

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Clan Line
50th anniversary
comeback



BETTON GRANGE
HAULS FIRST PASSENGER TRAINS

■ S160 OMAHA TO MARK D-DAY 80TH AT DARTMOUTH ■ STRATHSPEY IVATT MOVES AGAIN AFTER 44 YEARS ■ WORLD'S FIRST ACCESSIBLE PULLMAN LAUNCHED BY STAR PARALYMPIAN ■ BALA LAKE SUBMITS FRESH BID FOR RAILWAY EXTENSION



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Resplendent in its new livery, complete with gold leaf lettering, LMS Stanier mogul No. 13268 crosses Bewdley South Viaduct on the Severn Valley Railway on April 19. No. 13268 was the big star of the SVR's Spring Steam Gala – see feature, pages 50-55. JOHN TITLOW



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Achievements on our anniversary!

THIS issue, we proudly celebrate 25 years since the first edition of *Heritage Railway* appeared on the shelves in May 1999. Since then, we have aimed to give 100% support to the sector from which we took our title and celebrate its many magnificent landmarks as they happen by bringing them to the attention of an eager public.

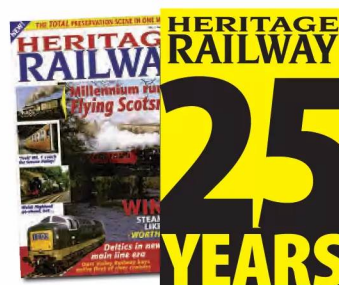
Our anniversary month has also coincided with the latest major achievement – the appearance of new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* to haul its first passenger trains, albeit within the confines of Tyseley Locomotive Works.

Members of the 6880 *Betton Grange* Society and their invited guests were afforded the extremely rare honour of being the first to ride behind what appeared every bit to be an out-of-the-box full-size standard gauge steam locomotive, the like of which has not been seen in action for nearly six decades, when the still-embryonic sector did not have the resources to save even one example of this class from the scrapyard.

Those who attended its first passenger runs on April 27 will vouch for the fact that the locomotive, resplendent and gleaming in its newly applied varnished BR green livery, could so easily have been mistaken for one that had come straight off the Swindon works production line.

As it is, Quentin McGuinness and his splendid team have steadfastly spent more than a quarter of a century bringing back to life a lost part of classic British transport heritage for the benefit of a far wider public and must be applauded for their vision, efforts and perseverance against a mountain range of perceived odds.

While it was found that some tasks needed addressing after the launch day, subject to further



testing and running-in, *Betton Grange* appears to have all the hallmarks of a highly sought-after guest for galas, special events and extended loan periods.

Other landmark success stories in this issue are the main line comeback of Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* following its two-year withdrawal for overhaul, just in time to celebrate the half a century since it returned to main line service after its purchase for preservation, and the return to steam after 44 years of LMS Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46464 at the Strathspey Railway. Keep them coming!

In this issue we also cover some of the many successful spring galas that have drawn in the crowds and demonstrated that, in these often-dreary times of economic gloom, doom and incessant national political bickering, the proven 'can do, will do, have done' principles of railway heritage and its staff and volunteer army's record of triumph in the face of multi-faceted adversity should be the informed inspiration for many a light shining through the dark.

Robin Jones Editor

ISSUE 319

May 10 – June 7, 2024

News



8

Headline News

6

- Members' day sees *Betton Grange* pull its first trains at Tyseley
- First steamings for Carmyllie Ivatt after four-decades-long overhaul
- *Clan Line* marks half-century of preserved main line running
- Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland develops app-based railway guide
- *Canadian Pacific* returns home



26

News

10

- £300k appeal launch to fund P2's "last major component"
- Severn Valley wins top regional transport attraction award
- Top of the crops: Cotswold line's 'Asparagus Express' for first 'gras'
- Locomotives unseen for 40 years go on show in Rheidol's museum
- Moorsline visit for Deltic will take *Alycidon* to preservation roots
- Great Central reunification launches urban link viaduct appeal
- *Lily* to bloom at Amberley gala
- The best of the best: spectacular spring galas in pictures



61

Main Line News

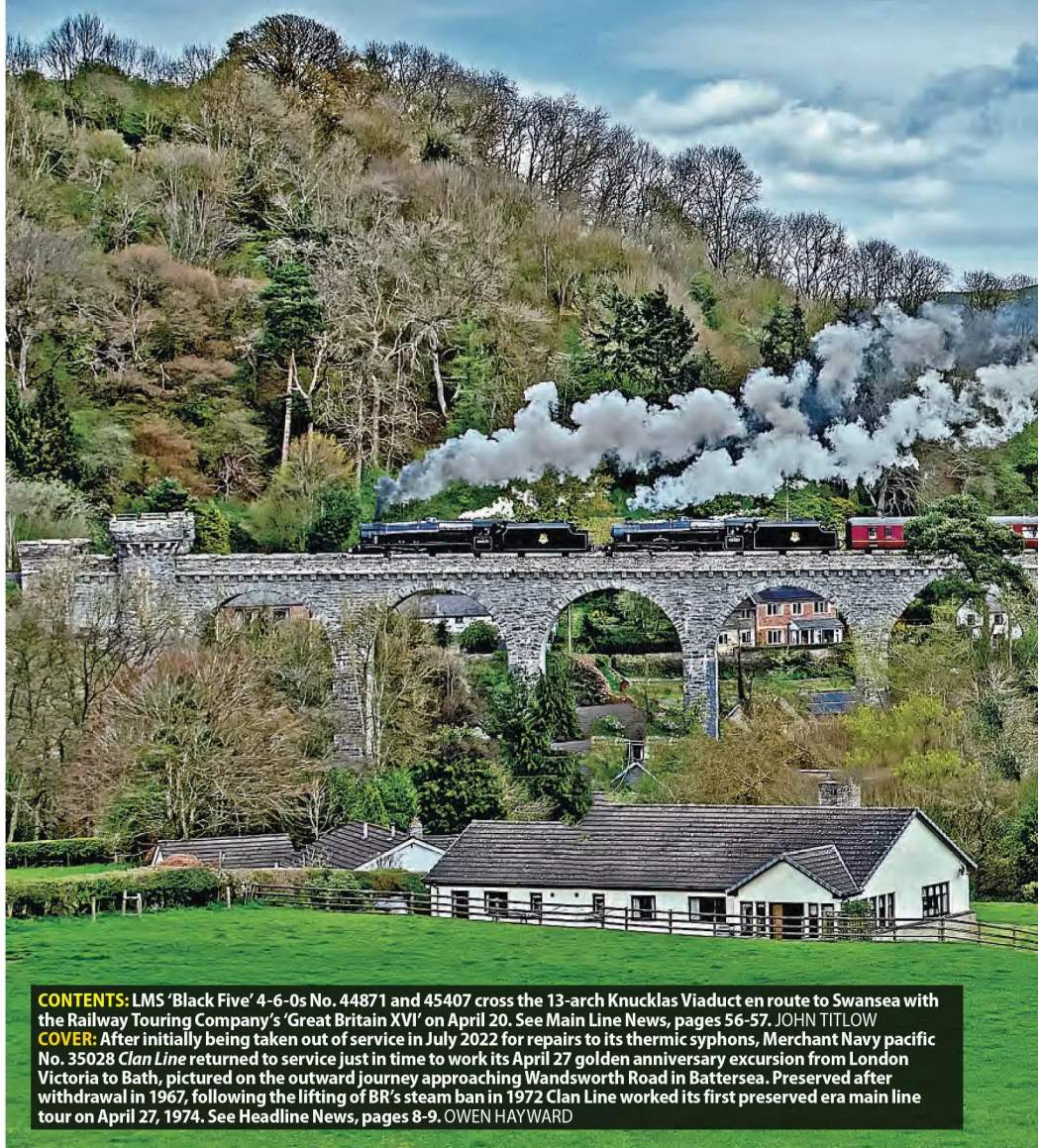
56

- 'Annual Great Britain' UK tour by rail a 'fantastic' success
- MPs request rail minister's aid in ongoing 'Jacobite' dispute
- £3.4 million repair project for iconic Glenfinnan viaduct commences

With Full Regulator

62

Don Benn's column looks at the March 16 'Shap Mountaineer' with No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*



CONTENTS: LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0s No. 44871 and 45407 cross the 13-arch Knucklas Viaduct en route to Swansea with the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain XVI' on April 20. See Main Line News, pages 56-57. JOHN TITLOW
COVER: After initially being taken out of service in July 2022 for repairs to its thermic syphons, Merchant Navy pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* returned to service just in time to work its April 27 golden anniversary excursion from London Victoria to Bath, pictured on the outward journey approaching Wandsworth Road in Battersea. Preserved after withdrawal in 1967, following the lifting of BR's steam ban in 1972 *Clan Line* worked its first preserved era main line tour on April 27, 1974. See Headline News, pages 8-9. OWEN HAYWARD

Regulars

Subscribe Today Centre

30

Visiting from the Bluebell Railway, LBSCR 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* climbs Eardington bank with a local service towards Bridgnorth. JOHN TITLOW



54

Main Line Itinerary

65

Steam and heritage diesel railtours.

Railwayana

72

Geoff Courtney's regular column.

Up & Running

96

Your guide to upcoming railway running days and events.

Next Stop

106

Features



48

Our First 25 Years

Heritage Railway founding editor Robin Jones looks back at the quarter-century since the magazine was launched to provide a premium source of news and features covering all corners of the preservation sector, along with some of the landmarks in that time.

HERITAGE RAILWAY
25 YEARS



Stanier mogul the star in Severn Valley gala stunner

50

Up to nine locomotives – including three visitors – ran during the Severn Valley Railway's successful April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala, reports John Titlow

The changing face of main line running

66

Lineside photographer John Titlow, a *Heritage Railway* contributor since the first issue, looks back at the exploits of heritage traction on the national network during the 25 years of the magazine's existence.

Meeting high demands on the Isle of Wight

76

After 2023 proved to be a year of record passenger numbers, Owen Hayward sat down with the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's general manager Marc Huws to talk about how the railway plans to grow further and the challenges of attracting visitors to the island.

Ride to Dartmouth to mark D-Day 80th anniversary

84

Both South Devon and world history will be restaged on the Dartmouth Steam Railway with special services over three days to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day – by a locomotive that ran over the line in the 1940s.

From volunteer to general manager

88

In his new role as the Tanfield Railway's general manager, David Watchman – a volunteer for 25 years – is preparing the line for its 300th anniversary celebrations in 2025, reports Dave Wilson.

Two more gala successes for Great Central railway

94

Two very different special events held on successive weekends in April on the Great Central railway again proved a hit with the visiting public, reports Robin Jones.

Models



Model News

82

Bachmann treads new ground with upscaled range of narrow gauge models, and Heljan Co-Bos return thanks to Rails of Sheffield.

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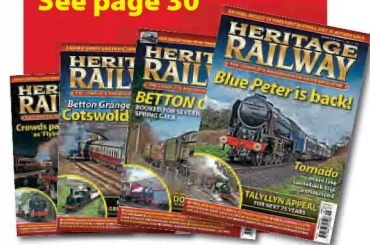
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GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* heads past Tyseley (Warwick Road) signalbox on April 27, its first day in passenger service.

Betton Grange pulls its first trains!

Words and pictures by Robin Jones

A NEW chapter in Great Western Railway history began in April when the 81st Charles Collett Grange 4-6-0, No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, ran for the first time at Tyseley Locomotive Works – before hauling a series of passenger trains on an internal siding following its official launch at a private ceremony 16 days later.

As first reported on the special www.heritagerrailway.co.uk/18671/

[bettongrange webpage](http://bettongrange.webpage.heritage-railway.co.uk) *Heritage Railway* set up for the occasion, No. 6880 first steamed on Thursday, April 11 in the presence of officials from the 6880 Betton Grange Society and Tyseley staff, before undertaking short solo runs.

While No. 6880 had been booked to appear at the Severn Valley Railway's Spring Steam Gala (see pages 50-55), as reported in issue 317, further work was still outstanding and it could not be moved there in time.

On a murky and overcast Saturday, April 27, society members attended the official launch of the locomotive at Tyseley.

Special introduction

Looking magnificent in its recently completed coat of gleaming BR green livery, as though it had just come off the Swindon works production line, *Betton Grange* stood in front of Tyseley's new carriage shed as society chairman Quentin McGuinness

addressed the audience and introduced the guest speakers one by one.

As recounted in our special Grange feature in issue 314, it was Quentin and fellow members of the 5199 Project who in 2008 came up with the idea of plugging a gap in the GWR heritage fleet by building a new Grange as a follow-up to the restoration of ex-Barry scrapyard GWR large prairie No. 5199. That year, the 6880 Society was formed for the purpose.

Andrew Dakin, the former Welsh Development Agency officer, and John Buxton, from Cambrian Transport and manager of the Barry Tourist Railway, recounted how *Betton Grange* acquired the Swindon No. 1 boiler from 4-6-0 No. 7927 *Willington Hall*, one of the 'Barry Ten' – and No. 6880 has become the first locomotive project to steam using a major component from that collection of unsold engines removed from Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard when he retired in 1990 and taken on by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

For the next 20 years, the 'Barry Ten' were stored in scrapyard condition before being released from council ownership to the management of Cambrian Transport, which on May 4, 2010, announced plans for the different locomotives in that collection.



Waiting for the off: No. 6880 *Betton Grange* prepares for another passenger run from Tyseley Locomotive Works' new carriage shed.



Inside the cab of No. 6880 between trips.



A 26-year-old dream comes true: 6880 Betton Grange Society chairman Quentin McGuinness officially launches the 81st Grange at Tyseley.



Letting off steam before setting off again for its short passenger run.

The boiler of No. 7927 was acquired by the Betton Grange project for £1 from the council, and the frames were sold to the Great Western Society for the project to build a new Hawksworth County 4-6-0, No. 1014 *County of Glamorgan*.

Society fundraiser Lynn Moore also gave a speech.

First rides

The audience then moved to the platform inside the carriage shed, before *Betton Grange* coupled up to a pair of Mk. 2 coaches, which were then boarded by the members.

Carrying an 88C shed code on its smokebox door representing Barry, which closed in 1964, No. 6880 then hauled its debut train – the first by a Grange in 59 years – along the road leading past the works' internal Tyseley (Warwick Road) signalbox, before reversing and repeating the journey several times.

In between these trips, members and their guests were allowed under supervision to board the footplate from the carriage shed platform.

Previous arrangements for a first steaming and then a private launch followed by a public launch of No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, as reported in past issues, ended up being postponed as last-minute jobs were completed by the Tyseley team. Following the testing and launch,

the boiler inspector passed No. 6880 on April 30 for heritage railway use, but several other jobs were being addressed: as we closed for press, a date to take No. 6880 by road to the SVR for running-in was still to be fixed.

Betton Grange is scheduled, all being well, to appear alongside two other GWR new-builds, Saint 4-6-0 No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* and West Somerset Railway 2-6-0 No. 9351, at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's May 25-27 Cotswold Festival of Steam.

After that, it is planned to take No. 6880 to the West Somerset and then to the North Norfolk Railway, to haul timetabled services for three months from August.

Quentin said that the society has received several offers from other lines wanting to hire *Betton Grange*, but a permanent home for it has not yet been agreed.

→ The society is running a £150,000 appeal to build a new Collett 3500-gallon tender to complete the project. At present, the locomotive is running with a borrowed 4000-gallon tender. The new tender, to be built around an existing chassis owned by the society, will be built to a standard to permit eventual main line running. To donate to the tender project, visit www.6880.co.uk or email lynn@6880.co.uk

→ See also pages 48/49.

Carmyllie Ivatt's return looks imminent – after 44 years

By Owen Hayward

LMS Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46464 – which has not hauled trains for more than four decades – is nearing the end of a lengthy overhaul and has made its first moves under its own steam.

Since 2000, a small team of dedicated volunteers from the Carmyllie Pilot Company Ltd (CPCo) have progressively undertaken the locomotive's restoration work, which included creating a new lower tender dragbox, smokebox, running plates, cab sides and roof, with much work initially carried out beneath tents at Brechin on the Caledonian Railway where the locomotive was moved to in 1989.

After the boiler was sent away to Northern Steam Engineering Ltd in Stockton-on-Tees in 2019, CPCo concluded that a more suitable location was required to reassemble the locomotive and building on the long-standing relationship between the two organisations, No. 46464 returned to Aviemore on the Strathspey in February of the following year.

Gaining momentum

With the large workshop facilities available, along with under cover space, work continued apace, with bearings white metalled, the tender and engine rewheeled, and countless new pins, bolts and bushes machined. The wheels were sent to Tyseley for tyre profiling, having been generously funded by the Strathspey Railway Association.

A successful out-of-frames hydraulic and steam test was conducted in November 2023, before the boiler was returned to the locomotive's frames on February 27, following which the

final reassembly commenced. With a fire in its belly, No. 46464 moved under its own steam on April 11 within the confines of Aviemore yard, the first time it had done so since 1980.

A small number of issues were discovered and promptly addressed before a final boiler examination took place on April 16. With this passed, the way was paved for its first test runs along the Spey Valley on April 25, first with just a brake van and then with the stock from the Strathspey's service train.

Nearly there

CPCo director Iain Smith said: "These runs went well, but as with any project of this scale, there are a few things that still require further 'fettling' (as they say) – this was only its third run as a complete locomotive in 44 years!

"Efforts are now focused on resolving any remaining concerns and completing various tasks before the locomotive heads to the paintshop. Painter Murray Duncan will finalise the restoration by reverting the locomotive to its original BR Lined Black appearance from 1950.

"The team would like to extend their gratitude to the late Ian N Fraser's family, especially David and Barbara Fraser, for their enduring support over the past 24 years and more. They also express appreciation to the shed staff and volunteers at the Strathspey for their invaluable contribution towards returning the locomotive to steam. We also wish to thank the Strathspey Railway Association for its recent financial contribution towards the cost of cladding and paint materials to help complete the engine."

CPCo was anticipating that No. 46464 will be ready to enter service early in the summer.



Pulling its first train in 44 years, No. 46464 pauses in the loop at Broomhill during a test run on April 25. ROBIN TAYLOR/CPCO

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Exploring Ffestiniog history with new telephone app guide

THE Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways has launched a new mobile telephone app that allows its passengers to be guided along their journey from the comfort of their seat.

Developed as part of the railway's interpretation and Boston Lodge project, the FfWHR Explore app has been funded in part thanks to a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, as well as the FR Society and FfWHR Trust, and provides descriptive and historic information about the various stops and points of interest on a passenger's journey.

Ducks... and an alligator

Younger minds can be engaged further as each line also has three 'Out the Window' games to spot landmarks such as the FR's humorous rubber duck bath in the woodlands between Penrhyn and Tan-y-Bwlch stations, or the Wagyu cows between Dinas and Waunfawr on the WHR, along with species of trees, landmarks and the people who work on the railways.

FfWHR visitor experience manager Stephen Greig said: "We want our visitors to enjoy a chat and the wonderful scenery.

"The app has been designed by our NLHF Project team to enhance the journey and to be a conversation starter.

"Our on-train staff and volunteers are always more than happy to tell you about our wonderful locations and railway – and may even help you spot that family of rubber ducks and the toy alligator who joined them last season!"

Summer opening

The free bilingual Welsh and English app can easily be downloaded when visitors arrive for their journey, as every railway station has free Wi-Fi access. QR codes are available at check-in to take you straight to the site, or it is available now, from either the Apple Store or Google Play Store.

Meanwhile, The FfWHR Interpretation and Boston Lodge Project is due to open to the public for tours to commence this summer.



Left: Fifty years after its first main line tour in preservation, *Clan Line* passes through Brougham Hayes with the Belmond Pullman during the April 27 golden anniversary trip to Bath. DUNCAN SAVIDGE

Below: Despite the significance of the trip, no commemorative headboard was worn on the locomotive. However, an aptly-numbered route disc was fitted to one of the lamp brackets throughout the trip. JAMES CUMMINS/MNLPs

Bang on time: *Clan Line's* successful comeback celebrates half a century of preservation

By Owen Hayward

THE April 27 target for the completion of the Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society's overhaul of Bulleid 4-6-2 No. 35028 *Clan Line* was one that was the group could not afford to miss – as the date marked the 50th anniversary of its first main line railtour in the heritage era.

Built in 1948 at Eastleigh Works, *Clan Line* worked many prestigious expresses during its career, including

the 'Golden Arrow' and 'Night Ferry' trains, and was unofficially timed at reaching 104mph at Axminster while pulling an 'Atlantic Coast Express' in 1961. Its BR career ended on July 2, 1967, with a farewell special out of Waterloo bound for Bournemouth, although it was not formally withdrawn for another week.

Wise purchase

Little over a month later on August 13, it was purchased by the MNLPs for £3850 in place of classmate No. 35022



Holland America Line, which had been sent to Barry for scrapping before the purchase could be agreed.

With BR banning privately-owned steam locomotives from operating on the national network, *Clan Line* was first based on the Longmoor Military Railway in Hampshire. However, when the ban was lifted in 1972, the Pacific was added to a small list of approved locomotives and led to its first tour since withdrawal on April 27, 1974, which ran between Basingstoke and Westbury.



No. 35028 *Clan Line* weaves its way around Factory Junction as it approaches Wandsworth Road shortly after departure from London Victoria. OWEN HAYWARD



MNLPS volunteers pose with *Clan Line* at Stewart Lane on April 26 following the locomotive's successful final fitness-to-run exam. JAMES CUMMINS/MNLPS

Since 1994 it has been the locomotive of choice for the 'Belmond British Pullman' (formerly 'Venice Simplon Orient Express') and in March 1999 was transferred to Stewart Lane depot in Battersea, where it has fittingly remained based since, having been allocated to the now-demolished locomotive shed there for the first decade or so of its BR career.

In July 2022, five years after returning from its last overhaul, cracks were discovered in the thermic syphons which saw it withdrawn from service to allow for these to be repaired. Although work was started at Stewart Lane, the scale of the job quickly necessitated that the locomotive was sent away, and it arrived at Leaky Finders' workshops in Devon that November.

There, MNLPS volunteers and contracted workshop staff repaired the affected areas, a job which by then had included the superheater elements, some tubes and flue tubes, all while the boiler remained in the frames.

Furthermore, new sections of firebox and boiler platework were also welded in place, along with replacement of several hundred firebox stays.

Counting down

With the work ending up being more extensive and thus taking longer than initially expected, *Clan Line* missed out on operations during 2023, but by March 7, 2024, it had passed its hydraulic test, with a successful steam test carried out just days later.

With the April 27 deadline in sight but with a highly-motivated team, the locomotive was swiftly reassembled and on March 22 arrived back home in London for the finishing touches before making its first moves under steam in nearly two years on March 31.

On April 19, the locomotive undertook its first test run hauling its support coach and a Class 67 before a loaded test run took place

on April 22, with the Merchant Navy pulling the full Belmond set to Dover and back (see picture, Main Line News, page 58). Following a final fitness-to-run examination on April 26, No. 35028 was given the all-clear to resume duties just in time for the 50th anniversary tour which departed Victoria at 9.14am on April 27, half a century on from its first such heritage era working. Furthermore, the Class 67 that brought the empty coaching stock into London Victoria was detached there allowing the trip to run unassisted – a rare sight on the main line these days.

Poignant moment

MNLPS press officer James Cummins said: "The locomotive performed brilliantly. It is a further testament to the incredible efforts of Rory Edwards and his team at Leaky Finders, DB Cargo, Belmond, our CME Chris Ellick, our MNLPS volunteers who worked tirelessly to get the locomotive back to the main line and our planning team to arrange and sort out our tour on Saturday, as well as the two test runs – the list goes on! Without any of these people, we would not have achieved what we saw at the weekend. It's been a huge effort by everyone concerned, which we cannot be thankful enough for.

"The run's poignancy on April 27 marked 50 years to the day that *Clan Line* operated its first main line railtour in preservation, from Basingstoke to Westbury in 1974.

"This route was once again used for our trip on Saturday, and we were delighted to have three of our original members, Tim Robbins, Bob Abercrombie and Tony Clare, together at the water stop at Salisbury.

"*Clan Line* will now resume its regular workings on the Belmond Pullman services.

"To honour our commitments to Belmond and thank it for its patience throughout, we will not be taking No. 35028 to any heritage lines this year."

Home at last: *Canadian Pacific* returns to Mid-Hants for completion

FRIDAY, April 26 was not only the start of the Mid-Hants Railway's spring steam gala (see News, pages 12/13), but also its flagship locomotive, SR Merchant Navy class 4-6-2 No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific*, finally returned to Alresford after more than a decade in the former SR works buildings at Eastleigh depot.

Having initially arrived in 2011 for dry storage, work to overhaul the chassis commenced there in 2013, and a Heritage Lottery Fund grant being was awarded to the project in 2015.

With the boiler being overhauled at Ropley, recent attempts to bring the chassis home were thwarted following a weight restriction imposed on a bridge over the adjacent main line that needed to be crossed to exit the depot.

Alternative options were explored, including departure through a different part of the site, but fell through. However, following recent repair work to strengthen the structure, an exemption was granted to enable the required road movement to go ahead. The chassis departed Eastleigh on April 28 and was unloaded at the MHR the next morning.

Operations manager Richard Bentley said: "We are very grateful to Network Rail and Arlington Fleet Services for their support throughout this process. We were hopeful it would be home in time for the gala, but we deliberately didn't say anything as we didn't want to build up expectations. The fact it just about made it meant it was a welcome surprise late addition for all.

"Having *Canadian Pacific* back home will make the overhaul much easier. It's gone from a two-hour round trip from our works and offices to check measurements to a two-minute walk, and this puts us in a better position to complete the work.

"We have some checks to do on the chassis first, but the tender is ready, and the boiler is almost in a position to be hydraulically tested, so it is almost a reassembly job now. We'll need to lay everything out to check what's been done, what still needs doing, and to identify any missing components.

"While I would like to say it could be back in time for the autumn gala or even Christmas, we won't commit to any timescales as we want to get the job done and done right. It's very much going to be a 'finished when it's finished' project."



Back home: The frames for No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* are prepared for unloading at Alresford on April 26, having arrived from Eastleigh depot where they had been for the last 11 years. CORINA CREES/MHR

£293k grant for station restoration

A VOLUNTEER group has been awarded £293,193 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to convert the derelict Mytholmroyd station building in West Yorkshire into a community centre with studio space for local artists.

The Mytholmroyd Station Partnership, run by Geoff and Sue

Mitchell, has been working on plans to redevelop and reopen the Grade II-listed station building for 17 years and now aim to have the first tenants within the next year.

The station was built by the Manchester & Leeds Railway and opened in May 1847, a few weeks before the company became the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway.

Bala Lake line submits fresh bid for town centre extension

THE Bala Lake Railway has launched a fresh attempt to win the green light for its long-awaited extension into Bala town centre.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 306, the Snowdonia National Park Authority refused permission for the extension over fears that more tourists using toilets in the town will result in higher sewage levels, breaching recent Welsh Government guidance regarding the discharge of additional phosphates into watercourses; in this case, the River Dee.

However, the Bala Lake Railway Trust submitted a revised planning application for a 1300-yard track extension, the installation of a level crossing, and the erection of new station building, an ancillary engine and carriage building, signalbox and associated development, on April 9. It is set to be discussed by park authority members in early June.

Trust chairman Julian Birley BEM said: "We have been so fortunate with our supporters and donors who have continued to hold the belief in what we are doing. Thanks to their generosity, the additional cost of £120,000 on top of the £250,000 already spent has been met. All this for what will hopefully be the most valuable piece of paper in North Wales.

"With Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales having reassessed the concern of the additional discharge, the main issues for refusal having been removed as they are now content that the Bala Waste Water Treatment Works is performing well and there is enough 'headroom' in within its capacity to take our project, there is an air of hope that we may be successful. The other issues concerning archaeological digs, highway issues, listed building consents, and building on the Green Wedge have all been addressed to the best of our ability.

"More than £10,000 was spent on updating the ecology report alone. Nothing has been left to chance. Bala will get its railway, non-negotiable."

Help raise £300k for the P2's last major component

By Robin Jones

A £300,000 appeal to fund the final large component for new Gresley P2 2-8-2 No. 2007 *Prince of Wales* has been launched.

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, which is building the seventh member of the most powerful express passenger locomotives fleet to operate in the UK, designed by Sir Nigel Gresley in the 1930s to haul 600-ton trains over the arduous Edinburgh to Aberdeen route, has launched The Valve Gear club to raise the necessary finance.

The new-build project has already raised £4.5 million, with most large components now manufactured, from the boiler to the tender.

The ultimate performance and economy of a steam locomotive is dependent on optimising the complete thermal system, from the fire hole door to the top of the chimney. Assuming the boiler and smokebox are fundamentally sound, the most important areas for good design are the cylinders and valves.

Moving forward

The design and manufacture of the unique cylinder monobloc, which was delivered to Darlington Locomotive Works last autumn, was the first step towards building the powerhouse of the P2. With that work complete, attention now focuses on the manufacture of the valve gear.

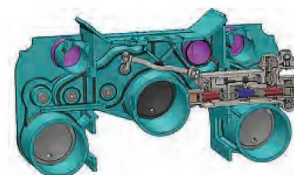
Lentz poppet valve gear is a more efficient design than Walschaerts valve gear, which is commonly found on UK locomotives including the trust's Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*.

Dr Hugo Lentz developed the concept by an improved system of large passages, large areas through valves, and suitably controlled valve events would fully utilise the latent capacity of the boiler. Lentz rotary

cam poppet valve gear was fitted on the first P2, No. 2001 *Cock o' the North* – unusual as most modern steam locomotives used piston valves, where the entry of live steam to and the exit of exhaust steam from the cylinders was controlled with piston valves driven backwards and forwards by the valve gear. On rotary cam valve gear, the live and exhaust steam cut-offs can be adjusted independently.

Gresley recognised that poppet valves can result in higher power, greater efficiency and reduced maintenance. The first application of continuously variable gear was on No. 2001 in 1934. When proposed for No. 2001, Gresley requested that the Associated Locomotive Equipment Company provided continuously variable cams, rather than stepped cams, therefore providing an infinite number of settings between 10% and 75% cut-off. This fine adjustment was required with powerful locomotives and will enable the economical operation of No. 2007.

On No. 2001, the continuous cams wore rapidly and required replacement after only 10,000 miles, so stepped cams were fitted, adversely affecting its economy, and therefore the Lentz valve gear was further



A 3D image of the right-hand cam box and rocking shaft mounted within the cylinder block. A1SLT

developed by the Franklin Company of the USA during the 1940s, which overcame the wear problems with the cams and other maintenance issues.

The Franklin Company took on the Lentz patents in the early 1940s and developed the concept further, overcoming the grooving problems in early continuous cams and changing the cam slider mechanism from rack and pinion to screw operation, resulting in less backlash which – more importantly – cannot back feed into the reverser.

The A1 Trust obtained details of the Franklin developments and incorporated them into the design of the valves and valve gear for No. 2007. Combined with modern design software and modelling, the Lentz-Franklin valve gear has been specifically adapted for the new P2; it will consistently produce more than 2500hp at the drawbar, with 3000hp-plus at the cylinders when climbing hard or at higher speeds – in addition to improved economy at lower speeds and when minimal power is required.

The first £50,000 raised by The Valve Gear Club will go towards the building of a prototype and test rig.

→ The club seeks to raise these funds through donations of £1000, in a lump sum or smaller instalments. Visit a1steam.com/valvegear



The Franklin Company further developed the Lentz valve gear and incorporated it into Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Baldwin 4-8-4 No. 3752. The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust has obtained copies of the blueprints for this locomotive and the valve gear modifications and further adapted them into those for the new P2. A1SLT

Severn Valley wins UK Transport Award

THE Severn Valley Railway has won the UK Transport Award's Best Regional Heritage Railway Attraction for 2024.

The awards scheme is run by *SME News*, a quarterly digital publication aimed at small to medium-sized businesses. Awards are given to commend companies that show ingenuity and hard work and distinguish themselves from competitors. SVR's managing director, Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, said: "We are

delighted that the SVR has added another award to its trophy cabinet "Our Spring Steam Gala (see pages 50-55) showed just how well we can do things here.

"Running a heritage railway attraction is very much a balancing act. You have to make sure visitors have an excellent experience, so they'll not only return, but so they will also tell their friends to come.

"And you've got to do it in a way that's financially sustainable. We work

hard to get that balance right."

UK Transport Awards coordinator Jack Ford added: "Changing oneself to meet the ever-changing needs of such a versatile industry is no easy feat. The demand for such flexibility creates an expectation that anybody would struggle to meet. Thankfully, our awardees have onboarded the responsibility and have developed award-winning methodologies that may very well define the future of the trade."



On a test run, A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* pulls away from Hampton Loade on the Severn Valley Railway on April 17. JOHN TITLOW

Blue Peter concludes test running on Severn Valley as main line return beckons

A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* successfully completed its testing and crew training on the Severn Valley Railway, and its final day was on April 17 – the day before the Spring Steam Gala. During the gala, it was on display in the dock at Kidderminster Town station.

Ian Walker, head of steam locomotive engineering at London

and North Western Railway Heritage Co Ltd and SVR volunteer driver, said: "The loco is performing well and is proving to be a very strong and capable locomotive. There have been no major faults with the loco, only minor niggles, which is what testing is all about."

Testing with six Mk. 3 carriages and a one Mk. 1 support coach went

very well and about 1000 miles was covered, which was expected.

No. 60532 departed on April 30 to return to Crewe under its own power as a main line test run, towing its support carriage with a diesel on the rear (picture, page 49).

It was due to undergo a Crewe-Chester Shrewsbury-Stafford-Crewe loaded test run on May 2.

New dawn for GWR pannier after delivery to Minehead – and another available for hire!

GWR pannier tank No. 6435 has arrived at its new home on the West Somerset Railway after being sold, along with its accompanying Hawksworth auto trailer third No. 232, by the Bodmin & Wenford Railway to WSR plc chairman Jonathan Jones-Pratt.

As reported in issue 316, the BWR sold the pannier, which last ran in 2022 and needs an overhaul, after reviewing its finances.

Bodmin Railway Preservation Society chairman Nick Wood said that the line needs to get Bagnall Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 2766 back into service as soon as possible in order to avoid costly locomotive hire fees. Attention will then turn to GWR 0-6-0PT 4612, which needs a significant overhaul, and GWR prairie No. 5552 will by then need a mid-term exam.

"All of which means that we would be unable to start work on No. 6435 for another decade. By then, who knows what the cost might be," he



GWR pannier No. 6435 after delivery to the West Somerset Railway, where it will be overhauled. WR 0-6-0PT No. 9466 is to the left. WSR

wrote in the April edition of railway's magazine, *Bodmin Railway News*.

The BWR has also sold Bagnall 0-4-0ST No. 2962 of 1950 *Devonport Dockyard No. 19*. Not currently in working order, No. 19 is to be moved to a new home to the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway, where it has been purchased by a private individual.

Meanwhile, Jonathan's WR pannier No. 9466 is back in action with a new 14-month ticket following its mid-term examination – and he is offering it for hire to other heritage lines for winter work.

Any railway interested in hiring No. 9466 is invited to email jon@jjpholdings.co.uk

Six could be seven for June's Strictly Bulleid II at Swanage

WHILE it was making no promises, Southern Locomotives Ltd is confident that rebuilt Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* will be finished in time to join the Swanage Railway's June 7-9 Strictly Bulleid II gala – and has spared no expense to increase these chances.

With the event already set to hold a heritage era record for bringing Bulleid Pacifics together, as reported last issue, should *Sir Keith Park* be completed in time, this will take the total from its current six locomotives up to seven.

'Money well spent'

SLL's April update said that the locomotive "has not appeared in the advertisements, but rest assured our team will ensure it will be ready. It's cost SLL a lot to ensure No. 34053 is ready in both overtime, by keeping the works open five days a week, as well as contracting Swanage Railway staff to assist, but we think it's money well spent."

The front end of the locomotive arrived back at Herston almost a month after the boiler was delivered to Tyseley Locomotive Works from Weybourne on the North Norfolk Railway, and since then all the motion, pipework, packing and cladding has been refitted. The tender entered the goods shed at Swanage on April 24, where painting commenced.

An official steam test is scheduled for May 23, after which an announcement will be made accordingly.

Summer service

Following this event, SLL's West Country class No. 34072 *257 Squadron* will head to the Mid-Norfolk Railway for the June 28-30 summer steam weekend, where it will operate alongside BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80078 (a former SLL locomotive) before returning to the Spa Valley Railway in July. It was expected that it would then head to the Mid-Hants Railway for the remainder of the year, replacing No. 34070 *Manston* which is currently on hire there.



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Kitson works 0-6-2T No. 29 catches a brief pocket of sun as it emerges from the aptly-named Sun Lane cutting on the approach to Alreside on April 26. The locomotive was later stopped after the discovery of leaking tubes.



A smattering of cowslips break up the grassy banks at Pines Cutting as Urie No. 506 emerges with a mixed freight working from Ropley.

Jubilant Jubilee steals the show at Mid-Hants spring gala

Words and pictures
by Owen Hayward

Its first visit to a preserved line in the region saw crowds flock to Hampshire to see LMS Jubilee No. 45690 *Leander* at the Mid-Hants Railway's annual spring steam gala, which took place on April 26-28.

With its boiler certificate's May expiration date fast approaching, *Leander* was making its penultimate stop on a farewell tour, having travelled south from the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway in Cumbria at the end of March (as reported last issue). Having put in a surprise few days of general services the weekend before the event, the Jubilee went on to perform a spectacular show over the three-day steam event, tackling the MHR's gradients (the steepest of which is nicknamed 'The Alps') with ease.

During the weekend, the Jubilee carried a wreath on the smokebox in tribute to volunteer supporter crew member and East Lancashire Railway driver Craig Potter, who died at the age of 34 in the week before the event following a short illness.

Late addition withdrawn

Leander was joined for the occasion by a relatively late addition to the line-up. Having starred at the Severn Valley Railway's own steam gala the weekend before (see pages 50-53), Kitson-built Lambton, Hetton & Joicey collieries 0-6-2T No. 29 made the journey to Hampshire in the days between the two events. Part way through the Friday, however, it had to be pulled from service following the development of some leaking tubes. After allowing it to sufficiently cool overnight, engineers inspected the affected area the next morning

in the hope of sealing these; while this appeared successful, with No. 29 being returned to service shortly after noon on April 27, the joy was short-lived as it was then withdrawn from service again by the end of the day.

A BR Class 20 locomotive was pressed into service for April 28 to cover and assist with some of the timetabled services as required.

There was plenty of other steam on offer, with resident Ivatt 2-6-2T 2MT No. 41312 and Urie 4-6-0 515 No. 506 also taking charge of service trains, while Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1788 *Kilmersdon* operated driver experience courses within the confines of Ropley's locomotive yard each day.

The line-up was concluded by visiting SR West Country light Pacific No. 34070 *Manston*, which has been on loan to the MHR since last

November courtesy of Southern Locomotives Limited. Looking respectfully grubby in its weathered condition, *Manston*'s stay will soon draw to a close, with a return to Swanage due in late May, ahead of the June 14-16 Strictly Bulleid II gala there, where it will feature in a line-up of no less than six Southern pacific locomotives.

A replacement locomotive to help the MHR through a current shortfall is currently being negotiated.

New temporary 'box

The event was also the first gala for the new temporary signalling set-up at Medstead & Four Marks station, which has been installed following the retirement of the now life-expired lever frame in the former Wilton South 'box' in November 2023. The new system was designed and installed by Watercress Line

Leander speeds through the Hampshire countryside shortly after departing Ropley on April 26. SIMON ANDREWS





The sky above may have dulled as the day progressed on April 26, but the vibrant yellow fields of rapeseed brighten the mood as *Leander* approaches Ropley with a rake of vans.

volunteers who are all qualified railway signal engineers and was checked and tested to Network Rail standards.

On April 23, Lord Kamall, who was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport between September 20, 2022, and October 28, 2022, visited the line to officially launch the new 'box' into service.

After being given a tour by MHR volunteers and CEO Rebecca Dalley, he said: "I was so impressed by the achievement of the highly skilled

volunteers working in their spare time. Their passion and dedication to the Watercress Line shone through in the warm welcome I received.

"It was fascinating to compare the new electronic signalling with the old lever frame system, and I was privileged to see it in action on board a heritage diesel loco."

A final surprise for the gala was the appearance of the frames for SR 4-6-2 Merchant Navy class No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* on the morning of April 26 – see News, page 9, for the full story.



On April 23, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Lord Kamall, visited the railway to officially open the new temporary cabin. Left to right are Pat Butler (S&T manager), Lord Kamall, and Rebecca Dalley (MHR CEO). MHR



On April 26, heavily weathered SR light Pacific No. 34070 *Manston* passes a sea of yellow rapeseed at Northside Lane as it recreates the LCGB 'Hampshire Branch Lines Rail Tour' of April 9, 1967.



Ivatt 2-6-2T No. 41312 arrives at Medstead & Four Marks station on April 26. To the left, the new signal cabin is just visible, which temporarily replaces the former Wilton South 'box' and its life-expired lever frame. NICK GILLIAM

Catch the 'Asparagus Express' as 'first' crop delivered by rail

By Robin Jones

A GREAT tradition was invoked on St George's Day when the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway had the honour of carrying the first round of asparagus – or 'gras' – cut in the Vale of Evesham for the new spring growing season.

April 23 is a special day for the asparagus growing industry in Worcestershire, which claims to produce the most gras – in the world. Traditionally, the first 'round of gras' was cut amid much celebration, marking the start of the British Asparagus Festival.

In times past, hundreds of tons of the precious green spears were once despatched by train from Broadway and Toddington stations to market during the spring growing season. The day saw the first 100-round of gras, comprising bundles of 15 spears, amounting to 120 (not 100!) spears, transported from Broadway to Cheltenham on the G/WR in a special hauled by WR 4-6-0 No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall*, proudly bearing the 'Asparagus Express' headboard.

Two months of fun

The launch event marks the start of two months of celebrations dedicated to all things asparagus, which is filled with music, Morris dancing, and the company of none other than Gus the Asparagus Man, who is somewhat akin to the centuries-old custom represented by the Green Man, interpreted as a symbol of rebirth and representing the cycle of new growth that occurs every spring, along with the legendary St George himself.

The journey for the asparagus began at the Fleece Inn at Bretforton, the largest farming village near Evesham. The crop was carried in one of a convoy of Morgan cars to Broadway to catch the 11.35am



Pictured at Cheltenham Racecourse station alongside WR 4-6-0 No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall* on April 23 are (right to left) Nigel Smith, landlord of the Fleece Inn at Bretforton and holding the first round of gras, Gus the Asparagus Man, St George, Vic Allison, chief executive of Wychavon District Council, and Jerome Green, a G/WR volunteer. IAN CROWDER/G/WR

train. From Cheltenham Racecourse, the asparagus was then taken to the National Star College for young people with disabilities, where it was made into a delicious soup by students.

The route of the launch changes each year, the destination always being a charitable organisation. It was the second time the route has included the GWSR; the first time was in 2018, shortly after the railway's extension to Broadway station opened.

Over the years, the British Asparagus Festival team have been to Buckingham Palace, Worcester

Cathedral, the European Parliament in Brussels, the Royal Hospital Chelsea and many more places to present the 100-round to worthwhile causes.

Back in time

The railway's marketing manager, Catherine Johnson, said: "The GWSR is thrilled to be involved in this fantastic event, celebrating the beautiful asparagus our region grows."

"It is great to be involved in the transportation of this on our fantastic locomotive, and supporting National Star is an added bonus."

"In the past, asparagus was transported to market over our

railway from the Vale of Evesham, so we are turning the clock back."

National Star chief executive Lynette Barrett said: "Preparing young people with disabilities for adulthood is what National Star is all about."

"An important part of that preparation is learning about healthy eating, understanding the importance of local, seasonal food, and of course how to prepare balanced and tasty meals."

"We are thrilled that the British Asparagus Festival has chosen StarBistro at National Star as the final home for the first 100-round of Vale Asparagus."

'Forgotten' station to serve trains again in Peterborough

A PROJECT to dismantle a 'lost' country station brick by brick and move it for reconstruction as an entrance to the Nene Valley Railway's Peterborough terminus and the adjacent Railworld Wildlife Haven has begun.

Built midway between the villages of Sutton, Wansford and Upton to the west of Peterborough, Wansford Road station served the Stamford & Sibson branch of the Stamford & Essendine Railway, which was said to have suffered badly from the effects of the 1926 General Strike and closed in 1929, then becoming a private residence. Having been built in a cutting, it slowly became obscured from Sutton Heath Road by a

belt of mature trees. When National Highways drew up plans in recent years to turn the busy two-lane A47 between Wansford and Sutton into a dual carriageway, it realised that the boarded-up station would be in the way and offered it free to anyone who could give it a home, while allocating £200,000 towards its dismantling and move.

Delayed by the need to relocate a population of protected pipistrelle bats, dismantling the station roof began in April and was set to take up to 10 weeks, the bricks being taken to a compound at Railworld. An ecologist has been appointed to ensure the well-being of wildlife.



Wansford Road station before dismantling. ROBIN JONES

A second chance for the 'Teddy' that missed out

THE Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's July 25-28 Class 14 60th anniversary gala event, 14s@60, has been bolstered following the addition of a seventh locomotive to the previously-announced line-up – and one that unfortunately missed out on a similar event 10 years ago.

Following on from the very successful event in July 2014 at the East Lancashire Railway, where 10 examples of the class were gathered, Wensleydale Railway-based D9523 will now also be attending the EVR's celebration of the diesel hydraulic locomotives. This particular locomotive was also present at that ELR event but ran for only three miles before an engine failure saw it sidelined for the remainder of the celebrations.

Its appearance in Derbyshire this summer will see it have a second opportunity at working services to celebrate the anniversary of the

introduction of the 'Teddy Bears', but it has somewhat ironically been brought about by a failure of classmate and EVR resident D9525, which was unfortunately stopped on April 19, having suffered its own engine failure.

Event organiser Chris Baily said: "Options have been looked into to see if we could get D9525 available for the 14s@60 event, but these have unfortunately turned out to be unviable and time-consuming.

"It is with regret that D9525 will no longer be a running loco at this event. However, it will be available on display and for cab visits."

It is hoped that D9525 will additionally be able to be towed dead as part of a planned service with the six operational locomotives at the head, echoing sights of the ELR's nonuple-header on July 26, 2014. The line-up this summer will see the Kent & East Sussex Railway's



Wensleydale Railway-based Class 14 D9523 will join the Ecclesbourne Valley's 14s@60 gala this July, taking the total line-up to seven locomotives. This particular locomotive failed early on at the 2014 50th anniversary gala, and its visit to Derbyshire has come about following the failure of another locomotive in this year's line-up. V MIDDLESBROUGH/EVR

D9504, the Nene Valley Railway's D9529, the Severn Valley Railway's D9551 and the Caledonian Railway's D9553 join Wensleydale's D9523 and EVR residents D9525 and D9537 Eric for the celebratory gala weekend.

For further details and event sponsorship packages, see www.e-v-r.com/14s-at-60/

As reported last issue, Intercity

is offering customers a railtour starting from Bristol Temple Meads and picking up at Bristol Parkway, Cheltenham Spa, and Birmingham New Street on Saturday, July 27, to the event under the title of the 'Diamond Jubilee Express' and hauled by Class 45 'Peak' No. 45118 *Royal Artilleryman*. For more details, visit inter-city.co.uk

Black Prince set to spend two years at Bressingham in storage deal

OUT-OF-TICKET BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92203 *Black Prince* is to go on display at Bressingham Steam Museum for the next two years.

The North Norfolk Railway and the museum have announced a partnership which will see the 9F, saved for preservation by the late wildlife artist David Shepherd, become one of the star exhibits at Bressingham.

The Poppy Line's interim general manager, Graham Hukins, said: "This is an excellent arrangement for both the NNR and Bressingham. We need to store *Black Prince* until workshop space and funding are available for its overhaul, and the steam museum has room in its standard gauge exhibition hall.

BR Standard 9F No. 92203 *Black Prince* in the locomotive yard at Weybourne station on June 10, 2023. STEVE ALLEN/NNR

"We anticipate this exciting initiative being the start of a mutually beneficial collaboration between the two organisations."

Museum trustees chairman Chris Leah said: "We at Bressingham are delighted and proud that the North Norfolk Railway wish to partner with us to house its iconic 9F loco *Black Prince*. We are looking forward to working with North Norfolk on a programme of joint promotions. It is pleasing that two East Anglian organisations can work together for the benefit of steam preservation."

The 9F was taken from Sheringham by low-loader on April 29 and was booked to make its first Bressingham appearance at the venue's Annual Heritage Steam Gala on May 4-6.



Tim Hedley-Jones, Ann Middleton and Andy Savage at the plaque unveiling next to the water tower. FRANK DUMBLETON

Blue plaque for Didcot's listed Great Western water tower

A BLUE plaque has been unveiled at Didcot Railway Centre in recognition of the restoration of its Grade II-listed water tank, which dates from 1932.

On April 10, Andy Savage, chairman of the Railway Heritage Trust, was joined by its executive director, Tim Hedley-Jones, and Ann Middleton, from Didcot Railway Centre, for the unveiling.

The trust contributed towards the refurbishment efforts, along

with Great Western Society members. The restoration also received a Highly Commended certificate at the National Railway Heritage Awards 2023. It is the only original water tower in the UK still used for its original purpose.

The Great Western Trust also received a wall-mounted table chronicling the contribution of the 18 chief civil engineers of the GWR/WR up to 1992, when the WR ceased to exist.



HERITAGE RAILWAY

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HSTs join line-up as Severn Valley Spring Diesel Festival grows further

By Robin Jones

THE Severn Valley Railway's May 16-19 Spring Diesel Festival had added further guests, with up to 18 different locomotives and units now due in service.

Colas Rail has agreed to its Class 43 High Speed Train set being in service during the event. It will comprise power cars Nos. 43301 and 43303, plus three coaches. The set is coming to the SVR for storage as part of a commercial contract.

Another pair of Class 43 HST power cars, Nos. 43468 and 43480, are also now set to appear, courtesy of Rail Adventure UK Ltd. They are a different pair to the two that appeared at the corresponding event last year. SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "These proved to be very popular at our last

spring diesel event. Then, we were only able to have them in service for one of the days, but this time round, we will have them in operation on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the event."

Class 43 power cars were built between 1976 and 1982 and were arguably part of the most successful train ever built in the UK. They revolutionised train travel in the country, travelling at 125mph on many key intercity routes. Although they are now being replaced, a few remain in use on passenger service in Scotland and Cornwall, as well as on test trains and other specialist movements.

Michael Owen has also agreed for all five of his Class 20s, Nos. 20205, 20007, 20048, 20189 and 20142, to attend, and they are expected to work in multiple. Also attending



The Colas Rail Class 43 High Speed Train set led by power car No. 43301 has joined the Spring Diesel Festival roster. SVR

are Class 70s from both Colas and Freightliner, Classes 73 (No. 73119 Paul Taylor) and 69 (No. 69009 Western Consort) from GB Railfreight, Class 59 No. 37409 Loch Awe, Class 46 D182, running alongside members of the SVR's home fleet. As reported in *Heritage Railway*

issue 316, the SVR won the Heritage Railway Association's 2024 Diesel and Electric Locomotion award for last year's special events programme, which celebrated 50 years of main line diesel preservation.

➔ For more details of the event and to book tickets, visit svr.co.uk

Waterman's mobile layout breaks world record

POP producer Pete Waterman and a team of fellow enthusiasts have set a new Guinness record for building the world's biggest portable model railway.

The feat was achieved by Pete and the Railnuts team at the Model World Live event at the National Exhibition Centre, near Birmingham, on April 27.

The 280ft by 14ft model has 3280 feet of track and depicts the West Coast Main Line between Rugby and Watford Junction. The model included tracks they built in recent years; a layout which was displayed at Chester Cathedral.

Guinness Book of Record adjudicators spent seven-and-a-half hours checking the model.

"The rules are very strict, and it has to be measured to within 500mm," Pete told the BBC. "So it has to be professionally built, it has to run, and all the tracks that are counted have to carry trains."

"When Guinness Book of Records announced that it had certified it, the place went crazy. People were cheering and shouting – it was fantastic."

He received congratulatory calls from as far afield as the USA after the record was confirmed.

The model is set to return to Chester Cathedral in August.

Mountaineer becomes Wensleydale patron

IN case it ever finds itself presented with a mountain to climb, the Wensleydale Railway has made a perfect choice for the second patron of its charitable trust.

Alan Hinkes OBE became the first Briton to climb all 14 of the world's mountains more than 8000m in height.

He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the University of Sunderland in 1999, an Honorary Doctorate from the University of York in 2007, and in 2005 was named Yorkshire Man of the Year and made an honorary citizen of his home town, Northallerton, in the same year. He was awarded an OBE in the 2006 New Year's Honours list for his achievements in mountaineering.

In addition to his mountaineering career, he is an outdoor equipment technical consultant, author, photographer, cameraman, motivational speaker, mountain guide and environmentalist.

Alan joins Steve Davies MBE as a patron.

Nick Keegan, the WR's fundraising and marketing manager, said: "Alan grew up in Northallerton, close to the Wensleydale Railway, and has great passion and enthusiasm not just for our railway, but also for railways in general. He's a champion of all things Yorkshire – the environment, people, education and local communities."

Trust chairman Richard Leathley said: "We are now looking forward to Alan being involved in a number



New Wensleydale Railway Trust patron Alan Hinkes OBE. NICK KEEGAN/WR

of fundraising activities, open to all, during the course of the present season, which we will be publicising in the not-too-distant future."



The Bure Valley Railway celebrated the 30th anniversary of its ZB class locomotives with a special event on April 27. In 1994, a pair of 2-6-2s were designed specifically for the 15in gauge line. Built by Winsor Engineering, they were based upon the Indian Railways 2ft 6in gauge ZB class, and the term ZB was immediately adopted. Two tank engines based on the design followed in 1997. A rare double-header sees No. 6 *Blickling Hall* and No. 7 *Spitfire* on the approach to Aylsham station. JAMES KINDRED



Visiting from the Great Central Railway, WR Modified Hall 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* heads the 2.40pm Bishops Lydeard to Minehead service past Blue Anchor on April 20. The locomotive was booked to start in the line's May 3-6 Spring Steam Spectacular. DON BISHOP

Moorsline's engineering director back on TV

RETURNING for its second series, Channel 5's *The Big Steam Adventure* once again features John Sergeant, Peter Davison and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's director of mechanical engineering, Paul 'Piglet' Middleton, travelling the UK using only vehicles powered by steam.

After their epic trip from London to Scotland in 2023, in the new series, which started on May 3, the trio will explore the Lake District, The Highlands, Dorset and the Isle of Wight, getting around using only the power of steam. Viewers will see them ride in everything from luxury narrow gauge steam trains to steam vans with no seats.

Paul said: "It was great to be back with the team again for another series of laughs and steam adventures."

"Of course, there were trials and tribulations along the way, but that's all part of the fun. Learning the history of the machines we travelled on is always fascinating, and to see some stunning scenery at the same time is an added bonus."

→ To find out more about *The Big Steam Adventure*, visit www.nymr.co.uk/the-big-steam-adventure-series-two



North Yorkshire Moors Railway director of mechanical engineering, Paul 'Piglet' Middleton, with SRV 4-4-No. 926 *Repton*. NORTH EDGE/NYMR

Waverley is set to bring passengers to West Somerset

PADDLE steamer *Waverley* is to revisit Minehead – and offer passengers the chance to ride on the West Somerset Railway.

Waverley – which was built for the LNER, launched in October 1946 and entered service on June 16, 1947 – will call at Minehead on Sunday, June 2, Tuesday, June 4, and Thursday, June 20, with the two later dates giving the option of a ride on the heritage line. What is the world's last seagoing paddle

steamer, has been awarded the prestigious status of National Flagship of the Year by National Historic Ships UK. Throughout the season, *Waverley* will fly a special Flagship Pennant to denote this national status and receive an engraved brass plaque.

Waverley's sailings in the Bristol Channel last summer were so well received that nearly all were sold out in advance. The highlight of the 2024 season will be *Waverley's*

return to the River Dart in late August, where it will exchange whistles with paddle steamer *Kingswear Castle*, which is on long-term charter to the Dartmouth Steam Railway and River Boat Company, meaning the last two operational paddle steamers in the UK will meet for the first time in more than a decade.

Kingswear Castle celebrates its centenary this year and was previously Flagship winner in 2019.

Debut approaches for North Eastern clerestory

ON April 17, a shunt of the Stainmore Railway Company's Kirkby Stephen East site saw NER luggage third clerestory No. 818 emerge into the daylight.

Having undergone an extensive restoration by the railway's volunteers, with assistance from external contractors over the last five years, the carriage is due to be officially launched into service on May 26, with trains offering travel aboard No. 818 departing half-hourly.

As part of the day, workshop tours will also be on offer, with free admission to the site but a small charge for train rides.



NER luggage third clerestory No. 818
MARIO PAPWORTH/SRC

Comeback Hunslet Austerity for GCR debut

A J94-type Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST which has been under overhaul for more than 15 years is booked to make its Great Central Railway debut at a special event.

No. 3809 of 1954 (NCB No. 18) is to make its comeback during the May 29-June 2 Steam to Mountsorrel event, along with the line's Class 10 D4067, which is rarely used on passenger services.

The locomotive started its working life with the NCB in East Fife at Wellesley Colliery. In 1963 it was moved to the Dysart Central Workshops in Fife, where a new Giesl ejector chimney and blastpipe assembly were fitted, before it returned to Wellesley in 1964.

During 1966-68, it worked at Michael Colliery before going back to Wellesley again.

Saved

Withdrawn, in 1972 it ended up at Thomas Muir Scrap Merchants at Balbeggie in Fife, where it stayed until it was bought for heritage use in 1983.

Three years later, it was moved to Shipyard Services at Brightlingsea in Essex for an overhaul, before going to the North Norfolk Railway in 1988. There it ran in regular services and underwent two 10-yearly boiler overhauls.

In 2006 it was sold to the Weardale Railway, then two years later bought privately and moved to the GCR.

It is now owned by David Wright, director of Locomotive Maintenance Services in Loughborough, which has been working on its overhaul and that of A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*.

David is also a driver on the GCR.

Night Gala

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said that after being out of action for many years, No. 18 will make its debut at the Mountsorrel branch event, in which services will run from Rothley to Mountsorrel Bond Lane, calling at Nunckley Hill.

Another imminent steam event at the GCR is the Night Gala on June 1, featuring passenger, goods and parcels trains all night.

→ For details of special events, visit www.gcrailway.co.uk



Paralympian Fabienne André cuts the ribbon to launch the Bluebell's new wheelchair-accessible Pullman Car 54 into traffic...



...before making use of the newly-fitted wheelchair lift to board the train ahead of a trip to East Grinstead aboard the stunningly restored carriage.

Star athlete launches world's first-ever accessible Pullman

Words and pictures
by Owen Hayward

FINE dining services such as 'Golden Arrow' have offered a first class silver service experience that is highly sought after by many, and now the Bluebell Railway has opened up its own trains to a new demographic of customers – thanks to the completion and launch into service of its new accessible Pullman carriage.

Outshopped in 1923 as a third class kitchen car but rebuilt in 1937 as a brake vehicle, Car 54 has undergone an extensive eight-year restoration costing £600,000 that has seen it become wheelchair accessible thanks to an electric lift in the double doors of the luggage compartment, as well as widened internal doorways. It is believed that this is therefore the first accessible Pullman carriage of its type in the world.

Attention to detail

The overhaul involved a large number of in-depth jobs, including the lifting of the body off of the underframes to allow the latter to undergo vital repairs, including the replacement of both headstocks, gangways and buffers, with 300 hot rivets replaced across the structure. Work on the running gear also saw the wheels retired and horn guides

and springs replaced, along with the design and installation of new brake gear. An all-new steam heat system has also been fitted.

A team of the railway's carriage and wagon fitters have paid fine attention to detail, recreating missing parts of the interior as authentically as possible, to the extent where you can barely tell the difference between original and new. A small number of original components have been reused; while the majority of the external aluminium body sheets are new, there is one, which was fitted in the 1950s, that has survived.

Internally, much of the marquetry has survived, with in-house repairs undertaken that have involved rotten backing plywood being removed and the veneers then being fitted onto new wood, and while all seating has been retrimmed – a job that had been undertaken in-house – it uses moquette material that is a reproduction of an original Pullman Car Company design.

Part of the funding for the substantial work came thanks to a Department for Transport grant of £75,000 specifically for the adaptation of the vehicle to make it wheelchair accessible.

On April 24, a launch ceremony was held at Sheffield Park station with Surrey-based Paralympian Fabienne André, who has achieved

recent successes for Team GB at the European and World Championships and for Team England at the Commonwealth Games. She inspected first-hand the amazing work done to make the famous 'Golden Arrow' more accessible. Following a ceremonial ribbon-cutting, Fabienne then boarded Car 54 for a round trip of the line in style, including lunch.

Significant moment

Speaking at the ceremony, Fabienne said: "This really is something very special in more ways than one, but not least because it shows the Bluebell Railway's commitment to making its services accessible to all."

"I'd like to give my heartfelt thanks to those who have worked on this carriage to make it just that."

"For someone like me to now have the opportunity to be able to enjoy

an experience like this means the world to me."

Booking is already open, and the availability of wheelchair spaces has already seen high interest. A dedicated customer liaison has been allocated to ensure those booking have their individual needs met.

Meanwhile, the railway's next Pullman car to be overhauled will be brake parlour third Car 36, which was built in 1926 and arrived on the Bluebell from the Colne Valley in 2019.

Its condition is believed to be much better than that of Car 54 at the start of its own restoration.

The Bluebell's 'Golden Arrow' operates on select dates throughout the year with high demand for seats, meaning they can sell out fast.

→ To check availability and book places, visit www.bluebell-railway.co.uk/golden-arrow



Left: The extravagance of the interior is testament to the Bluebell Railway's carriage works team. You would be hard-pressed to tell what is original and what has been made new.

New Ruddington facilities get £40k grant boost via Levelling Up agenda

THE Great Central Railway (Nottingham) has received a £40,000 grant towards the provision of new toilets at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre by the end of the year. The grant, made by Rushcliffe Borough Council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is part of the Government's Levelling Up

agenda, will cover nearly two-thirds of the £65,000 cost of the new building at Ruddington, with an appeal launched to raise the remaining £25,000. The building will replace ageing temporary facilities and for the first time will offer accessible toilets, and shower and baby changing facilities.

GCR(N) spokesman Andy Fillingham said: "This is a major step forward. As we rebuild our roster of special events and reopen the railway, having decent, accessible toilets is essential."

"We are grateful for the grant funding and will be seeking out other potential funds too, but for now we have begun a public appeal for

£25,000 so we can get building as soon as possible and open the new toilets before Christmas 2024.

"We have already received donations, so thank-you to everyone helping us raise pounds so we can all spend a penny."

→ Donations towards the 'new loo' fund can be made at Inergctrust.org

Rheidol museum shuffle brings new exhibits into public eye for first time

IT only opened on March 23, along with the adjacent heritage line commencing its 2023 operating season, but the Vale of Rheidol Railway's museum collection at Aberystwyth has already had a reorganisation to change exhibits – some of which are being seen for the first time in more than four decades.

With Ffestiniog Railway George England 0-4-0STT No. 4 *Palmerston* and Welsh Highland Heritage Railway's Baldwin 4-6-0T No. 590 being transferred to the railway's workshops for assessment ahead of respective overhaul and repair works, five new vehicles have been moved into the museum, with some coming from the extensive collection of the late Peter Rampton, of which the VOR is custodian.

Representing international steam, Couillet 0-6-0T Sabero Railways No. 1 dates from 1895 and worked on the Hulleras de Sabero railway, an industrial system with two differing gauges. One was a two-mile metre gauge line that ran between Cisternia and a coal washing plant at Sabero, and the second was a 600mm gauge line between Sabero and Sotillos that served numerous mines. No. 1 was brought to the UK by Peter in 1969 and its entry into the museum is the first time it has been publicly seen since then.

Coupled to it is a four-wheel Hulleras de Sabero director's coach, a survivor of the same railway and built with verandas at each end of the vehicle and longitudinal seating inside.

Also breaking cover was Dick Kerr petrol electric locomotive No. 18 of 1918, one of a batch of locomotives built by order of the War Department for use on the Western Front during the First World War to transport munitions and supplies.

Upright exhibits

Two other exhibits have their origins slightly closer to home: 0-4-0VB locomotives *Pendyffryn* and *Redstone* have moved to Aberystwyth from the Brecon Mountain Railway. *Pendyffryn* was built by De Winton & Co of Caernarfon in 1897 for the Poen-yr-Orsedd slate quarry and was preserved in 1965. *Redstone*, however, was designed in 1903 by



Couillet 0-6-0T Sabero No. 1 has gone on public display for the first time in over 40 years after being brought to the UK by the late Peter Rampton in 1969. VOR



Built in 1903 as a 2ft gauge version of the De Winton locomotives, *Redstone* has moved to Aberystwyth from the Brecon Mountain Railway and is on display in the museum's glass entrance atrium. VOR

the owner of the Penmaenmawr granite quarry for use by his family on a private garden railway and built as a 2ft gauge example of the 3ft gauge De Winton locomotives. It was restored to operational condition in 2012.

All five vehicles form part of a unique collection in the former GWR locomotive shed museum. Entry is £5 adults and £3 children, or free for passengers with tickets for travelling on VOR services and is open every day that trains are operating.

Fresh scent for slam-door EMU in Isfield move

CLASS 421 3CIG EMU No. 1497 has relocated from the Spa Valley Railway to the Lavender Line at Isfield after nearly seven years based at and operating along the Kent and Sussex borders.

Originally resident at the Mid-Norfolk Railway, the former Lymington branch EMU moved to Tunbridge Wells West in July 2017 for what was originally a five-year deal between the two railways, with the unit being periodically used as locomotive-hauled stock with the Spa Valley's diesel locomotives, including occasional push-pull formation with suitably-fitted examples.

Last in service

No. 1497 was one of two that survived beyond the demise of slam-door stock on the national network, being utilised alongside classmate No. 1498 on the Lymington branch in Hampshire until May 22, 2010, when both were retired. No. 1498 was initially preserved at the Epping Ongar Railway in Essex but was sold and exported to Ireland in 2016 for a failed glamping venture.

No. 1497 commenced its transfer on April 30, joining the LR's two resident Class 205 'Thumpers'. Meanwhile, a motor coach from Class 207 unit No. 1302 arrived at the Spa Valley the same day as a strategic source of spares for the line's own unit, No. 1317.

Futures secured

Elsewhere, current Isfield resident Class 309, which is owned by the Clacton Express preservation group, was being prepared for a move from the line following a search for a new home.

The group was confident that the vehicles would not be scrapped, but pending a final agreement being signed, it could not confirm any further details as we went to press.

From driving to maintenance... plenty of roles on offer

The Fife Heritage Railway is to stage a recruitment event for volunteers at its Kirkland Sidings site in Leven on Saturday, May 18. One session will start at 10.30am

and a second at 1.30pm, each lasting about two hours. Roles available range from driving locomotives and maintenance to train guards, and also positions in

catering, the bookshop, museum and general duties. Anyone interested in attending should email fhmembership@gmail.com to book a place.



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T9 'Greyhound' to be overhauled for Swanage at Flour Mill again

By Robin Jones

FOLLOWING months of speculation, Swanage Railway's 563 Locomotive Group has confirmed it is to overhaul LSWR T9 'Greyhound' 4-4-0 No. 30120.

As highlighted in issue 312, the group returned 1893-built LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 to working order last October so it could haul a passenger train for the first time since 1945 following a six-year £650,000 project almost completely funded by donations from enthusiasts and the public.

The overhaul of the T9 will similarly be carried out in conjunction with Victorian locomotive restoration experts at Bill Parker's Flour Mill workshop at Bream, in the Forest of Dean.

Varied career

Built at Nine Elms during 1899, T9 No. 30120 spent its career after the Second World War hauling trains in Devon, Dorset, Hampshire and Surrey, before being withdrawn by BR at Eastleigh in Hampshire during October 1961.

Nicknamed 'Greyhounds' for their turn of speed on the main line, T9s operated on the Wareham to Swanage branch line from the 1920s through to the early 1960s – first on passenger trains from London and then later on freight trains to Corfe Castle and Swanage.

Nathan Au, chairman of the 563 Locomotive Group, said: "It is exciting to be embarking on our second ambitious challenge. The overhaul of the T9 is the natural follow-on project to the T3 in providing the Swanage Railway with another affordable locomotive with an impeccable Southern pedigree."



LSWR T9 4-4-0 No. 30120 heads a Swanage-bound service away from Corfe Castle in March 2014. ANDREW PM WRIGHT

"We are delighted to be able to support the NRM in its mission to ensure that selected steam locomotives from its National Collection are available for the public to enjoy in steam and hauling passenger trains," added Nathan, a volunteer driver who is also a director of the Swanage Railway's train operating company.

"The project to overhaul the T9 will start with an assessment of the locomotive to confirm what work is necessary, that the restoration work is viable and that there is the necessary financial support available before a commitment is made to the full overhaul."

"The hoped-for overhaul of No. 30120 will be shared between the Flour Mill and the Swanage

Railway's Herston engineering works in Swanage with the Flour Mill doing the boiler and tender and the Swanage Railway doing the chassis of the T9.

Fruitful partnership

"The Flour Mill successfully returned the T9 to steam in 2010 so its skilled staff are already familiar with the locomotive, while its involvement in No. 30120 builds on the successful relationship established with the restoration of the T3."

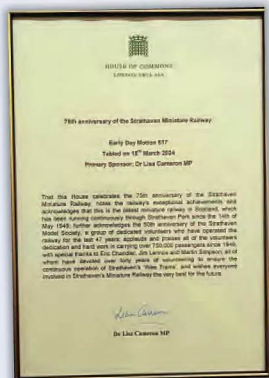
The T9 was taken by road from the Swanage Railway to the Flour Mill on April 19.

Bill said: "After finishing one LSWR locomotive, T3 No. 563, last year for the 563 Locomotive Group, we are delighted to be involved with the

restoration of another Victorian steam locomotive. Funded by the late and much-missed Swanage Railway Trust patron Alan Moore, we overhauled T9 No. 30120 some 15 years ago for the Bodmin & Wenford Railway, so it will be interesting to see what 10 years of hauling trains has done to the T9. No. 30120 is ideal for the Swanage Railway."

NRM railway partnerships manager Paddy McNulty said: "Following the success of the T3 restoration, we are pleased to be working with the Swanage Railway Trust on its plans for the T9. We look forward to enjoying the splendid sight and sound of both locomotives in steam in the future."

➔ To make a donation to the overhaul appeal, visit 563locomotivegroup.co.uk/project120



The framed copy of the Early Day Motion now has pride of place in the railway's clubhouse. SMR

Strathaven Miniature Railway on floor of the House of Commons for anniversary year acknowledgement!

By Hugh Dougherty

THE Strathaven Miniature Railway made it to the floor of the House of Commons on Monday, March 18, when Dr Lisa Cameron MP tabled an Early Day Motion congratulating the railway and its volunteers for attaining 75 years of service.

Dr Cameron later presented a framed copy of the historic motion to volunteers at the line on Easter Monday as a curtain-raiser to the commemoration of the running of the first train 75 years ago, on

May 14, 1949. There will be a re-enactment of the first train, hauled by the original locomotive, 2-6-0 *Margaret*, on Tuesday, May 14.

The motion also mentioned the 50th anniversary of Strathaven Model Society, whose volunteers run the 7¼in gauge railway, with special congratulations to Eric Chandler, Jim Lennox and Martin Simpson, each of whom have notched up more than 40 years of keeping the locally-known 'wee train' running round its 1000ft of track in Strathaven's public park.

Dr Cameron, MP for East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow, said: "I put down the motion to mark the exceptional achievement of all involved with keeping the SMR, Scotland's oldest miniature railway, running during the last 75 years, and I was delighted with the support it received at Westminster."

Railway secretary Ian Samson said: "We are very grateful to Dr Cameron for putting down this motion. It's wonderful as heritage railway volunteers to be recognised in this way, and an action like

Hopetown Darlington heading for July opening

THE £35 million Hopetown Darlington railway heritage centre is set to open in mid-July in time for the school summer holidays.

As highlighted in issue 313, the Northgate venue encompasses both purpose-built and heritage buildings, including North Road Station Museum (formerly the Head of Steam Darlington Railway Museum) into a major family attraction which is expected to bring more than 300,000 visitors each year.

Onsite partners include The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, which is already occupying the new custom-built Darlington Locomotive Works, and in which visitors can see staff and volunteers at work. The Darlington Railway Preservation Society and the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group have also moved into the newly-restored 1861 shed.

The museum will highlight the history of Stockton & Darlington

Railway through traditional and brand-new immersive interpretations, interacting with historic figures including George Stephenson and Joseph Pease. A new feature in the museum is Experiment!, an immersive time travel ride exploring Darlington's influence on railways around the world from 1825 and into the future.

Broad appeal

An ever-changing programme of exhibitions and events will be staged all year round in The Carriage Works, and the Stores will allow visitors to interact with items and objects relating to the S&DR and local railway heritage not on display in the museum.

The site will feature Wagon Woods, a railway-themed outdoor adventure playpark, based on the Brusselton Incline with walkways, bridges, slides, and a multi-level play structure.



The entrance to Darlington Hopetown railway heritage centre's main building is almost complete. DBC

Visitors will be able to arrive at North Road station by train.

Darlington Borough Council's head of heritage and culture, Mike Crawshaw, said that the museum was "on track" for a mid-July opening.

"It's a live station, and that's part of the beauty and appeal of the site, because you can sit and have a coffee and, as well as celebrating the history of the site, you've got the Bishop Line passing alongside parallel."

Council to persevere with plans to buy world rail history landmark

DARLINGTON Borough Council is to press ahead with plans to acquire a Georgian building linked to early railway history despite fears that it might not be able purchase all of it in time for next year's Stockton & Darlington bicentenary.

Edward Pease House, in Darlington's Northgate, was where George Stephenson met woollen manufacturer Edward Pease in its kitchen on April 19, 1821, and persuaded him to use steam locomotives for his proposed railway, rather than horses as was planned.

The house, which comprises four properties, is in a poor state of repair, with a succession of alterations having left it almost unrecognisable, but the council pencilled it in for a £3.5 million investment boost under the Government's Towns Fund programme, which would see



The plaque commemorating the inauguration of the Stockton & Darlington Railway at the top of Edward Pease House.

JOHN LUCAS/CREATIVE COMMONS



Right: Edward Pease House was where engineer George Stephenson met Edward Pease, the main promoter of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, in 1821. A plaque over the Best Kebab shop commemorates the event, but it is more likely that the meeting took place in the property next door, Cuisine Marmaris. The pair were friends until Stephenson died in 1848. Pease died in 1858. JOHN LUCAS/CREATIVE COMMONS

it preserved and converted into a multi-use space.

However, so far the council has managed to acquire only one of the four properties.

A council spokesman said: "Celebrating our rich heritage is

a key part of our long-term Town Centre Plan and Edward Pease House is part of the Darlington Towns Fund programme. The council has acquired one property and, while it remains a long-held ambition to progress the full scheme, we have

been unable at this stage to acquire the remaining ones. The Towns Fund board, with Government approval, intends to develop the one property the council owns to showcase part of this heritage asset utilising the allocated budget."

Right: Dr Lisa Cameron MP presents a framed copy of the Early Day Motion to Strathaven Miniature Railway volunteers at Strathaven on Easter Monday. Long-service volunteers Jim Chandler (left) and Martin Simpson (right) are beside Dr Cameron. SMR

this gives not just the SMR, but the whole movement, official recognition at the highest levels of government.

"It's a wonderful curtain-raiser for our 75th anniversary celebrations on May 14, when miniature steam locomotives from clubs all over Scotland will be joining us to mark the event in style."



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Above: The two Pacers at the Midland Railway – Butterley were targeted by vandals on April 21. MR-B

Right: A window on a Class 108 DMU vehicle was smashed as trespassers gained entry on April 9. MR-B



Arsonists, thieves and vandals target heritage lines

By Robin Jones
and Owen Hayward

SECURITY is being stepped up at heritage venues after three railways were subjected to criminal attacks in early spring.

An arson attack badly damaged a Mk.1 BSK coach used for storage purposes at the Rushden, Higham & Wellingborough Railway at about 6pm on April 17.

Based at the Midland Railway's Rushden station, the short line forms part of the Rushden Transport Museum that homes a collection of vehicles, including a Class 121 'bubblecar' and a pair of Class 142 pacer units. A statement issued by the Rushden Historical Transport

Society, the museum's supporting charity, said: "Members of the public called the emergency services and by 8pm the fire was extinguished.

"After liaison with the trustees, the police and fire brigade remained on site overnight and into the morning to ensure the site was safe and to undertake an investigation into the cause of the fire.

"It is regrettably understood that the fire was started deliberately, and the police have issued a request for anybody to contact them with information and footage from the area around the time of the incident to assist with their investigation.

"Thankfully, no injuries were reported, but the carriage itself is beyond salvage.

"The trustees of Rushden Historical Transport Society would like to thank the efforts of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and of Northamptonshire Police for their work and their assistance in making the site safe."

→ Anybody with information regarding this incident should call 101, quoting reference number 24000224460.

Pacers covered with graffiti

Elsewhere, Midland Railway – Butterley volunteers were left disheartened when the site was targeted twice within the space of just two weeks and substantial damage caused to items of rolling stock.

On April 9 the railway received notification that a group of individuals had gained entry to a Class 108 DMU by smashing a window and climbing in with the aid of a ladder, letting off a fire extinguisher. Derbyshire Police and railway officials arrived at the scene and discovered five teenagers aboard the DMU, who had additionally been sharing video footage of their activities on messaging app SnapChat. A 15-year-old was invited by police to attend a voluntary interview at a later date, said a force statement.

On the morning of April 21, volunteers arrived to discover that overnight further trespassers had covered the railway's Class 141 and 142 'Pacer' units on one side with graffiti, causing about £5000 worth of damage. The volunteers worked throughout the day to remove the graffiti before it damaged the paintwork any further.

The volunteers have reviewed CCTV footage taken at the time of

these incidents, during which it was additionally discovered that an alarming number of people were seen using the track as a walking route.

This led to a statement being issued that said: "We are saddened to report this and it is not acceptable. There is absolutely no reason to visit our railway, or any other heritage railway, out of hours.

"This has been extremely distressing for volunteers who are having to help clean up the mess. These vehicles have all had countless hours of restoration and maintenance to keep them in operational condition for visitors to enjoy when visiting Midland Railway – Butterley.

"The response to our recent vandalism has been incredible. We have had quite a large number of messages and requests regarding donations towards repairs.

"Vandalising heritage railways is not okay, and we all stand together against it."

Railwayana and signs stolen from Severn Valley

Thieves took a range of rare railway lamps and other items of railwayana from the Severn Valley Railway's smallest station at Eardington on April 15.

Stationmaster Steve Downs discovered the attack and raised the alarm. The intruders had forced the door of the tiny station's lamp room, and Steve immediately spotted that items were missing.

The full extent of the thefts only became apparent the next day when volunteers carried out an inspection in daylight.

"Up to a dozen lamps have gone," said volunteer lampman Phil Harris,



Eardington's lampman, Phil Harris, in the ransacked workshop. LESLEY CARR/SVR



A Mk.1 BSK was set alight by arsonists at Rushden Transport Museum on April 17, completely destroying the vehicle beyond salvage. DALE WEST/RHTS



This oil-fired station platform lamp was taken. SVR



An advertising sign stolen from Eardington station. SVR

who has been repairing and restoring lamps at Eardington for the past 10 years.

"Then there's the cast iron door sign, some polished brass oil cans, a milk churn and an enamelled advertising sign."

For Phil, personally, the worst loss of all was the theft of his toolbox.

"This had something like 20 years' worth of accumulated spare parts and special tools that I'll find very difficult to replace. Whoever took this has no concept of the upset this has caused the team here at Eardington.

"We've lavished so much care and attention on this, and to have somebody come and do this – well, it's shocking. I wish I could speak to the culprit, because what is just a lamp to them is a great deal more to our heritage railway. This is history, something we can demonstrate and show to visitors, it adds value to the railway, and at a stroke, you've destroyed it. Plus, by taking my toolbox, you've taken away my ability to carry on my job."

Steve Downs said: "We have informed the police and are widely circulating photographs and details of the lamps. Though these lamps are rare, they are probably not worth a huge amount, and they represent a great deal of emotional value to us at Eardington. We are heartbroken that this has happened."

The Eardington break-in follows the theft a few days earlier of cast iron signage from outside nearby Hampton Loade station.

→ Anyone with information that could lead to the recovery of any of these items is urged to contact West Mercia police, or contact Steve directly at steve.downs@svrlive.com



About to return to the task they were built for 108 years ago during the First World War, transporting materials across muddy, rain-soaked ground, trench railway wagons restored by the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway Historic Vehicles Trust will take construction materials to the site of the new station. DAVE ENEFER/LCLR

Football specials ruled offside in high winds

By Robin Jones

LINCOLNSHIRE Coast Light Railway officials blew the whistle on a series of football and rugby specials due to safety grounds.

The specials, a first for the 2ft gauge line, were timetabled to run during April and May to convey matchgoers to both the ESF 2024 Youth Football Festival and the Rhinos Challenge Rugby League Festival, which saw thousands of supporters, and players and their families, descend on Skegness.

The games were played in the Skegness Water Leisure Park grounds, which sit adjacent to the railway's Walls Lane station. To cater for the influx of visitors, the specials were timetabled for April 20/21, May 4/5, 11/12, and 18/19, with heritage diesel locomotives hauling ex-War Department and Ashover Light Railway passenger carriages.

However, a problem arose on the first weekend when young children kicked footballs over the fence which divides the playing area from the railway and then climbed over the fence to retrieve them by walking on to the track – while trains were running.

A LCLR spokesman said: "The problem was exacerbated by the very strong winds blowing at the time, which were picking up balls from children's kickabouts (not from the tournament matches themselves, which were well-organised, supervised and supported) – they weren't doing this deliberately.

"I spoke to a number of parents about my concerns and the necessity on safety grounds of keeping

children away from railway lines (of any gauge) and they – and the children – were understanding

"However, train crews continued to report their concerns and so after consultation with the operating company and the owner of Skegness Water Leisure Park, it was agreed that no further services could be operated in connection with the tournament on safety grounds.

"All of us involved with the LCLR are sorry for any inconvenience caused to people planning to travel on the services, but we hope it will be understood that safety must always be our priority."

Meanwhile, the railway is also due to commence construction of a new station and interpretation centre at its south loop terminus

thanks to a £24,250 grant from the UK Government's Levelling up programme, with match-funding of £8000 from leisure park owner Ellis Bros Ltd.

With record rainfall over the winter months making it impossible to carry construction materials to the site, the railway will operate regular freight trains to convey the deliveries, harking back to the origins of part of the collection which was constructed to aid transportation of soldiers, weapons and supplies across otherwise impassable muddy quagmires on the battlefields of France during the First World War.

→ The advertised LCLR services will resume on Sunday, May 26, when it is hoped that Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1008 of 1903 *Jurassic* will be in steam.



Motor-Rail Simplex 4wDM Major J.A. Robins R.E. on April 20 with the Heritage Railway Association award-winning former Nocton Estates Railway carriage Queen Mary at Walls Lane station. The football pitches, with the games being played, are in the background. CHRIS BATES/LCLR

Poppy Line commemorates route closure 60 years on

By Robin Jones

THE North Norfolk Railway's event to commemorate 60 years since the surviving Sheringham to Melton Constable section of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway was closed by BR proved a success.

More than 1000 visitors travelled during the 60th Anniversary of Closure weekend on April 6/7, when a special timetable was introduced to recreate services as they would have been before the closure.

GWR 2-8-0T No. 4277 *Hercules*, visiting from the Dartmouth Steam Railway, lined up alongside home fleet members GER Y14 0-6-0 No. 564 hauling the Quad Art set, Class 31 D5631, and a DMU comprising the line's newly-restored Class 104 set and the Class 101.

Regular passengers and staff were just like their counterparts throughout the UK during the Beeching era, disappointed at the closure of the line on April 6, 1964, and an unofficial headboard was created and carried on the front of several trains that ran on the final day. During the gala, a similar reproduction headboard was carried by the DMU.

The majority of the M&GNJR closed in 1959, with the section in Norfolk surviving after the introduction of diesels, but the line was axed when passenger numbers fell.

The Poppy Line's next big event is Rails and Ales on June 7-9, which will feature at least eight steam and diesel locomotives, including double-headings and express workings.

Visitors will include Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer*, courtesy of Hanson & Hall, Class 33 No. 33012 *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* from the 71A Locomotive Group at Swanage, and the London Underground 4TC set.

Meanwhile, the railway has reported incidents of dangerous behaviour at its Sweet Briar Lane level crossing, near Sheringham Golf Course, and has reminded walkers, cyclists and motorists to stop when the warning lights show. New signage to reinforce the safety message has now been installed.



GER Y14 0-6-0 No. 564 passes through Kelling Heath on April 7.
ALEX HARVEY-JONES/NNR



GWR 2-8-0T No. 4277 *Hercules* heads the 10am from Sheringham through Kelling Cutting on April 7.
DAVID CHANDLER/NNR



Left: As reported last issue, Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3844 of 1956 NCB No. 22 from the Appleby Frodingham Railway at Scunthorpe will be on loan to the North Norfolk Railway for the whole of the season. It is seen approaching Weybourne on March 27.
STEVE ALLEN/NNR

Right: Carrying the reproduction headboard, the DMU set passes Sheringham Golf Course on April 7.
DAVID CHANDLER/NNR



Adventure-filled month is in store for visitors as Spa Valley enters its jam-packed 2024 summer season

By Geoff Courtney
and Owen Hayward

AS daylight hours increase and the weather entices people outdoors, the Spa Valley Railway is gearing itself up for a busy June which will see a programme of special trains running on three weekends of the month.

The first is the 'Superhero Express' on June 1/2, which will feature Radtastic Man, the eponymous hero whose clumsiness has led to him losing all his powers. The fun will begin at Tunbridge Wells West station, where the hero has lost his powers. There, passengers will board the train for a five-mile journey to the national network station of Eridge, during which the hero will distribute activity packs.

On arrival at Eridge, passengers will witness Radtastic Man battle with his arch nemesis, and then it will back to Tunbridge Wells as the hero hands out treats along the way. Tickets are £15 for adults and £8 for children, and trains will depart Tunbridge Wells for Eridge at 10.15am, 12.55pm and 3.35pm.

Things will get scarier on June 15/16 when the railway will travel back millions of years in time to when dinosaurs roamed the earth – including perhaps at Tunbridge Wells. A variety of the animals large and small will appear on both days between 10am and 4.30pm and, accompanied by rangers, will interact with visitors at Tunbridge Wells and on the trains, which will be steam (probably on-loan ex-Caledonian Railway 812 class 0-6-0 No. 828) and diesel-hauled.



Scottish visitor: The Spa Valley Railway platform at the national network station of Eridge is a hive of activity as No. 828 waits for its five-mile return to Tunbridge Wells West on April 20. The 1899-built 0-6-0, formerly BR No. 57566 but now in its original Caledonian Railway livery, is on loan from the Strathspey Railway and as an essential part of the Spa Valley's operating fleet is set to be a mainstay of a series of special trains in June. CAROLINE EDMUNDS

Departures from Tunbridge Wells are at 10.15am, 11.30am, 12.55pm, 2.10pm and 3.35pm, and en route to Eridge will call at the intermediate stations of High Rocks Halt and Groombridge. Tickets are £18 for adults and £11 for children.

Magic and mayhem

On the final weekend of June 29/30, siblings Hansel and Gretel will be the stars of a comedy, magic and mayhem performance as they battle to escape the wicked witch. As with the 'Superhero Express' and the dinosaurs' appearance, the activities will start at Tunbridge Wells West station and continue on the trains to Eridge, where passengers will watch as Gretel outsmarts the witch and is reunited

with her brother. Tickets prices are similar to those for the 'Superhero Express', as are the train times.

Spa Valley commercial manager Jonnie Pay said the three-part programme of specials would be an enjoyable launch to the railway's summer season: "The fun-packed month will begin with passengers helping Radtastic Man get his powers back, while youngsters of all ages are fascinated by dinosaurs, and many adults too, and we anticipate those two days may well be the highlight of our June activities.

"Hansel and Gretel, though, is a fairytale enjoyed by generations of children since it was first published more than 200 years ago, and that's bound to be a favourite. It will be a

real family month that everyone at the Spa Valley Railway is enormously looking forward to."

The weekend of July 12-14 will also see the railway welcome GWR 2-6-2T No. 4144 for its Summer Steam Gala. The Large Prairie will be visiting courtesy of Didcot Railway Centre and is set to appear alongside No. 828, which is on long-term loan from the Strathspey Railway, and Southern Locomotive Limited's Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34072 257 Squadron before that heads out on hire itself.

It is hoped that, subject to completion of overhaul and testing, fellow BoB 4-6-2 No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* will also be in service, hauling trains through the High Weald.

Diesel gala comeback a roaring success for KESR anniversary year

KENT & East Sussex Railway general manager Robin Coombes hailed the railway's first diesel gala in nearly 15 years as a "phenomenal success," with enthusiasts flocking to witness a star line-up of locomotives on the light railway route.

Held on April 12-14, the first major event of the KESR's 50th anniversary year saw enthusiasts fill platforms and lineside locations and attracted about 1100 passengers, a figure that far outstripped expectation. Catering and shop sales also saw takings booms.

Six locomotives were in action, with the Heavy Tractor Group's Class 37 No. 37714 *Cardiff Canton* visiting from the Great Central Railway and Diesel Traction Group's Severn Valley Railway-based Class 17 D8568 topping the billing. Resident Class 03 0-6-0DM (D2023), Class 14 0-6-0DH D9504 (working its first public trains in

four years following a comprehensive overhaul), and long-term loanee Class 20 No. 20087 also ran passenger services alongside the guest locomotives, while Ruston & Hornsby 0-4-0 works No. 423661 ran 'driver for a tinner' trips at Tenterden Town. Saturday morning saw a cavalcade of the five ex-main line locomotives run from Rolvenden to Tenterden, with an evening triple-header featuring Classes 17, 20 and 37, which additionally had the 'Teddy Bear' assisting from the rear.

On April 15/16, the two visiting locomotives were used for a limited number of 90-minute driver experiences that allowed enthusiasts a chance to take the handle of these iconic machines, including a chance to tackle the steep Tenterden bank.

Robin said: "As the dust settles on what was undoubtedly a phenomenal weekend, I find myself reflecting



Powerhouse trio: The evening triple-header on April 13 saw D8568, 20087 and 37714 put on a show as they tackled Tenterden Bank. ROBIN COOMBES/KESR

on the monumental success that you have made possible. The event was not just a showcase of our railway and the majestic power of diesel locomotion; it was a vibrant celebration of our collective spirit, dedication, and passion for railway heritage. So many people have

assisted and helped with the running of the event, and I would like to thank everyone involved. This event was a reaffirmation: the KESR is not just about trains; it's about people. It's about each volunteer, visitor, and enthusiast who believes in the magic of rail."

Victory for the UK as veteran aircraft outpaces steam in rail gala

By Geoff Courtney

THE age-old sporting rivalry between the UK and Australia was at the heart of a steam gala Down Under on the weekend of April 13/14 – and victory went to Britain. It was the Great Train Race, a highlight for thousands of visitors to the Hunter Valley Steamfest in Maitland, New South Wales, north of Sydney.

The race on April 14 featured UK-built Beyer-Garratt No. 6029 and NSW Government Railways C35 class 4-6-0 No. 3526 running alongside each other on a 22-mile route between Newcastle and Maitland with trains full of enthusiasts and families, but with a twist – above also in the race was a veteran de Havilland Tiger Moth biplane, and it was this example of aeronautical history that brought home the spoils for Britain.

Victorious

In an event that attracted national media attention, No. 6029 was the early leader, but No. 3526 eventually overtook the Garratt, only for the 4-6-0 to lose out to the biplane, piloted by members of the Royal Newcastle Aero Club.

No. 6029, which like No. 3526 is part of the Transport Heritage NSW fleet, was built for NSW Government Railways by Beyer Peacock at Manchester in 1953 and withdrawn in 1972 with 620,000 miles on the clock and saved for preservation by the National Museum of Australia. At

The end is nigh: Beyer-Garratt No. 6029 and Class C35 No. 3526 are neck and neck as they approach East Maitland station, three miles from the finish of the Newcastle-Maitland Great Train Race on April 14, but of out of shot above is a venerable de Havilland biplane that beat them both to the chequered flag. MICHAEL KEMP



264 tons, 109 feet long and boasting a tractive effort of 63,016lb-ft, the 32-wheeled giant is the largest operating steam locomotive in the southern hemisphere and attracts enormous attention and awe whenever it appears in public.

Although of rather more modest proportions, No. 3526, which was built at NSWGR's workshops in the Sydney suburb of Eveleigh in 1917, is also a popular member of the steam preservation scene in its home country, and doubtless many of

Steamfest's visitors would have been rooting for it in the race.

Thousands of visitors

Other attractions at the two-day event were steam, heritage diesel, railmotor and railcar shuttles, most of which were sold out, and displays of portable steam engines, steam trucks, traction engines, historical military equipment, and diesel farming and earth-moving machinery. Old-time crafts and steampunk also featured in a gala that attracted thousands of

visitors in addition to photographers and linesiders over almost the entire route of the race.

Speaking from his Sydney office, David Bennett, THNSW head of engagement, told *Heritage Railway*: "It was a very successful and smooth operation with sold-out train rides, including those in the race, and there was much interest within the media."

"Congratulations to the Aero Club for its win, and we look forward to securing victory when the race is run again next year."

Alycidon gala visits will take Deltic back to its preservation origins

CLASS 55 Deltic No. 55009 *Alycidon*, currently running as No. 55013 *The Black Watch*, will be stealing the show at two heritage lines following its recent gala visit to the Great Central Railway (see feature, pages 94-95).

The Deltic was scheduled to operate driver experience courses on selected days in May at the Nene Valley Railway, before starring in a Giants of the East Coast gala weekend on May 25-27, when it will operate alongside visiting A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*, with the pair double-heading one service together each day over the bank holiday weekend. The Deltic will then travel north and will be one of three guests to appear in the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's June 14-16 diesel gala.

The locomotive was originally introduced to traffic in 1961 and named *Alycidon*, maintaining the 'racehorse' tradition of the LNER by commemorating the winner of the 1949 Ascot Gold Cup. The locomotive ended BR service in 1982, and after being purchased by the Deltic Preservation Society, underwent a major overhaul and visited the NYMR for the first time the same year, meaning its visit to the Moorsline will be something of a homecoming for the iconic locomotive.

The other guests will be Class 45 No. 45108 and Class 14 D9537 *Eric*, both from the East Lancashire Railway, running alongside the home fleet including Class 37 No. 37264 and Class 25 D7628



Deltic No. 55009 *Alycidon* will be back at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway this summer where its preservation career started, and where it is seen at Eller Beck in June 1983. JOHN HUNT/NYMR

Sybilla. It is planned that *Alycidon* will then remain on the railway for several more weeks and operate on a select on number of additional days to be announced nearer to the time.

→ For more information and to book tickets for the NVR services, visit <https://nvr.org.uk/product.php/492/east-coast-giants>. NYMR tickets can be obtained via www.nymr.co.uk/ diesel-gala

Ecclesbourne receives anonymous £10k gift to complete landslip repairs

AN anonymous benefactor has ensured that the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway has met its £30,000 appeal target for essential work to tackle the landslip which has blocked the line at Duffield.

The slippage followed embankment damage that began in April 2023, but was exacerbated by Storm Babet in October.

Through no fault of the railway, it found itself in the position where the main line interchange at Duffield was cut off.

A team of engineers at the railway drew up plans to realign the track away from the landslide by moving it onto the unused side of the formation, allowing trains to run into Duffield station again. However, a new trackbed to accommodate the line must be constructed, hence the appeal.

EVR chairman Neil Ferguson-Lee said: "To our amazement and delight,

an anonymous benefactor has donated the final £10,000 through a charitable trust.

"As you can imagine, we are quite amazed by this good news and means that we are fully funded to slew the track past the landslip at Duffield.

"In the meantime, progress is accelerating. The west side of the formation has been levelled and the drainage ditch re-routed. Forty tonnes of gravel will be used to bed-in the piping that is to be lowered into the ditch and once done, Terram geotextile will be placed over the new part of the formation, then a first layer of ballast and then the slew can commence."

It was estimated that the landslip cost the railway up to £40,000 in lost revenue, with passengers arriving via the main line at Duffield station not being able to board trains to Wirksworth.



Above: A steam-hauled freight delivers pipework to the landslip site. EVR



Left: Progress being made on the landslip site before Duffield station. EVR

New light is shed on mystery of LNER wagon buried in Antwerp

By Geoff Courtney

FURTHER light has been shed on the mystery of the LNER wagon unearthed by archaeologists in Antwerp, although it is still unknown how and why it ended up in the Belgian city, and why it was buried rather than returned to the UK.

As reported in last month's issue, the remains of the wooden removal wagon, which is believed to be nearly 100 years old, were discovered buried beneath the future route of a ring road currently under construction. It is now understood that it was unearthed under the wall of an old fortress during excavation by archaeologists who were working in the area in collaboration with the road's construction personnel.

Upon close examination, the only identifiable features are LNER lettering and inscriptions that include 'Furniture removal to house,' 'enquire at any station' and 'BK769'.

New research by the modern-day train operating company LNER has now established that the wagon, which is in maroon livery, was the first model for furniture removal that was briefly in service in about 1930, with 'B' indicating the truck's size and 'K' its use for furniture. A much more common model was a blue



Wagon mystery: Archaeologists reveal an LNER wagon that has been buried beneath an old citadel in the Belgian city of Antwerp for nearly 100 years. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE, CITY OF ANTWERP

edition which was used widely, and which made the discovery of this earlier version rarer and more unique. "This curious find has certainly generated lots of interest," said Stuart Thomas, communications director of the LNER.

"We are delighted the team from the Antwerp urban archaeology department has helped shed more light on the discovery and would like to thank them."

Consultant archaeologist Femke Martens said: "It is a mystery how this wooden removals truck came to be in Antwerp, and unfortunately there's very little left as it disintegrated while being excavated."

Southern Six group plans for ways ahead in troubled times

MEMBERS of the Southern Six group of heritage lines met at the Mid-Hants Railway on April 10 to continue their collaborative approach to heritage rail management.

Representatives of the railways that formed the Southern Railway Company meet regularly to share ideas and challenges and to provide support as the heritage sector finds a path through the cost-of-living crisis.

Everything from motive power to marketing and standards to Santa trains was discussed by the group to share best practices, generate ideas, and minimise cost and duplication. Mid-Hants CEO Rebecca

Dalley said: "The Southern Six was a lifeline for me when I started.

To be so welcomed and discover such openness and honesty in the face of adversity across the sector was remarkable.

"I was delighted to be able to host our colleagues this time, and the opportunity to share the problems and successes of our railways enriches and enthuses us all."

The Southern Six is an informal group of the Mid-Hants, Bluebell, Kent & East Sussex, Isle of Wight, Swanage and Spa Valley railways, which were part of the Southern Railway network.



Representatives of the Southern Six at Ropley on the Mid-Hants Railway visit on April 10. From left to right are Neil Glaskin, (Bluebell); Robert Patterson (Swanage); Rebecca Dalley (Mid-Hants); Lisa Boyle (Bluebell) and Robin Coombes (Kent & East Sussex). MHR

Back with a bang: Llangollen gala exceeds all expectations

Words and pictures
by Owen Hayward

GALAS are usually approached with some trepidation, particularly in the current economic climate, but for the Llangollen Railway, the added fact that the April 12-14 branch line weekend would be its first large scale gala since recovering from the administration of the plc in 2021 also meant that it would be monitoring the outcome very closely. However, it became obvious almost immediately that any concerns were easily overcome when visitors flocked to Denbighshire, proving the case for the return of gala events to the line.

Since the line was acquired by the LR Trust after the administration of the previous plc, the railway has focused on becoming both financially stable and viable to secure its long-term survival. Although small-scale diesel galas have since been run, only a maximum of two steam locomotives have steamed simultaneously, either for testing purposes or as part of the opening of the new station at Corwen (as reported in issue 308). That has partly been due to that the railway's resident locomotives – GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7754 and GWR 2-8-0 No. 3802 – have both been undergoing overhauls of different degrees, with



Hudswell Clarke Austerity No. 68067, making its final appearance before its hire to the railway ended, leads Class 26 No. 5310 through the site of the former Deeside Halt. The loop here was removed to supply rails for vital track relaying work elsewhere, with the decaying platform also demolished. There are no immediate plans to reinstate either of these, and although it has not been entirely ruled out, more pressing projects must be completed first and sufficient funding available before this can be considered.

that for the pannier having taken almost two decades to complete, while the 2884 class heavy goods locomotive has seen the bottom end completely refurbished.

With the return to service of both locomotives resulting in the hire of Hudswell Clarke Austerity w0-6-0ST No. 1752 of 1943 *Robert* (currently masquerading as J94 No. 68067) coming to an end, the opportunity was seized to stage a gala weekend that saw five locomotives in use, with

the trio joined by resident Kitson 0-6-0ST No. 5459 *Austin No. 1* (which had also just returned to service following axlebox repairs) and Class 26 No. 5310 for the most intensive timetable the railway has run for many years.

Constant action

The Austerity and Class 26 were tasked with working shuttles between Corwen and Glyndyfrdwy, while Nos. 7754 and 3802 took charge of

all line services starting Llangollen; these were further supported by a DMU service that primarily shuttled between here and Glyndyfrdwy with one full round trip of the line each day, the open ends allowing for panoramic views of the stunning Dee Valley scenery.

Meanwhile, *Austin No. 1* ran short trips between Llangollen and Goods Junction with a short train comprising a Toad brake van and LNER 'Sunshine' coach, the result being that there was almost always something on the move (or if there wasn't, you wouldn't have long to wait).

Volunteer gala organiser Matthew Davies said: "Over the winter, our staff and volunteers have been working flat-out to get the railway ready for 2024. We wanted to kick the season off in fine style with the biggest event since before the pandemic."

Initial concerns about how well-attended the three-day gala would be was quickly relieved when advance ticket sales topped £20,000 in the days leading up to it.

Trust manager Tom Taylor said that advance sales typically account for less than half of ticket sales overall, adding that: "By the end of Friday, the event had covered its costs, meaning anything else thereafter was almost pure profit."

Such was the level of success that it has been proposed this weekend of April (which currently has little competition and comes before a succession of galas at other lines) could become an annual fixture in the LR's events calendar, with a steam gala also having been mooted for the weekend of September 6/7, 2025.

With 2025 not only being the 200th anniversary of rail travel, but also both the 60th anniversary of the closure of



Nos. 7754 and 3802 commence the steep climb out of Llangollen station with the morning's eight-coach express to Corwen on April 14. NIGEL VALENTINE



Newly-overhauled Pannier No. 7754 departs from Carrog on April 13 with a short set of Suburban stock bound for Corwen.



Class 26 No. 5310 passes Fisherman's Crossing on April 14 with a shuttle from Glyndyfrdwy, bound for Corwen.

the LR route to passengers by British Railways and the 50th anniversary of the first trains at Llangollen station following reopening by preservationists, events next year have the potential to be something very special indeed.

Healthy turnout

"We were blown away by the response to this event," Tom added. "Many of our trains went out full, which is not something we have seen for a long time. "Over the three days, we saw roughly 1500 people buy tickets to travel, and the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive, which

is both a confidence boost in our ability to run gala style events, as well as a morale boost for all those who have put in vast amounts of effort to rebuild the railway back to a successful operation. The event made a profit of roughly £20,000, which commercially we are very pleased with.

"Our steam department volunteers should be proud of their work on both Nos. 7754 and 3802, which gives the railway a home steam fleet capable of managing our services for the first time in several years, and we are indebted to Roger Hibbert for the loan of the Austerity, which has seen us through the last few years too."



Back in action following a comprehensive mechanical overhaul, No. 3802 heads away from Berwyn overlooking the River Dee and the valley below.



Kitson 0-6-0ST No. 5459 of 1932 Austin No. 1 departs Goods Junction on April 13 with LNER pigeon van No. 6854 and a Toad brake van.

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR



On April 12 the WR pairing of 5700 class 0-6-0PT No. 7754 and 2884 class 2-8-0 No. 3802 approach Corwen with an eight-coach service during the Llangollen Railway's branch line weekend. OWEN HAYWARD

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Great Central launches £500k appeal for urban viaduct link

By Robin Jones

THE Great Central Railway has launched a new £500,000 appeal for funds to help in complete the 'missing link' to its northern neighbour, the Great Central Railway (Nottingham), as it prepares to imminently submit a planning application for the proposed urban viaduct section of its reunification scheme.

In the wake of the successful groundbreaking gala held jointly by the GCR and the GCR(N) on March 16/17 to mark the 125th anniversary of the opening of the London Extension, as featured last issue, a new image of the proposed viaduct linking the heritage line has been released.

To the future

The project will create an 18-mile heritage line stretching from the north of Leicester to the south of Nottingham, centred on Loughborough, and linked to the national network.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "We'll be submitting our planning application in a matter of weeks, so we want to tell people about our plans. The new image shows a train running on the proposed viaduct.

"Originally, we had expected to build an embankment about 300m long, but the space we have

available would have made that quite complex. Our new plan needs 100ms of embankment, then 200m of viaduct. It should be slightly cheaper and simpler to construct."

This proposed link section will also include two steel bridge spans: one to carry the railway across a culvert and the other to take it over Railway Terrace in Loughborough. The full designs will be included in the planning application, along with the necessary reports.

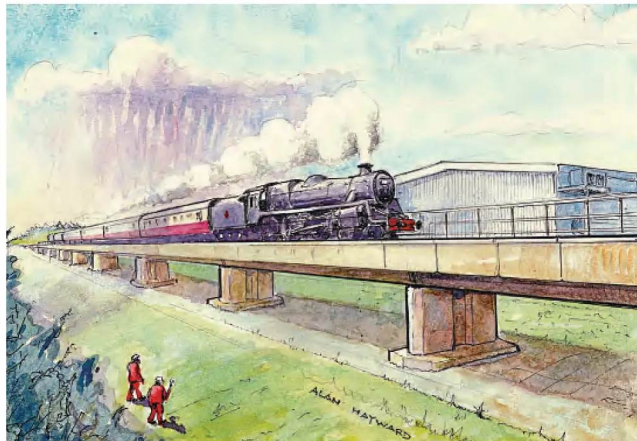
"After we have submitted our planning application, we will need to spend about £500,000 taking the design documents and turning them into construction and engineering blueprints. Those documents are essential – as is planning consent – before we can build again.

"While we have £2 million already raised for the project, we want to protect as much of that fund as possible for actual building work.

"Our new appeal for £500,000 is to fund the vital next steps and get this epic project 'shovel ready'. The more money we raise, the sooner we can build again and the more we can achieve."

Following the closure of the GCR main line by BR in the 1960s, about 500m of track between what became the two heritage lines was restored.

Restoring the missing section has been underway since 2017. A new bridge has been built over the Midland Main Line, another replaced,



A visualisation of the Great Central Railway's proposed urban viaduct section running north from Loughborough. ALAN HAYWARD

and a third completely refurbished. Supported by local, national and international well-wishers, millions of pounds have been raised to fund the work.

New structures

The GCR has also confirmed the two bridge decks secured for the scheme in 2012 are no longer needed.

Malcolm said: "The bridge decks were kindly donated by Network Rail when they were removed from Reading station.

"They were absolutely instrumental in getting the whole reunification project started. However, with our

design changes, they would require expensive modification to fit with our plans, so with regret we have decided they will be disposed of in due course.

"Instead, the two steel bridge spans required for the reunification line are more than likely to be brand-new structures."

→ Donations to the new appeal can be made online at gcrailway.co.uk/unify or via post with a cheque made payable to 'David Clarke Railway Trust' marked 'Reunification' on the back. Cheques can be sent to: Lovatt House, 3 Wharncliffe Road, Loughborough, Leics LE11 1SL.

Nine in steam for Colne Valley big May miniature gala event

NINE locomotives are due to be in steam for the Colne Valley Miniature Railway gala on May 18/19.

The 7¼in gauge line, part of the Colne Valley Railway at Castle Hedingham, is hosting guest engines for the event; one, a Holmside locomotive, is attending on the Sunday only, and a 5in gauge railway will also be visiting.

The 45163 Restoration Group will be offering guided tours of the shed housing its ex-Barry scrapyards LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0, and visitors will also be able to view progress on neighbouring classmate No. 45293, being restored from Barry condition by the British Enginemen Steam Preservation Society.

Trains will run on the CVR's standard gauge line, signalbox visits will be available, and the model railway will be in operation.

→ For more details, contact the CVR on 01787 461174, visit www.colnevalleyrailway.co.uk or www.facebook.com/CVMRAILWAY

Right: Andrew Barclay 0-6-0ST Works No. 2138 *Swordfish*, visiting from the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, and the 5in gauge miniature railway on the platform at Castle Hedingham during last year's event held on May 14. TOBY JENNINGS



Dame Vera Lynn oil conversion to go ahead with US engineering partners

A DEAL to convert WD 'Austerity' 2-10-0 No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn* from coal burning to oil firing has been agreed by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway with US-based railroad engineering and mechanical contractor FMW Solutions.

As reported in issue 311, both the railway's former CEO, Chris Price, and director of mechanical engineering, Paul Middleton, visited Florida to witness a similar-sized liquid-fuelled locomotive in operation, and FMW has been identified as the professed contractor to convert *Dame Vera Lynn*.

The project will be the first full-sized steam locomotive oil conversion in the UK since the end of BR steam and is seen as a crucial step forward in 'future-proofing' the busiest heritage railway in the country.

Paul said: "This is a great opportunity to develop oil-burning systems on our locomotives. This will help ensure our steam locomotives remain in service for future generations."

"Oil has many benefits, including lowering the risks of lineside fires, reducing staff hours maintaining locomotives, and reducing business risk due to the unavailability of coal."

FMW president Davidson Ward said: "We are thrilled to work alongside the NYMR engineering department at Grosmont to convert No. 3672 as part of its upcoming overhaul."

"This work will be a transatlantic effort, with key firing components



WD 'Austerity' 2-10-0 No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn* at Grosmont. NYMR

being manufactured both at our workshop in Tennessee and by the NYMR forces at Grosmont. The final installation is anticipated to take place on the NYMR."

Alongside the announcement, the two organisations recorded a video podcast, 'Restoration Roundtable' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RzAtS0XLLQ, to discuss whether oil-fired steam can future-proof the heritage sector. The conversation was steered by FMW's Kelly Lynch, alongside Davidson Ward and Wolf Fengler, with NYMR's Paul Middleton and Nick Simpson tuning in from Pickering.

Dame Vera Lynn was built in 1944 by the North British Locomotive Works in Glasgow as one of 150 of

these extremely powerful freight locomotives ordered for the war effort.

Once completed, *Dame Vera Lynn* was shipped to Egypt and worked there following D-Day.

Clifford Brown, who purchased *Dame Vera Lynn* in the late 1980s, placed the locomotive in trust to the NYMR when he began to suffer from ill health.

In November 1998, having amassed well over 100,000 miles on the NYMR, No. 3672 was taken out of traffic for a much-needed overhaul. In 2013, an appeal was launched to raise the necessary funds for the overhaul.

→ To donate to the appeal, visit www.nymr.co.uk/Appeal/3672-dame-vera-lynn

'Sprinter's' conversion to community hub with £60k grant funding

THE Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway will be converting the body from a retired Class 153 'Sprinter' into a new community hub, having successfully applied for two separate grants to provide much of the funding.

Set on the site of a former colliery, which was acquired in 2005, the LMMR acquired the body of No. 153374, which was withdrawn in 2020, in January 2023.

On its arrival in Cynheidre, the railway announced its intention to have it professionally converted into a café and meeting room for use by the local community, which saw a plan to convert a Class 143 Pacer dropped for this purpose.

Grant award

On April 13, the L&MMR announced it had been awarded two grants totalling £60,000 towards undertaking the work and further developments on its site; £40,000 of this has come from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, which will be used in the 'Sprinter' conversion project and include the installation of a mains electricity supply to the structure. The remaining amount was awarded by Carmarthenshire County Council's Targeted Finance Fund, which will also go towards facilitating the creation of two paid employment opportunities.

LMMR chairman Mark Thomas said: "We are very pleased to have received these grants which will enable us to further develop the site at Cynheidre as a first-class visitor attraction and community space, while also providing two much needed job opportunities. We would like to thank the funding bodies for their support."

A start has already been made on the project, with trenches dug and ducting installed for the electricity supply. It is anticipated that the National Grid will make the connection in early summer, although the supply will then need to be distributed around the site. The café project has gone through pre-planning and awaits final consent, but it is anticipated that this facility could be available by later this year.

East Sussex village bridge saved from infilling

VILLAGERS in the East Sussex village of Barcombe are celebrating after a plan by National Highways to infill a 140-year-old railway bridge with nearly 2000 tons of concrete was scrapped.

Instead, National Highways, which manages Historical Railways Estate structures on behalf of the Department for Transport, has transferred ownership of Church Road bridge to East Sussex County Council, which will now look to refurbish it.

Designed by civil engineer Frederick Banister, the bridge was built in the early 1880s as part of the Lewes to East Grinstead line, the northern part of which is now occupied by the Bluebell Railway.

National Highways wanted to infill the bridge due to fractures appearing over time and concerns due to its strength. However, nearly 200 villagers signed a petition against the plan on the grounds that infilling the bridge would have resulted in the loss of an asset within Barcombe's conservation area and blocked a wildlife corridor adjacent to ancient woodland. The villagers



Barcombe villagers staged a protest against the infilling of Church Road bridge. HRE GROUP

were supported by campaign organisation the HRE Group.

A council statement said: "We can confirm we have taken ownership of Church Road Bridge in Barcombe from National Highways."

"The bridge will be inspected by our highway engineers in the coming weeks, and we will engage with the

local community over the plans for the bridge before work to strengthen and sympathetically repair it is carried out in due course."

A National Highways statement said it was "pleased to be able to work closely with the local authorities to find alternative solutions to preserve this bridge".

Darjeeling tank trust's appeal to raise £80k for new boiler

By Phil Marsh

AN £80,000 appeal to replace the boiler of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Sharp Stewart B class 0-4-0WTT No. 19B has been launched by its owning group.

The Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust bought No. 19B, the only locomotive from the British-built resident in the UK, and two matching replica coaches at the auction of former owner the late Adrian Shooter's private Beeches Light Railway on June 21 last year, before reaching an agreement to have it overhauled and based at the Statfold Barn Railway.

At the DTLT's second open day, held at Statfold Barn on April 7, a total of 75 supporters were informed that the locomotive's 121-year-old boiler needed to be replaced rather than repaired.

Trust chairman Jeremy Davey announced that the overhaul of the chassis was nearly complete. The outstanding items were a bronze bearing (being delayed by sourcing bronze), and a brake cross-shaft waiting to be fabricated, but given it is likely to be 12 months before a new boiler will be ready for fitting, these parts were not an issue. The timescale will enable volunteers to thoroughly clean, descale and paint the chassis while carrying out minor steelwork repairs. The electrical circuits on the chassis will be renewed and the well tanks descaled and cleaned.

"The cylinders are in really good order, the axle boxes have now been brought into line (so the wheelbase both sides is the same, for example), the bearings in order, the lubrication much improved, and a long-standing issue with the draincocks resolved," said Jeremy.

The complete locomotive stripdown has informed the trust team about the history of No. 19B (as reported in



Above: The boiler of No. 19B minus its inner firebox on display for supporters at Statfold Barn. DTLT

Right: Trustee Andy Savage (fourth right) with supporters inspect the firebox of No. 19B. DTLT

issue 317). Engineer Will Smith said: "We now have a full asset condition documented, such as the fireman's side has an unlined cylinder and that the driver's side a lined one, both with minimal ovaling, and the axles we now know were renewed at Tindharia in 1956."

Will documented virtually every last nut and bolt in his 32-page report he authored between January and March.

Up close

No. 19B's chassis was available for viewing in the Statfold roundhouse, adjacent to the DTLT and Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society stands. Supporters also had access to the workshop to see the boiler shell and firebox. There was also the rare opportunity to see the million and one parts that make up a steam locomotive laid out in the No. 19B store.

Jeremy said that the boiler condition "was always the great concern and always the great question mark hanging over the overhaul. Could we get another 10 or even 20 years out of it, given its age?"

"It was during the boiler overhaul that every time we removed a life-

expired part, we found more issues. Very little of it was going to be left if we continued, so a new all-steel welded boiler to modern standards became the obvious and only sensible decision."

The initial visual inspection showed just some external wrapper wastage. A second inspection using ultrasonics and non-destructive testing revealed firebox cracking and backhead wastage. The final inspection showed barrel pitting and cracking, which made the decision to go for a new boiler inevitable. The DTLT team estimates that No. 19B will return to service in 2026 and that the new boiler should last 40-50 years.

A new boiler obviously has no grandfather rights, so it has to be designed, the design certified and then manufactured, and the build certified before it can be used.

Trust treasurer Pete Jordan said: "We have a significant part of the £150,000 cost already in hand, as well as the funds to re-erect the locomotive when it arrives, hence you'll see an appeal for the £80,000 outstanding amount to finish the job."

"It is down to all supporters that we have got this far in under 12 months, such as purchasing the locomotive

and coaches and being well into the overhaul."

Trustee Andy Savage added: "We have made an application for a £30,000 grant, which we will hear about in a couple of months. With the newly-received standing orders and donations covering £15,000 including Gift Aid, our outstanding figure is between £50,000 and £80,000, depending on grant outcome."

Potential alterations

Jeremy told the supporters that no overhaul work was required on the tender but that once overhauled, No. 19B will again be able to operate with or without its tender, necessitating various small engineering alterations for braking, electricals, sanding, and to restore the bunker to service, plus tools and equipment storage facilities.

Furthermore, plans are being explored to assess potential alterations to the replica Darjeeling carriages, such as to the electricals and an in-train air generator for the braking system. Accessible passenger space is also being looked at, with various options identified to create this vital facility.

No. 19B is known to have hosted at least one wedding when in June 1986 in America, Darwin and Kathy Enders were married on the footplate. More weddings will hopefully happen again, and an events team will also look at arranging visits to locations using temporary track.

Such work, of course, requires a larger team of volunteers, and a recruitment drive will commence, targeting younger and critically diverse volunteers. An events team is required to organise activities at Statfold and in due course the trust's visits programme.

→ To support the restoration of No. 19B, visit www.darjeelingtank.org.uk



Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust chairman Jeremy Davey addresses supporters on April 7. DTLT



The chassis of No. 19B at Statfold. DTLT

Historic Stanway Viaduct repair project shortlisted for national award

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway project to repair its century-old Stanway Viaduct has been shortlisted in the category of Historic Bridge Project of the Year in the New Civil Engineer Bridges Awards 2024.

The first phase of work on the iconic 220-yard 15-arch structure, one of the largest viaducts on any heritage railway, began in November last year, and was completed on March 7 – in time for regular trains to run over it between Toddington and Broadway on Good Friday, as reported last issue.

Partnership working

The engineering project was carried out by a team consisting of David Symonds Associates, Walsh Construction, Lampitt Rail Services, and staff and volunteers from the railway.

The awards ceremony is due to take place in London on July 18.

GWR civil engineering director Dr Graham Plant said: "I am delighted that we have been shortlisted for a project that had to cope with a major, unexpected change during its

implementation and was successfully completed by a collaborative effort.

"I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all railway staff and volunteers, and our suppliers, who were engaged in this endeavour, especially having to cope with the unexpected substantial additional work to stabilise the parapets. The restored viaduct and track look superb, and the work allowed us to reduce the weight on the viaduct structure by about 90 tonnes, which was an added bonus."

Meanwhile, the railway is making available 240 stainless steel plates on the viaduct, which were incorporated as part of the parapet stabilisation works, on which to place commemorative plaques, enabling supporters to have a permanent connection with the most significant structure on the railway. Plaques may be sponsored by individuals or companies; one plaque has been sponsored by the railway to mark the reopening of the line to Broadway.

Each weather-resistant plaque will be affixed to the plates with the



Regular trains returned to Stanway Viaduct on March 29 following the completion of the first phase of repairs to the structure built for the GWR in 1903/4. WR Foremarke Hall is pictured heading the second train over the viaduct following its reopening. G/WR

message of choice engraved in white on a blue background.

The message may be to remember a loved one past or present, to record for posterity a memorable date or event, recognise someone's contribution to the railway, or it could be a four-line poem.

Rewards to treasure

Each successful donor will receive a signed certificate incorporating their message.

They will also receive a duplicate of the plaque, which they can treasure and put on display in their own home. The minimum donation for each plaque is £250, which will be



An example of one of the commemorative plaques. G/WR

used to repair, maintain, renew and operate the railway's infrastructure.

The application process to obtain a plaque and more details can be found online at www.gwsr.com/support-us/stanway-viaduct-commemorative-plaques



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Six driving wheels for Clan Hengist to be built in a year

By Robin Jones

ALL six driving wheels for new BR Class 6 Clan Pacific No. 72010 *Hengist* are to be built over the next year by William Cook Cast Products, in one of the biggest milestones for the project.

The firm, which was also the principal commercial sponsor for new-build A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*, will make the wheels based on two patterns – one for the centre driving wheel and the other for the leading and trailing wheels.

The patterns will be made using traditional methods, assisted by laser scanning of the wheels on *Hengist*'s 'big sister' BR Britannia Pacific No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*, based at the Great Central Railway's Loughborough depot. The scan will define any missing details for the finished patterns. From these, the wheels will be cast and then proof-machined, ready for finish machining to suit the axles and tyres.

The work will take between six and 12 months and will be worth more than £100,000 to the Standard Steam Locomotive Company Ltd's project.

The firm's Sir Andrew Cook CBE said: "Britain is now entering the

second and most hazardous stage of the heritage rail movement which began some 60 years ago. Preserved locomotives are requiring hugely expensive repairs, including new boilers, and the generation of men whose knowledge and enthusiasm preserved them in the first place is dwindling as death takes its inevitable toll.

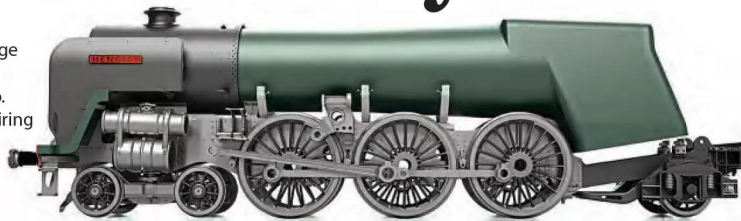
"In this context, new-builds are ever more important if the working steam locomotive is not to become a thing of the past. As both a life-long rail enthusiast and experienced manufacturer of the many kinds of cast parts a steam engine requires, I consider it my duty to our industrial heritage to do what I can to assist.

Last in UK?

"The Clan class was a pretty engine, but no example escaped the scrapman's torch. *Hengist* is a state-of-the-art engineering project based in the heart of Sheffield and could even be the last Pacific locomotive built in the UK. Such iconic locomotives are a major part of our history, without which future generations would never experience the sight, sound, and even smell of a working steam locomotive."

Andy England, managing director of CTL Seal in Sheffield, where *Hengist* is based, said: "This is a fantastic development for the locomotive; the project is building a real head of steam now. You can really see the engine taking shape.

"It is an exciting challenge as we are recreating the engine using the original 1950s design but employing 21st-century engineering techniques



An artist's impression of Clan Pacific No. 72010 *Hengist*, complete with the six driving wheels. SSLC

to make it greener, cleaner, and more efficient."

The first Clan was built in 1952, but due to a steel shortage and the modernisation of the rail network, only 10 of a planned 118 were completed and none survive.

Precision engineering company CTL Seal Butterthwaite Lane, Ecclesfield, was chosen to build the 11th example using a combination of volunteer expert engineers and the firm's experienced design and manufacturing team – known as the Sheffield Steam Team.

The new engine design can be more easily be adapted to take advantage of alternative manufactured fuels being developed, using biomass as a key component.

To make *Hengist* greener, two key changes are going to be made. Firstly, boiler pressure is to be increased by 25psi from 225 to 250 to extract more energy from the fuel. Secondly, a 21st-century exhaust system, which improves combustion and reduces back pressure on the cylinders, will be designed. Computer simulations suggest that these two improvements will help *Hengist* reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions by up to

10.5%. The higher boiler pressure and the improved exhaust system also means that it will be 22% more powerful and will be able to pull more coaches or run faster uphill, giving greater operational flexibility for running on the main line.

Even more improvements

When new, the original Clans had one of the lowest fuel consumptions of any BR Standard, and *Hengist* is expected to improve on this.

As well as the improved exhaust system and higher boiler pressure, other improvements are going to be made to the pistons and valves to reduce steam leakage and reduce wear, through improved materials and lubrication.

As a total of 999 BR Standard locomotives were built up to 1960 when production ceased, *Hengist* will become the 1000th.

→ The Standard Steam Locomotive Company Ltd, a registered charity, needs to raise a total of £4 million to complete *Hengist* by the target date of 2029, and donations are invited. To find out more about the project and to make a one-off donation, visit www.gofundme.com/hengist



A visualization of one of the driving wheels. SSLC

Fulfil a dream with a steam driver job on offer by the sea!

HAVE you ever dreamed of becoming a locomotive driver or moving to the seaside?

The Lappa Valley Railway, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, is offering the chance to do both.

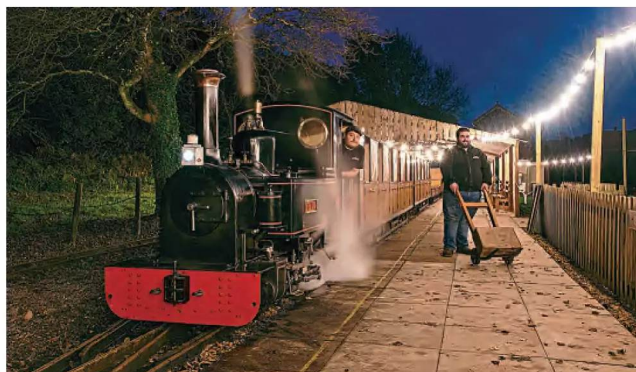
The multi-gauge railway based in the old mine workings of East Wheel Rose Mine at St Newlyn East, near Newquay, is looking for a full-time driver to work on its three lines. The railway carries more than 100,000 passengers a year and runs steam, diesel and battery electric locomotives.

Operations manager Ben Harding said: "Jobs like this genuinely don't

come around very often. As well as driving regular services throughout the year, the successful applicant will also help maintain our fleet of 13 locomotives, 23 passenger carriages, various wagons, and more than 2.5 miles of railway.

"We are a small and passionate team, and we are very lucky to be working with a variety of different locomotives. Although we are looking for someone with experience, we will provide in-house training too."

Lappa Valley has seen a huge level of investment over the last few years, including a new indoor soft play area and café, new railway infrastructure,



One of the Lappa Valley's 13 locomotives, *Ellie*, a 15in gauge 0-4-2T built in 2006 by Exmoor Steam Railway, waits with a train at Benny Halt. LVR

and the introduction of a new £500,000 diesel, *City of Truro*, as reported in issue 317. It has also been named Cornwall's top tourist

attraction in the Cornwall Tourism Awards for two years running.

More details can be found at Lappavalley.co.uk/work

Foxfield Railway renews sponsorship deal with heritage YouTube star

By Owen Hayward

EARLY in 2023, the Foxfield Railway signed a non-exclusive deal with YouTuber Lawrie Rose, believed to be the first such partnership between a heritage line and an independent content creator for the online platform, which helped promote the Potteries venue's Knotty 100 celebrations last July, and additionally bringing awareness of the railway to a new audience. Now, both parties have renewed that agreement to carry on through 2024.

Lawrie's YouTube channel, known as Lawrie's Mechanical Marvels (LMM), is the UK's biggest heritage channel and community and initially partnered with the Foxfield in a non-exclusive tie-up back in March 2023. The railway's marketing team felt this provided excellent value in an age of video-first internet users.

Not limited to railways, Lawrie's content covers heritage road transport and more. The owner of two Ruston 48DS locomotives, when focusing on rail, he has given reviews and insights on an array of rolling stock, as well as covering railway events, and his presentation style has proved to draw younger generations.

Delight at deal

The renewed deal covers long and short-form video content and social media posts, bringing Lawrie and his team to Foxfield for engine reviews, special events and giveaways. The channel will also reveal exclusive announcements and news, as well as sponsoring popular content filmed elsewhere. One of Lawrie's most recent releases has covered Polish steam, expanding his audience to beyond British shores.

Lawrie said: "I am delighted to be able to continue the relationship between LMM and the Foxfield Railway. LMM is all about showcasing

vehicular heritage and encouraging people to get involved and being able to work with a like-minded railway and support each other is a really exciting opportunity.

"Being part of some of the big events was a great experience and gave my followers a good opportunity to come to Foxfield and have a chat. I plan to be at a number of events this year, including the hugely successful War Wheels and the Autumn Vintage Vehicle Rally, when I'll be bringing one of my fleet of vehicles to exhibit!"

'Strong voice for good'

Volunteer content manager Ben Wiles said: "Lawrie has consistently shown a huge passion for reaching and educating the next generations of preservation volunteers and vehicle owners, and he has a big influence on his community and is a strong voice for good in our sector.

"After a year of working together, we measured the impact LMM has had and were delighted with the results. As well as seeing people flood around him during events, and the tickets and secondary spend that brings, we have reached about a quarter of a million views at a rate around 30% cheaper than sponsored Facebook ads, where our own biggest audience has historically been. Not only that, but because LMM's content will stay online forever, we know that each project will grow value every day and reach new audiences.

"LMM also saw an explosive 50% growth in subscribers during 2023, accruing millions of views, and is on the cusp of 100,000 subscribers, which is literally 100 times bigger than our own YouTube reach, five times bigger than any other heritage organisation we know of, and 10 times bigger than our largest platform, so continuing to expand



YouTuber Lawrie Rose has renewed a partnership deal with the Foxfield Railway that, during 2023, saw explosive growth for the railway's marketing as he brought the heritage line to new audiences. OWEN HAYWARD



Lawrie filmed several videos at the railway during 2023, including locomotive reviews and events coverage. This will continue throughout 2024. FR/LMM

this relationship is a no-brainer. Lawrie and cameraman and co-presenter Charles Brewster were invited to last year's flagship Knotty 100 event and were constantly seen swamped by fans, enthusiasts and families of all ages – we were actually

quite surprised just how diverse their audience is. The LMM brand has really brought passionate people to Foxfield, spending their time and money with us."

The War Wheels event will take place on May 18/19.

Farewell to railway historian Maurice Dart

PROLIFIC railway author, historian, and archivist Maurice Dart died peacefully at his home in St Austell on April 2, aged 92.

Maurice was born and brought up in Plymouth, where his father worked for the Admiralty in Devonport Dockyard.

As a boy he was twice evacuated to quieter Cornwall to avoid the wartime bombing.

Railways featured in his life from a very early age. Upon leaving school, he joined English China Clays (ECC) as

a laboratory assistant at its Lee Moor works outside Plymouth, not far from Laira steam shed.

In 1956 he transferred to St Austell, using his position within ECC to gain unrivalled access to the many and often inaccessible freight-only branches to the china clay pits all over mid-Cornwall and beyond.

These he diligently recorded and photographed, starting what became the Maurice Dart Collection, a huge archive and valuable reference point. Using his encyclopaedic knowledge

about railways, not just in Cornwall and Devon, Maurice started writing about railways, eventually producing 27 published titles, including such gems as *West Country Engine Sheds* (Ian Allan Publishing, 2002) and *West Cornwall Mineral Railways* (Middleton Press, 2005).

He also found the time and energy to volunteer at the Bodmin & Wenford Railway, being there almost from its inception, and was very much part of the scene when aged well into his 80s.



Maurice Dart. BWR

Avonside 0-6-0ST *Cranford* heading the 50th anniversary shuttle. JOSEPH DEAN

Avon Valley back to 1974 as it marks half centenary

By Robin Jones

THE Avon Valley Railway celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special gala on April 4-7 featuring a two-train operation over all four days.

The event highlighted how the Bitton-based heritage line grew from 100 yards of track in 1974 to three miles today, with further plans for expansion on the horizon.

The route now occupied by the AVR was part of the Midland Railway's Bristol-Mangotsfield-Bath line which linked to the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway at Bath Green Park, over which the legendary 'Pines Express' ran until September 8, 1962, and which closed in 1966.

Local people including MP Robert Adley formed the Bristol Suburban Rail Society in 1972 with the aim of restoring commuter trains and a weekend steam presence to the route and the Mangotsfield-Yate line.

Bitton station and its yard, including some trackbed, was leased by the society from the BR board. Volunteers slowly restored the heavily vandalised buildings and laid track north towards Oldland Common. Weekend steam-hauled 'brake van' train rides progressed to proper passenger services along the ever-lengthening line.

In 1979, the Bristol Suburban Railway Society was incorporated into the Bitton Railway Co. Ltd, and

the relaid track reached Oldland Common in 1988. However, by 1992, urban Bristol had expanded to the point where it was no longer considered practical to extend further north to the initial targets of Warmley and Mangotsfield, and so the revivalists looked south.

By 2004, it had crossed the River Avon, and a new station, Avon Riverside was built to serve the Avon Valley Country Park. British Waterways added a 55-yard landing stage allowing craft using the river to tie up, leading to riverboat trips on specific days as an added attraction to the train services.

The guest engine for the gala was Christopher Theaker's Avonside

0-6-0ST No.1919 of 1924 *Cranford*, representing the AVR's first steam locomotive of the heritage era. Back in 1974, the first trains were hauled by the line's own Avonside 0-6-0ST No. 1798 of 1918 *Edwin Hulse*, which is currently under overhaul in Bitton goods shed.

Shuttle service

Cranford, which is based at the Appleby Frodingham Railway – Scunthorpe, hauled the 50th anniversary shuttle service from the second platform at Bitton to Oldland Common, comprising a single Mk.1 carriage and a recently-restored BR Standard brake van – representing the AVR's train formation for most



Wimblebury as *Glendower* and *Cranford* side by side at Bitton. JOSEPH DEAN



Wimblebury masquerading as *Glendower*, which was the second locomotive to run on the heritage line. JOSEPH DEAN



1976



2024

The 2024 photo was taken after the end of operations on Easter Monday, with diesel and steam crews from the day taking positions to replicate a shot from 1976. The 1974 operations comprised only Avonside 0-6-0ST *Edwin Hulse* and a brake van until the first Mk.1 for the railway arrived two years later. Operations during the anniversary gala replicated the train from 1976 and throughout the rest of the 1970s and part of the 1980s. AVR ARCHIVE/ADAM ASHFORD



The special headboard carried during the event is now available as a raffle prize. ADAM BRYANT

Right: At 6.30pm on April 4, West of England Mayor Dan Norris unveiled a special plaque to celebrate 50 years since Avon Valley Railway opened. WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY



of the 1970s. *Cranford*, which was built locally in Fishponds, Bristol, celebrates its centenary this year. Returning from Foxfield Railway for the 2024 season, Hunslet Austerly 0-6-0ST No. 3839 of 1956 *Wimblebury*, masquerading as sister No. 3810 of 1954 *Glendower*, hauled the full line trains.

Glendower was the second locomotive to haul trains on the line in the heritage era, so it seemed

fitting for *Wimblebury* to represent it at the event. *Glendower*, which was withdrawn from NCB service in 1973, is now on static display at Buckfastleigh on the South Devon Railway.

Both trains proved popular with the enthusiasts, residents, and families who attended.

On the evening of Thursday, April 4 – exactly 50 years since the first public open day – West of

England Mayor Dan Norris unveiled a plaque to mark the milestone, before jumping on board a special anniversary dining train for local dignitaries and councillors, with a 1970s-inspired menu.

He said: "Avon Valley Railway is a Bitton gem that for the last 50 years has been loved by people of all ages in the west of England."

AVR officials showcased the line's achievements and renewed the

aspiration to eventually extend it by a further three miles to the outskirts of Bath. BBC TV filmed for half a day to gather content for the wider region on TV and online. Also present was railway media personality Francis Bourgeois, known for his TikTok and Instagram videos dedicated to the world of rail.

A 'Volunteers Appreciation Train' was run, as well as talks, yard tours, and a marquee full of stalls at Bitton. AVR general manager Mark Simmons said: "It is testament to our volunteers back in 1974 that they had the vision to preserve Bristol and Bath's railway heritage, which we have built on since then to create such a wonderful and unique attraction."

→ Upcoming events include the June 7-9 Beer Bash, featuring resident Class 31 No. 31130 *Calder Hall Power Station* hauling trains, and the anniversary year end-of-season Anything Goes Gala on November 2/3.

The railway is also holding a raffle with a 50th anniversary headboard, as used on its trains throughout 2024, as the first prize, and a 50th anniversary disc as second prize.

Entries cost £1 each, available to purchase online at www.avrht.org, and the winning tickets will be drawn at the end of the year.



Above: The 50th anniversary cake being cut by Avon Valley Railway company chairman and trustee Alan Matthews. JOSEPH DEAN

Left: Visiting from the Appleby Frodingham Railway – Scunthorpe, *Cranford* simmers at Oldland Common. JOSEPH DEAN

Pacer festival 'first' at Aln Valley

By Robin Jones

IN what looks set to be a heritage sector first, the Aln Valley Railway is holding a Pacer Festival on Saturday, May 18.

The event will be dedicated to the operation of its two Class 144 Pacer DMUs, both as individual units and in multiple.

Designed around a Leyland National bus body mounted on a rail chassis, Pacers first appeared in 1984 as a short-term solution to a shortage of rolling stock, with an expected lifespan of no more than 20 years.

However, they were regularly criticised for being of poor quality and uncomfortable. Instead of the bogies on DMUs, Pacers use a basic four-wheel two-axle configuration which often results in a ride that is noisier and rougher than other trains offer.

Decades of service

As modernised replacements were lacking, the Pacer fleet remained in service on some lines until 2021 – 37 years after their introduction in 1984. When withdrawn, many found their way to heritage lines or were converted to use as static buildings.

The AVR is home to former Northern units Nos. 144004 (in a temporary Regional Railways-style livery) and No. 144016 (carrying the Northern livery in which it left main line service). No. 144016 has not been



Class 144 No. 144004 at the head of the Aln Valley Railway's Pacer pair. ADAM SMALLWOOD

in passenger use for some time, with the event marking its return to routine traffic.

The railway is offering the public the chance to ride the 1½-mile line for the whole day for £8 for adults and £4.50 for children.

Volunteers who care for the Class 144 units will be on hand to answer questions and provide guided tours, while also running various stands exhibiting Pacer components and explanatory diagrams.

There will also be screenings of Pacer-related films and illustrated talks.

A raffle will be held with Pacer-related items as prizes, including a passenger seat recently removed as part of the interior refresh of these two units.

To the limit

A coupling demonstration will also be conducted, followed by the two Class 144s working in multiple as a full five-car set in passenger service.

It is planned to run both units between 10am and 4pm to the current limit of the line at Greenrigg Halt and back to Lionheart Station. External stands will also be attending,

subject to availability. The AVR's café will be open, providing refreshments throughout the day.

A free shuttle bus from Alnmouth for Alnwick station, on the East Coast Main Line, will run for those who are travelling from further afield.

An AVR statement said: "It is hoped this day will provide one of the first dedicated second-generation DMU open days in the heritage sector, and there is desire to run further events should this prove successful."

➔ For more details about the event and to book tickets, visit www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk

Corris extension boosted by waste from road bridge works

SPOIL from the construction of a new road bridge is being used by the Corris Railway to rebuild an embankment that will carry the line over a stream.

In the past, heritage railway building extensions have sought to get rid of extracted spoil; the Corris has instead found itself importing such materials from a substantial engineering project up the road.

The new bridge has been constructed to carry the road over the River Dyfi outside Machynlleth, but with water flow varying considerably due to the unpredictable Welsh rainfall, hard standing had to be constructed to allow heavy machinery to be used.

With this project completed, the materials are being removed to allow nature to re-establish itself. The result is tons of extracted spoil travelling down to the Corris extension site, just south of Maespoeth Junction. At its peak during February, a lorry was arriving every 15 minutes to offload its contents.

The line runs parallel to the A487 road, sharing the embankment,

which is what is being widened to accommodate the railway. To do so requires 'benches' being cut into the land, into which the delivered material is used to create a stable level bed and sloped embankment edges. New geotextiles are laid amid the spoil, along with drainage materials and embankment stone.

Such was the pace of work that two diggers, a dumper truck and a roller were kept busy throughout the 110-yard stretch of embankment.

A Corris statement said: "It was gratifying that by the end of March, the new earthworks had risen by five metres, and the southern end of the site was coming tantalisingly close to a remaining section of the original railway fence which survived closure of the Corris in 1948 and the re-routing of the A487, which has made the new works necessary.

"At this point in the project, the embankment is laid level along its length, but later works will be necessary to raise the northern end to the same height as the original route and the existing railhead south of Maespoeth Junction.



The embankment to support the Corris Railway's extension is gradually being built thanks to the delivery of spoil created through the construction of a new road bridge at Machynlleth. CR

"That will reinstate a 1-in-30 gradient and the prospect of the Corris' steam locomotives climbing that will delight many enthusiasts.

"Before that, however, the Nant Goedwig stream will need to be crossed, followed by final grading and tracklaying."

➔ Donations are sought to enable these necessary works to continue. These can be made online via www.corrisco.uk or, alternatively, donations can be made by cheque, payable to Corris Railway (SE), Station Yard, Corris, Machynlleth SY20 9SH.

Tributes paid to Worth Valley and Lincolnshire Coast's Julie Bates

TRIBUTES have been paid to Julie Bates, who became the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's first full-time administration employee when appointed in 1990, following her death at the age of 62 while on holiday in Aruba in the Dutch Caribbean.

Julie is survived by her husband Chris, a KWVR volunteer guard for 41 years and also a volunteer since 1961 on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway. Julie also volunteered as a pixie on Santa Specials on the KWVR and with platform and general duties on the LCLR.

Smokebox memorial

A celebration of her life will be held in the Bay Horse Inn, Oxenhope – her home village and the terminus of the KWVR – at 2pm on Saturday, June 8. It is expected that a steam locomotive on KWVR services will carry a wreath on the smokebox that day in her memory.

Julie moved from the KWVR to Birmingham in 1994 to marry Chris, and after working in the University of

Birmingham administering a master's degree course in occupational health, she joined the rail section of the erstwhile Centro passenger transport authority. There, her ability to acquire batteries for Bardic lamps and her understanding of emergency procedures for single line working, vacuum brakes and railway terminology was a distinct advantage.

She later became the administration manager of the Midland Metro Extension in Birmingham and then the national co-ordinator of the tramways' trade body UKTram, covering modern and heritage tramways in the UK, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland.

She moved to Lincolnshire in 2016 with Chris and settled happily into country life in Horsington, near Woodhall Spa.

Julie was a regular attendee of Christmas functions in Buckingham Palace for members of the Diplomatic Corps through her husband's role as the overseas representative of the world's most remote inhabited island,

Tristan da Cunha, and accompanied him to meetings in some of the world's most isolated locations.

She enthusiastically travelled with him on railways throughout the British Isles and Europe and as far – most recently – to heritage lines in the Eastern USA and Australia, New Zealand, and many places on the continent.

'Genuinely wonderful'

Former KWVR colleague Jim Shipley, writing in the most recent issue of the heritage line's magazine, *Push and Pull*, described Julie as having a personality "that could shape mountains, let alone a mere railway office"

He wrote: "With her can-do attitude, the volunteers immediately took to Julie. Her sense of mischief and humour was legendary and infectious."

"Julie was a genuinely wonderful lass who was as unpredictable as she was loveable and reliable. Her path through life was not always a smooth one, but she came through smiling,



Julie Bates at work on Haworth station on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway in about 1992.

CHRIS BATES COLLECTION

and her passing [on January 22] was both cruel and untimely".

Her ashes were buried in the churchyard of All Saints Church, Horsington, following a memorial service which raised £1400 for the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance charity.

She is also survived by her brother David Carter, sister Jill Buckley, and stepson Robert Bates.

Donegal drone takes to the air to capture records of lost and closed lines

By Hugh Dougherty

A DRONE is taking flight over the closed railways of Donegal to record them for posterity through Donegal Railway Heritage Museum, which has purchased a professional piece of kit thanks to Fáilte Ireland Digital.

Following training provided by Big Wheel, museum staff will go into action to create a unique archive of the course of the County Donegal, Londonderry & Lough Swilly and Great Northern Railway of Ireland lines as they presently

exist. "We believe that we are one of the first railway museums or heritage railways to take this approach to creating an aerial archive," said museum manager Niall McCaughan.

"Being able to shoot drone footage of the closed railways in their environment and surrounding landscape will create a unique resource that we will be using on our revamped website, which we'll launch in the summer, and on our social media outlets. And, crucially, the drone will be an invaluable tool

for helping us identify stretches of the railways which may be capable of having track restored, to allow us to achieve our ultimate aim of running CDR stock again in Donegal."

Meanwhile, the museum raised a few eyebrows by turning preserved CDR 2-6-4T No. 5 *Drumboe* green for St Patrick's Day.

It was not a repaint into the original Donegal Railway Company green livery, nor was it respray into the green livery of the Lough Swilly Railway, the CDR's

great rival, however – *Drumboe* went temporarily green thanks to floodlighting installed at the covered platform where it sits outside the museum.

"We had the lighting installed when the platform and canopy were built," said Niall.

"It means that we can light up the loco in different colours to mark various events and anniversaries. This really helps us promote the museum, as no one can miss a red CDR loco that keeps changing colour!"



Ready to launch: Museum manager Niall McCaughan (left) with trainers from Big Wheel and museum staff who will pilot the newly-purchased drone. DRHM



How to turn a red locomotive green, without using paint, and only for St Patrick's Day! *Drumboe* celebrates the Irish patron saint's day on March 1, bathed in green light. DRHM

Lily set to bloom at Amberley rail gala

By Geoff Courtney

A 112-YEAR-OLD French-built 0-4-0T is to become Amberley Museum's first guest steam locomotive for eight years when it joins resident 0-4-0ST *Peter* at a rail gala on July 20-21.

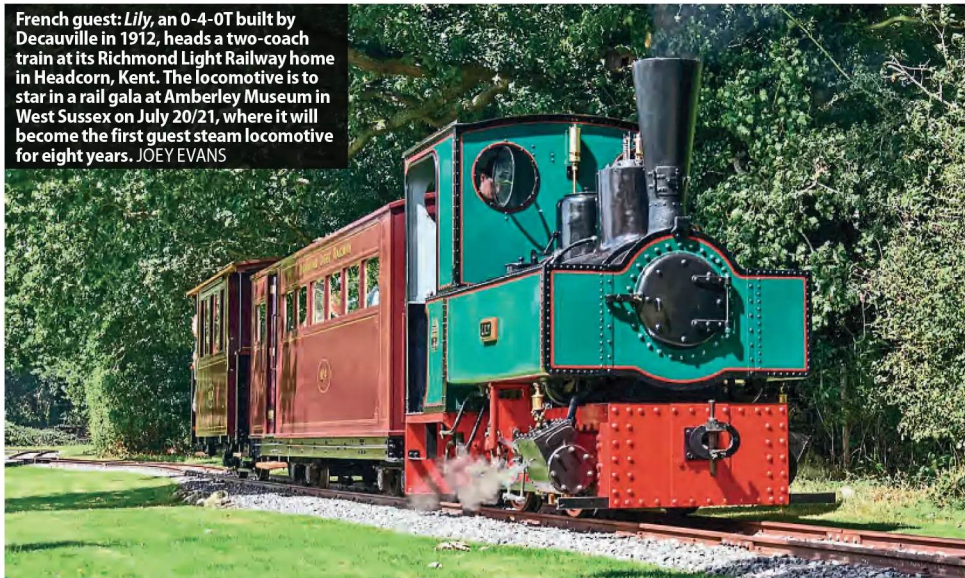
The West Sussex working museum, located in a 36-acre former chalk quarry in the heart of the South Downs National Park, near Arundel, is home to one of the country's most comprehensive collections of different gauge locomotives, and it also has a half-mile 2ft gauge steam and diesel-operated line with three stations, and a standard gauge demonstration track.

The locomotive that will end the museum's eight-year wait for a steam visitor is *Lily*, which will make the 80-mile journey to the museum from its home at the private Richmond Light Railway in Headcorn, Kent.

Built by Decauville in 1912 for the Thessaly Railway in Volos, Greece, as works No. 648 and originally named *Dimitrios*, the 0-4-0T is one of only five known survivors of the Type 3 class. It spent its early years as a streetcar before moving in 1939 to a chrome mine in Lamia, central Greece. Following the mine's closure in the 1960s, it faced two decades of neglect in the open air before being rescued by a German steam museum.

Over the ensuing years it changed hands a number of times before being restored in Frankfurt in the mid-1990s, and last year it was bought by the Richmond Light Railway, where, said Amberley

French guest: *Lily*, an 0-4-0T built by Decauville in 1912, heads a two-coach train at its Richmond Light Railway home in Headcorn, Kent. The locomotive is to star in a rail gala at Amberley Museum in West Sussex on July 20/21, where it will become the first guest steam locomotive for eight years. JOEY EVANS



Museum marketing officer Joe Meacher, it has "captivated enthusiasts with its charm and remarkable engineering."

Photographic charter

Such is the importance the museum is placing on the locomotive's visit that a photographic charter is being organised on July 22, which Joe describes as "a rare opportunity to capture *Lily* in all its glory." Bookings for this must be made through 30742 Charters.

Peter, which will be sharing operational duties with *Lily* as well

as diesel traction on the museum's public line on July 20/21, was built to 3ft gauge by WG Bagnell in 1918 for the Ministry of Munitions, was later converted to 2ft gauge, and has been a popular member of the Amberley stable for many years.

The museum's collection of more than 30 locomotives ranges from 1ft 6in to 5ft 3in gauge, while other attractions are nature trails and more than 20 exhibition areas, including vintage buses and other vehicles, communications, and crafts.

The quarry in which it is located operated from 1846 to 1969, and

at its peak employed 100 people. It had its own standard gauge internal railway system that was linked to the nearby national network and had a fleet of four steam and diesel locomotives, transporting such materials as chalk, coal and coke to the kilns.

After the quarry's closure, a group of architects, surveyors, planners and museum professionals joined forces to create the museum as a centre that conserves industrial and social history, and such is its success that it now has more than 350 active volunteers.

No 'Clockwork Orange' train for Bo'ness museum collection

MUSEUM of Scottish Railways director Becky Peacock said that the Bo'ness venue will not be accepting one of the 1978-built Metro-Cammell Glasgow Subway trains after it comes out of service following replacement by new rolling stock on Glasgow's unique 4ft gauge underground line, as reported in issue 315.

Affectionately dubbed 'the Clockwork Orange' by Glasgow's public and media following modernisation in 1978, because of its then-new bright-orange-liveried trains and its restricted 6½-mile circular route, reminiscent of a train set, the older units are being progressively replaced by new driverless rolling stock.

"We have given the idea great consideration, but we've had to reject the idea with great reluctance as we simply don't have enough space," said Becky.

"Strathclyde Partnership for Transport donated one of the



Above: The SPT Glasgow Subway promotional model, one of which may be displayed at the museum, instead of the full-scale real thing to bring the story up-to-date.

Right: Glasgow Subway motor car of 1898 on display at the Museum of Scottish Railways, where there is no room to display one of the trains that replaced it in 1978. HUGH DOUGHERTY



original motor cars of 1898 to the museum in 2015 and it's a popular exhibit.

"We'd have loved to exhibit one of the trains that replaced it, but we won't ignore the subsequent history of the subway, and the trains that are being replaced could best be represented by a model. SPT did

produce some for public relations purposes, and one of these might be ideal."

Glasgow's Riverside Museum is likely to accept one of the 1978 trains, or at least a motor car, to add to its existing collection of Glasgow Subway trains and artefacts. However, whether the train would

be exhibited at the Riverside Museum or at the Nitshill Museum store remains unknown.

SPT is still inviting interest from heritage railways museums and groups interested in acquiring the old rolling stock as it comes out of service over the next two to three years.

East Lancashire launches £50k appeal for repairs to its 'most picturesque' viaduct

A £50,000 appeal for funding towards essential repairs to the East Lancashire Railway's Higher Woodhill Viaduct has been launched.

The railway is seeking help with contributions towards match-funding requirements for a £1 million bid through the Community Ownership Fund for the repairs to the viaduct at Burrs Country Park, which carries the railway up the Irwell Valley.

Maintenance work is required to the viaduct in the next 12 months to ensure that it continues to deliver on the experience enjoyed by visitors and generations of the local community on board trains as they pass through the Irwell Valley.

Regular inspections are carried out on the structure and while there are no question marks around its safety, repairs are required to allow for the continued level of use of trains across it.

The necessary work is expected to cost £1.28 million, with grants anticipated to cover the vast majority of these costs. However, to secure many of these grants from the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, it is required that the railway demonstrates it has the support of the community that uses and loves it.



Picturesque Higher Woodhill Viaduct on the East Lancashire Railway needs £1.28 million spent on repairs. ELR

The viaduct is regarded as one of the most picturesque spots on the line as it passes the site of the historic former Higher Woodhill Mill.

ELR chairman Mike Kelly said: "As well as our trains, the track, the signals, the tunnels and bridges are all part of the immaculately preserved history that our visitors love so much."

"It is right that the trains get most of the attention, but in truth they're only part of the overall picture. The viaduct is one section of the line that people remember fondly from their visits to the railway."

"At this vital time, we need as many people as possible to show us their support."

"We have an online fundraiser where every single pound donated will make a difference. Added to that, every visitor's comment about the beauty, history and authenticity of the railway will also support the case for this restoration project."

→ To donate to the appeal, visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/supportourviaduct and to share comments of support, email general.manager@eastlancsrailway.co.uk

Moorsline 2024 school packages now on offer

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway has announced its 2024 offering for schools and pupils to experience the heritage line with its learning programme, which provides hands-on learning opportunities and engaging workshops.

The free cross-curricular workshops are designed to ignite curiosity and foster a deeper understanding of both railway heritage and wider social history. Led by experienced and enthusiastic staff and volunteers, students can delve into steam engine mechanics, Victorian life along the railway, and the impact of railways on local communities.

Through hands-on activities, immersive demonstrations and guided tours, students will engage with artefacts and stories from the past, bringing history to life in a dynamic and memorable way. Whether they are studying history, science, or design and technology, the workshops aim to offer rich and immersive learning experiences for pupils, from Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2.

There are new KS1 and EYFS workshops including Sensational Stations, where pupils use their senses to explore different parts of the station, and the Just the Ticket Station



A schools visit in progress at Goathland station. MICHELLE BAGGALEY/NYMR

Trail at Pickering station. To enhance their learning experience, a pre-visit activity pack is filled with resources to spark curiosity and encourage meaningful discussions before and after the visit, setting the stage for a multi-sensory learning experience.

The NYMR offers free familiarisation visits for a first-hand glimpse into the experiences provided, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to engage in a welcoming and inclusive environment needs are met.

To ensure the NYMR is accessible for schools, community groups and home educators, for 2024 under-16s travel free and over-16s cost only £25 per ticket. These continued enhancements are part of many ongoing initiatives in the NYMR's Yorkshire's Magnificent Journey project, backed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

→ To find out more, visit www.nymr.co.uk/learning or to discuss requirements, email learning@nymr.co.uk

'Hoover' fleet set for spring spruce-up

THE Class 50 Alliance has announced that two of its locomotives will undergo a repaint into a popular livery this summer – with an appeal launched to also help fund crucial maintenance work on a third.

For the last five years, Nos. 50007 *Hercules* and 50049 *Defiance* have worn the corporate colours of GB Railfreight, which was unveiled at Eastleigh works in March 2019. With the time for a repaint now falling due the owning group turning its sights to a very popular scheme, both locomotives will sport BR large logo blue when they return to the rails this summer.

Some bodywork repairs have been carried out at Kidderminster depot on the Severn Valley Railway in preparation for the upcoming repaint, which will once again be carried out at Eastleigh, although it will not be started until the summer.

Both 'Hoovers' are main line-registered and will work their final railtour wearing their current liveries on the Pathfinder Tours' June 29 'The Mazey Day Cornishman', which will travel to Penzance from Dorridge.

Pledges sought

The alliance has additionally launched an appeal for £5000 to employ specialist contractors that will undertake a thorough clean of a fuel tank that has been removed from *Defiance* and which will ultimately be installed in classmate No. 500031 *Hood*. The tank in question originated in *Hood* but had previously been swapped over in order to keep *Defiance* running. In 2022 it was removed from the latter locomotive when investigations into fuel starvation issues found a suction pipe inside it had loosened and dropped into the fuel residues.

Entitled 'Tag the Tank', all donors pledging £10 or more will have their name included in a hall of fame on the alliance website and on display inside one cab of No. 50031. Additionally, anyone donating £50 or more will have their name professionally applied to the tank.

→ For more details about the appeal, visit www.fiftyfundalliance.co.uk/appeal

IN BRIEF

Crich is back on track

CRICH Tramway Village, home to the National Tramway Museum, returned to full operation on Easter Saturday, March 30 after an unforeseen technical issue with the overhead line equipment delayed the planned March 16 reopening.

Karen Rigg, chairman of the Tramway Museum Society, which owns and operates the village, said: "During the testing of our electrical systems prior to commissioning tramcars for the public to enjoy, a fault was discovered with the overhead line equipment. This necessitated more in-depth testing and rectification work. This has now been completed and we are pleased to welcome visitors to ride on our trams."

Bideford waiting room to become holiday lets

A PLAN to convert the waiting room at Bideford station into three holiday lets has been approved by Torridge District Council.

The plan includes an extension to the building, owned by local hotelier Richard Brend, and a mess area for the adjacent Bideford Railway Heritage Centre, which manages the station site and nearby Instow signalbox.

A telephone box will be moved to the platform and become a pocket railway heritage museum.

A previous scheme for three permanent homes was amended after 69 letters of objection were received, many expressing concern about the effect of long-term plans to reinstate the rail link from Bideford to Barnstaple.

The station opened on November 2, 1855, but closed to regular passengers on October 4, 1965, and completely by 1982.

Vintage bus rally at Dereham

THE Mid-Norfolk Railway's Vintage Bus Day will be staged at Dereham station on Sunday, May 12 from 10am to 5pm.

It will feature about 30 modern or vintage buses and coaches from the 1930s to modern times.

Free vintage bus rides will be available on different routes between Dereham and Hardingham, with connections to Dereham and County School stations and the Dereham to Yaxham circular run.

→ More details are available at midnorfolkrailway.co.uk/vintagebusday

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Above: Visiting Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1210 of 1891 *Sir Berkeley* at Beamish Pit with a rake of chaldron waggons.

Inset: *Sir Berkeley* being linked to the chaldron waggons rake with dumb buffers.

Wheels of industry turn again at Beamish gala

Words by Robin Jones
Pictures by Paul Lewin

VISITING from the Middleton Railway, Manning Wardle Class L 0-6-0ST No. 1210 of 1891 *Sir*

Berkeley – which appeared in BBC TV's 1960s serialisation of *The Railway Children* – became the star of the show again at the Beamish, The Living Museum of the North at the Wheels of Industry gala on

April 6/7. The event saw *Sir Berkeley* haul dumb-buffered waggons for the first time since 1935, when it was sold out of contracting service by Logan & Hemingway, for which it helped build the Great Central



Visiting Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0STs Nos. 855 of 1904 *Hugh Napier* and Nos. 707 of 1899 *Britomart*.



Britomart heads a short freight working. The locomotive came to the Ffestiniog Railway in 1965 after a working life at the Pen-yr-Orsedd Quarry in Snowdonia.



Coffee Pot No.1 on a goods rake which included the new boiler for NER K class 0-4-0T No. 559 being built at Beamish. The project to build a new example of the smallest standard gauge locomotive as produced by a main line company was launched in October 2022.

Railway's London Extension that opened 125 years ago.

Owned by the Vintage Carriages Trust, *Sir Berkeley*, which when hired out acts as an ambassador for both its owning group and its home line, was booked to remain in action at Beamish until May 6.

Packed line-up

Head Wrightson 0-4-0VB Coffee Pot No.1 of 1871 was also in service, alongside the replica of Stephen Lewin 0-4-0WT *Samson*, the original locomotive having been built in 1874 and scrapped in 1904, and which is now entering its ninth year in operation at Beamish.

Visiting from the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways were Hunslet 0-4-0STs Nos. 707 of 1899 *Britomart* and 855 of 1904 *Hugh Napier*.

Also in action were 18 road steam engines, a variety of veteran cars/motorcycles/commercial vehicles, and the museum's own trams and buses, making the most of venue's

two miles of internal road network. The 1820 Pockerley Waggonway was also in operation, as well as all of the museum's other exhibits and activities.

The event overall attracted 10,787 visitors over the two days, despite an indifferent weather forecast.

The upcoming Fares Please! public transport event, being held on June 29/30, will focus on the buses and trams and will see newly-arrived Lisbon tram No. 730 on display and potentially in limited operation for the first time in Beamish ownership.

Meanwhile, in the workshops, the comprehensive rebuild of Gateshead tram No.10 continues, with painting nearly completed and the overhaul of the bogies now largely complete.

The electrical resistances are being renewed and the air brake system thoroughly overhauled.

It is hoped to have this important tram for the museum back in service for 2025.



The Cambrian Railways headquarters building and station in Oswestry await essential repairs. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Oswestry station building repairs go out to tender

WORK to restore the exterior of the Grade II-listed Cambrian Railways building in Oswestry has been placed out for tender by owner Shropshire Council.

The cost of the restoration of what is the town's station is estimated to be £900,000. A bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) was successful in securing 70% of this sum – a total of £630,550, with the council paying the remaining 30% in match-funding.

The external work must be completed by March 2025 to comply with the grant terms, when the scaffolding can be removed. Interested businesses have until May 10 to bid for the work.

Meanwhile, a working group has been set up to consider the long-term use of the building. The group comprises Donald Insall Associates and Tourism UK Ltd, which are consulting with Cambrian Heritage Railways Group, Oswestry Town Council, Oswestry BID and Oswestry Civic Society.

Detailed internal surveys of the structure are also underway, an application for listed building consent has been submitted, and a Conservation Management Plan will be undertaken during 2024 in parallel with the external works.

Following many years of neglect, Shropshire Council took possession of the building in early 2023, after it had suffered storm damage the previous year.

During the storm, several corbels became loose, and scaffolding has been placed around the building to prevent any corbels or pieces of masonry falling on pedestrians or visitors. The ornate row of corbels forming part of the soffit under the eaves are specifically referenced in the listing by Historic England and are a key feature of the building.



Damaged corbels on the building, along with guttering, soffits and drainpipes, will be repaired and repainted. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

An inspection by the council's conservation team and building surveyors has also identified that, at some time in the past 40 years, the original slates from the roof have been removed and replaced with tiles made of a ceramic composite which includes asbestos.

These tiles have now become weathered, and the asbestos fibres are now exposed, requiring replacement.

A recommended end use and business case will be presented to the council's cabinet in the second half of 2024.

Cabinet member for housing and assets, Coun Dean Carroll, said: "I am delighted that this project is progressing following the award of the SPF funding and the cabinet's agreement to provide the match-funding needed."

"Shropshire Council took possession of the Cambrian Heritage Railways building last year to help secure a viable long-term use for what is a very important and historic building for Oswestry. The restoration of the exterior of the building is vital to this – and will be an essential first step to removing the scaffolding and making the building safe, to enable it to be reused and support the regeneration of this part of Oswestry."

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Bristol docks stalwart Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1940 of 1937 Henbury.
BRISTOL MUSEUMS

Experience a dock worker's life through new M Shed opportunities

BRISTOL Museums has relaunched Have A Go experiences, which offers opportunities to operate steam locomotives and restored cranes at the city's docks.

One-to-one tuition will allow participants to take control of Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1940 of 1937 Henbury, as well as one of the iconic cargo cranes, with a 20-minute practical session on each, along with time for photographs and a certificate of achievement as a memento of the day.

Michael Dunn, head of commercial and operations at Bristol Museums, said: "We are thrilled to relaunch our Have A Go experiences (as previously reported in issue 191), offering the unique opportunity to step back in time and operate historic machinery like driving a steam locomotive and electric crane. It's all about bringing history to life and allowing our visitors to truly experience the past in an unforgettable way. It is a unique heritage offer and we are incredibly grateful to our volunteer team who care for our steam engines and cranes."

Henbury spent its working life of 27 years as a shunter at the Port of Bristol Authority's Avonmouth Docks; it was withdrawn in 1964 two years after a major overhaul. Since 1978, it has been the mainstay of operations on the Bristol Harbour Railway.

The M Shed cargo cranes were built in 1951 as part of a group of eight (numbered 25-32), and the four remaining examples are an iconic part of Bristol's skyline.

They last off-loaded cargo from a ship in 1974, and since then local groups and volunteers have worked hard to save and restore the cranes.

Experiences will run from July 1-5 and October 14-18 inclusive and cost £80 each. Bookings can be made online at www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/whats-on/train-and-crane-driving-experiences

Bluebell exhibition celebrates women's rail contribution

By Owen Hayward

THROUGHOUT the last century, the presence of women in the once male-dominated rail industry has boomed as they show they are just as capable at the work involved.

To commemorate their achievements and the struggles they faced to achieve equal treatment within the industry, the Bluebell Railway Museum at Sheffield Park has opened an exhibition that details their progression.

Although women could be employed on railways before 1914, they were often restricted to jobs that, at the time, were perceived as being ones 'only women could do,' such as cleaning, cooking, and ladies room attendants. Those with husbands or fathers employed by a railway company could, however, be given the opportunity to be crossing keepers – a role with great responsibility, although women were paid substantially less than men and were not permitted to join unions.

Uphill fight

The First World War shook the sector, with almost a third of its male workforce joining the Armed Forces, thus creating substantial vacancies, and the railways plunged in crisis.

Against fierce opposition, women were then permitted to take on most jobs in the industry that saw their

proportion of employment there rise from 2% to 66%, with almost 66,000 employed by 1918. However, their numbers and status declined again postwar with an act of Parliament forcing most of them to give up their roles to returning servicemen.

Women continued to fight for fair treatment, and again were called upon to fill roles during the Second World War, but it was not until sexual discrimination legislation of the 1960s and 1970s that it was possible for them to be employed on equal terms as their male counterparts. In 1978, Karen Harrison made history by becoming the first woman in Britain to be promoted to driver.

The exhibition tells the story from the beginning through to the modern day, with images drawn from the museum's extensive archive collection, paying homage to the countless women whose contributions have left an indelible mark on railway history. It is also accessible online through the museum's website, ensuring that the inspiring stories of railway women reach audiences far and wide. An interactive display kiosk allows visitors to further immerse themselves in the story.

The exhibition was inaugurated on March 30 by Haywards Heath Town Mayor Coun Stephanie Inglesfield, who said: "It was my absolute privilege to help open this superb new display



Haywards Heath Town Mayor Coun Stephanie Inglesfield (left) is shown around the museum by curator Malcolm Johnson as a BBC TV crew films the opening of the exhibition.
SUE ELLIOT/BR

which highlights the previously unrecognised women's contribution to this wonderful railway. The display is the brainchild of Malcolm Johnson, who is curator of the Bluebell Railway Museum, and just before cutting the ribbon, I noted what a wonderful thing it was that a man had taken the initiative to bring to light the women's contribution, and that only by working together can we change mentalities."

'Neglected' topic

Malcolm added: "The display describes how, at every stage of railway development, the role of women has been vital. We were delighted that Coun Inglesfield, could open this new display which addresses this much-neglected area of railway history"

The exhibition will run until the end of June.

Hertford East Victorian signalbox rebuilt at Wensleydale

THE Wensleydale Railway is making rapid progress in its project to reassemble the largest signalbox to be dismantled on the national network and rebuilt on a heritage line.

The Victorian timber-framed 'box from Hertford East station is steadily taking shape again in Constable Burton, near Leyburn. The project began in late 2022, and work is progressing well despite challenging weather conditions during the winter of 2023 and the early part of this year.

The 'box was removed when the Hertford station platform was extended to accommodate Greater Anglia's new 10-carriage commuter trains. Greater Anglia donated the 'box to the WR, which, along with the Railway Heritage Trust, has provided grant funding totalling £90,000 towards the restoration costs. The 'box was dismantled piece by piece in November 2021 and every item was carefully catalogued, removed, packed on flat-bed lorries and then



The Grade II-listed Hertford East signalbox taking shape at Constable Burton on the Wensleydale Railway.
NICK KEEGAN/WR

transported 210 miles to North Yorkshire. Following the preparation and construction of a new foundation base, the timbers have been cleaned, repaired, treated, and painted over several months. The main timber structure has been assembled, and work is progressing on the external timber walls and completing the roof and chimney, using the original materials. The work is being done by volunteers, and where appropriate

using traditional techniques that reflect the signalbox's heritage. Once fully fitted out with its lever frame, the 'box will control the passing loop at Constable Burton.

WR director and trustee David Walker said: "Most Victorian 'boxes were demolished, but this one was spared as it is Grade II-listed. It is one of the last Great Eastern Type 7s and dates from the 1880s."

WR fundraising and marketing manager Nick Keegan added: "This project is another example of the high-quality work undertaken by our railway's charitable organisation, the Wensleydale Railway Association (Trust). Having lovingly restored Scruton and Leeming Bar stations with funding support including from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Railway Heritage Trust, this project once again demonstrates the trust's dedication to preserving railway heritage for future generations to enjoy."

Following some routine maintenance, BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76017 passes Orpins Curve on the approach to Rolvenden with a 'Wealden Pullman' fine dining service. ROBIN COOMBS/KESR



Moguls in the Weald for KESR's anniversary gala

ON April 21, BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76017 worked its first public trains since the Bluebell Railway's October 14-16, 2022, Giants of Steam gala. Previously resident at the Mid-Hants Railway, it became wholly owned by John Bunch following the

death of a fellow shareholder and was subsequently taken to Southall, where it remained until April 2, when it arrived at the Kent & East Sussex Railway at the beginning of a minimum year-long hire to the line. No. 76017 will soon be joined

by another of John Bunch's moguls, with SR U No. 31806 visiting the railway (sponsored by model railway manufacturer Rapido Trains) for its June 1/2 50th anniversary gala. The roster includes the Bluebell Railway's 0-6-0 SECR 01 No. 65.

As reported last issue, over the same weekend, BR Standard 7 No. 70000 *Britannia* will work shuttles at the Rother Valley Railway end out of Robertsbridge station. For more information, see kesr.org.uk/50th-anniversary-gala/



The new £800,000 access ramp entrance to Didcot Railway Centre was officially opened by Network Rail chairman Lord Peter Hendy on April 26. An extension to the subway at Didcot Parkway station leads to the ramp, which provides a gentle slope for wheelchair users and parents with buggies to access the level of the railway centre. It has been funded by legacies and donations from members of the Great Western Society. There is also a new wide staircase which replaces the existing narrow one. Left to right are Joe Graham, business assurance director of Great Western Railway, society chairman Richard Preston, and Lord Hendy, with the ramp in the background. FRANK DUMBLETON

Tributes paid to Urie group driving force

VOLUNTEERS of the Urie Locomotive Society and Mid-Hants Railway were in mourning after the group's chairman, Mark Pedley, died on April 12, aged just 65, after losing his fight against cancer.

Mark could regularly be found working at Ropley on the society's current project, S15 4-6-0 No. 499.

ULS vice chairman Neil Marshall said: "As you can imagine, the team at Ropley are absolutely devastated by the loss of Mark.

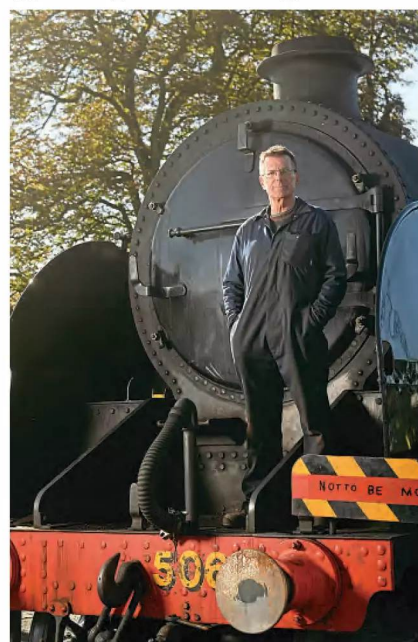
"He was a dear friend to us all, and we all held him the highest regard. We will certainly miss his dogged determination, wicked sense of humour, and his ability to extract money for No. 499 out of anyone who passed by.

"Mark's passing obviously leaves a huge hole, and as was commented in our members' *Stovepipe* magazine, it is difficult for us imagine anyone replacing him. But we must move on; it is what Mark would have wanted us to do.

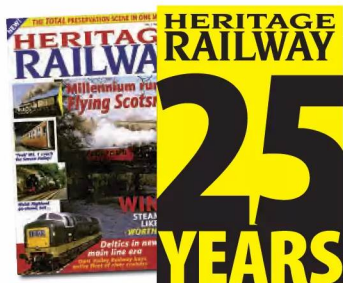
"Please be reassured that the team at Ropley are committed to doubling their efforts to get No. 499 running again, and we respectfully ask you to help us in any way you can.

"Please spread the word far and wide so that we can all enjoy the sight and sound of two Urie S15s working together over the Alps on the Watercress Line.

"I am sure that you will all join me in offering Mark's wife, Lyn, and his family our heartfelt sympathies."



Mark Pedley with Urie Locomotive Society S15 4-6-0 No. 506. ULS



Right: New-build projects present and future side by side? To the left of newly steamed *Betton Grange* inside the Tyseley Locomotive Works yard on April 11 stands the partially dismantled GWR 4-6-0 No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle*, the boiler of which has been earmarked by the Great Western Society's 4709 Group for use in its project to build the 10th example of George Jackson Churchward's 47XX 'Night Owl' mixed traffic 2-8-0. ROBIN JONES



OUR FIRST 25 YEARS!

Heritage Railway founding editor **Robin Jones** looks back over the quarter of a century since the magazine was launched to provide a premium source of news and features covering all corners of the preservation sector.

It was 25 years ago in May 1999 that the first edition of *Heritage Railway* appeared on the newsagents' shelves – after just three months in the planning, preparation and design stages.

In 1951, 73 years ago, the Talylyn Railway became the first in the world to be taken over and run by a volunteer-led preservation society. This concept was then by and large alien to the unsuspecting public, which was to become familiarised with its basic principles via the 1953 Ealing comedy *The Titfield Thunderbolt*.

Our magazine has therefore now been running for just over a third of the heritage era, and compared to its slow-start beginnings in the Fifties, milestones continue to come fast and furious, perhaps even more so than ever before, and we have established a track record of reporting them all.

One early morning in January 1999, when I was looking for freelance work, I telephoned the late Peter Kelly, an accomplished longstanding railway journalist, who was working for CMS Publishing in Stamford.

He arranged to meet me for lunch at the Periwig pub in the town, and following our talks, publisher Paul Appleton drove to my house. In short, we agreed to draw up a plan for a new type of magazine for the sector, one which would cover steam, diesel and electric traction, and a product which we both felt was long overdue.

Heritage Railway was first published on a calendar monthly basis, but after CMS Publishing was acquired by Mortons of Horncastle Ltd in 2001, the magazine became four-weekly. The move saw me appoint my first deputy editor in Brian Sharpe, a highly accomplished photographer with encyclopedic knowledge of the heritage sector, who became a backbone of the title during his 17 years with us.

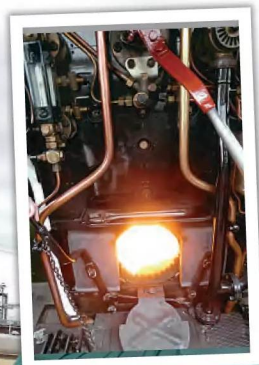
Joining us as a freelance contributor from issue 1 was lineside lensman John Titlow, whose feature on the 25 years of main line heritage activity during our time on the shelves can be enjoyed on pages 66-71.

Despite having worked on the newsdesk of the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, one of the UK's top-selling provincial dailies, and having followed railway magazines from my teenage years, I have never failed to be amazed by the sheer volume of news generated by our sector today.

Among the many stand-out landmark stories that broke during our first quarter-century were the purchase of A3 Pacific No. 4472 by the National Railway Museum – which in 2013-14 organised one of the biggest and most popular key heritage era events of all, the Great Gathering of all six A4 Pacifics including the two borrowed from North America for the occasion, the completion of Stephen Middleton's project to restore from dereliction NER petrol-electric autocar No. 3170, the



A2 Pacific No. 6053 *Blue Peter* passes Hagley with its support coach and a diesel in tow as it returns to Crewe following its successful testing on the Severn Valley Railway, (News, page 11). ALAN CAMPBELL



GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* on April 11, its historic first day of steaming, when it also ran under its own power to be refilled at the water column.
Inset: Glowing for the future: the lit firebox of *Betton Grange*.
BOTH: ROBIN JONES



ancestor of the world's DMUs. Another watershed moment was the completion of new-build A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* which was publicly launched at Darlington Locomotive Works as the culmination of an 18-year project.

By no means the sector's first new-build steam locomotive, it was the first to run on the main line and, plugging a gap in the heritage fleet, has inspired a steady stream of similar projects – with the latest GWR 4-8-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* – having just pulled its first trains, as reported in *Headline News*, pages 6 and 7.

By pure chance, the first steaming on April 11 (as pictured above) and then its first, albeit short, passenger-carrying run on April 27 has made *Betton Grange* a dream subject for *Heritage Railway's* 25th anniversary issue.

Shared anniversary

While Quentin Mc Guinness and fellow 5199

Project Group members came up with the idea in 2008, it was late the following year – 15 years ago – that the first new component for the project was supplied, in the form of the petticoat pipe, a vertical pipe with a bellmouth-shaped lower end extending down from the smokestack into the smokebox which enhances and equalises draft through the boiler tubes.

As we closed for press, we now look forward in earnest to the completion of the final modifications and adjustments to the new *Grange* which will allow it to run on the lines that have so far agreed to borrow it.

Another major breaking landmark story is the return of A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* to steam after 22 years and it passing its running-in tests on the Severn Valley Railway before heading back on to the main line, as reported on *News*, page 11.

Back in 2004, we covered the official opening of the National Railway Museum's Locomotion outreach station in Shildon by former Prime

Minister Tony Blair – a splendid venue which few of the revivalists of the early Fifties would ever have dreamt of, and which continues to go from strength to strength.

It has completed the movement of 46 vehicles into its £8 million New Hall building at its site in Shildon following a complex four-week operation, bringing Locomotion's total number of vehicles to 99 – more than any other indoor display in Europe. New Hall is due to open to the public on May 24, and will advance even further Britain's position as the country which gave steam railways to the rest of the world.

Following in the wake of *Betton Grange*, we are hopeful that we will see the debut of another major new-build project, LBSCR Brighton Atlantic No. 32442 *Beachy Head* on the Bluebell Railway.

Heritage Railway will be there to cover that historic moment – and every other in the sector – as we aim to deliver our all-encompassing compendium of news. **HR**



Left: An aerial view of NER Q7 0-8-0 No. 901 as it is moved into Locomotion's £8 million New Hall on April 22 as part of the National Railway Museum's biggest-ever shunt of 46 vehicles. The shunt, which took more than four weeks to complete, means Locomotion has created Europe's largest under cover display of historic rail vehicles in New Hall, which is situated opposite the museum's existing collection building and due to open to the public on May 24. OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

Right: Inspirational heritage era icon A1 Peppercorn Pacific *Tornado* in the final stages of its overhaul at Locomotive Services Limited in Loughborough. A1SLT



STANIER MOGUL THE STAR IN SEVERN VALLEY GALA STUNNER

Up to nine locomotives – including three visitors – ran during the Severn Valley Railway's successful April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala, reports **John Titlow**

Once again, the Severn Valley Railway excelled itself with its spring gala, with Stanier mogul No. 13268, newly resplendent with its gold leaf, as highlighted last issue, and in its full LMS lined livery being the undoubted star of the show.

About 4700 passengers travelled over the four days and numbers were especially high on the Saturday, while the railway reported that secondary spend was also very good.

However, the build-up to the gala was far from straightforward, partially to the non-appearance of new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, which was not ready in time to be delivered from Tyseley Locomotive Works, as reported on our special webpage, www.heritagerailway.co.uk/18671/betton-grange, after we closed for press last issue.

The winter gala was intended to be Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34027/21C127 *Taw Valley's* last appearance. As another large locomotive was needed and *Taw Valley* still in ticket, it was brought back into action for the spring event to make a welcome, quick

return to traffic, and once again proved to be a good performer.

Despite the valiant efforts of the shed staff at Bridgnorth, GWR 0-6-0ST No. 813 was sadly unable to attend the gala due to a leaking water tank. At very short notice, a replacement was found in GWR pannier tank No. 1369, from the South Devon, which filled the gap admirably, arriving on April 15 and returning on April 22 to Buckfastleigh.

The Erlestoke Manor Fund's flagship namesake GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 was in works the week before the gala having its tender springs replaced. Furthermore, pannier No. 7714 had two large flue tubes replaced just in time for the gala, with work continuing on April 16 – two days before the event's start.

LBSCR 0-6-0T 'Terrier' No. 27 *Fenchurch* arrived from the Bluebell Railway on April 15, also departing on April 24.

Lambton, Hetton & Joicey Colliery Kitson 0-6-2T No. 29 arrived from the North Yorkshire Railway and left for the Mid Hants Railway on April 23.

The gala featured four days of very intensive timetables, and timekeeping was generally good. The weather on the first morning was sunny, and trains were well-loaded. In use was No. 1369, making its only appearance on the two GWR top light carriages on the local between Bridgnorth and Highley. BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 deputised for No. 4930, GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* was on the freight between Kidderminster and Highley, and No. 29 did one full return with six carriages.

The highlight of the day was Stanier 2-6-0 No. 13268 on the SVR's LMS carriages with the addition of the Stove R behind. Two full returns were run, and the last train finished at Bewdley at 8.21pm.

Rain was slow to clear on the Friday when seven locomotives were running – Nos. 13268, 7812, 1369 and 75069, and making their first appearances in the gala were No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*, No. 21C127 in its wartime black livery, and *Fenchurch* on its first trains.

The 'Terrier' worked five returns on the local, comprising two carriage toplights between

Fresh from the paintshop, Stanier mogul No. 13268 passes Little Rock with the Stove R van and LMS set on April 18. JOHN TITLOW





Bridgnorth and Hampton Loade, with its first train off Bridgnorth at 7.55am. Fenchurch suited these carriages very well.

Despite overnight rain and very wet ground, No. 72 caused several lineside fires climbing Eardington Bank, with trains running in the opposite direction stopping to extinguish them.

Saturday was the big one, when all nine locomotives were working trains. Services started departing from Kidderminster at 7.45am, with the last arriving at 11.10pm. From Bridgnorth, the first departed at 7.35am and the last arrived at 10.35pm.

On the Sunday morning, No. 13268 was failed by the crew on the usual daily examination prior to preparation. Its hopper door had jammed open and would not close; the greatest risk was lineside fires, because fire would have been constantly falling out of the ashpan.

Furthermore, it would have allowed cold air into the firebox, which would raise the temperature of the coal and melt the firebars.

Not a serious problem, and one to be expected on a locomotive fresh after overhaul, however, no work could be undertaken by engineers until the mogul had cooled down. On April 23, No. 13268 was being repaired at Bewdley before returning light engine to Bridgnorth for further assessment and work as required.

The mogul was expected to return to traffic very soon, and No. 75027 took over No. 13268's duties. The highlight of the day was the two panniers double-heading the Great Western set on two full returns.

Goods trains ran daily, apart from the Sunday, behind No. 29, 7812 and 1369. The DMU was in use between Kidderminster and Highley on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Once again Eardington station was in the timetable and saw local trains stopping there.

Timekeeping generally good, with only minor delays. The use of Bewdley's island Platforms 2 and 3 is now becoming normal at galas, ➡



Above: As it heads towards Bewdley on April 20, GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* is reflected in the still water below Falling Sands Viaduct, which spans the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and River Stour. ROBERT FALCONER

Left: Bulled West Country light Pacific No. 21C127 *Taw Valley* climbs hard out of Bridgnorth before crossing Oldbury Viaduct on April 20. JOHN TITLOW

Below: Lambton tank No. 29 crosses Oldbury Viaduct with a five-coach train bound for Kidderminster on April 18. JOHN TITLOW





BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 climbs Eardington Bank with a rake of carmine and cream carriages on April 20. JOHN TITLOW



Pannier tanks No. 7714 and visiting No. 1369 head the Great Western set across Victoria Bridge en route to Bewdley on April 18. OWEN HAYWARD

enabling passengers to change trains without having to chase over the footbridge.

More than 70 tons of coal were consumed throughout the entire event, and an added attraction was visiting A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* on display in the dock at Kidderminster Town.

Taw Valley's annual inspection is due on May 16 but still has boiler life left beyond this date. It is being stopped for a stripdown and intermediate overhaul by mutual agreement with the owner and worked one last weekend on April 27/28.

It will be repainted from its 'what might have been' wartime black livery into lined BR green. When it emerges at some point in 2025, it will once again carry the number 34027.

SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "We have seen a bit more of this loco in its current guise than we originally expected, especially as we decided to draft it back into service for our Spring Steam Gala. This is the same locomotive that caused a



Passing a lineside clump of bluebells, GWR 0-6-0PT No. 1369 runs through the woods with the local approaching Highley on April 18. JOHN TITLOW



Stanier mogul No. 13268 on the 4.25pm ex-Bridgnorth on Eardington Bank, slowing to a stop for the footplate crew to extinguish a fire started by LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 on April 19. KEVIN WHITEHURST



The early-morning passenger behind GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 climbs the last few yards to Eardington summit while heading for Bridgnorth on April 20. JOHN TITLOW

worldwide stir in 2022 when it appeared in a striking purple livery, numbered as No. 70, and renamed *Elizabeth II* in commemoration of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

"Some people thought it was controversial for us to do this, others loved it – and it certainly paid great dividends in terms of publicity and attracting passengers, as well as making a wonderful tribute to the now late queen."

No. 7812 will be departing soon for its summer holidays at the seaside on the West Somerset Railway.

April 20 saw the Bewdley bypass closed due to an accident causing traffic chaos, which was not helped by the bridge over the River Severn having one-way traffic only for flood defence works, meaning staff were unable to get to the station for their turns because of the resulting problems.

Jonathan concluded: "This was another excellent event, showing our railway at its very best once again.

"I received so many complimentary comments both online and face-to-face while I was around the railway during the four days of the gala.

"These have been from visitors, including a great many who are also volunteers at other railways, which is a wonderful compliment.

"My thanks to everyone involved in planning and delivery of the gala.

"Despite the challenges presented in recent weeks, and in the few days leading up to our event, once again we've shown why the Severn Valley Railway is the finest UK heritage railway." **HR**

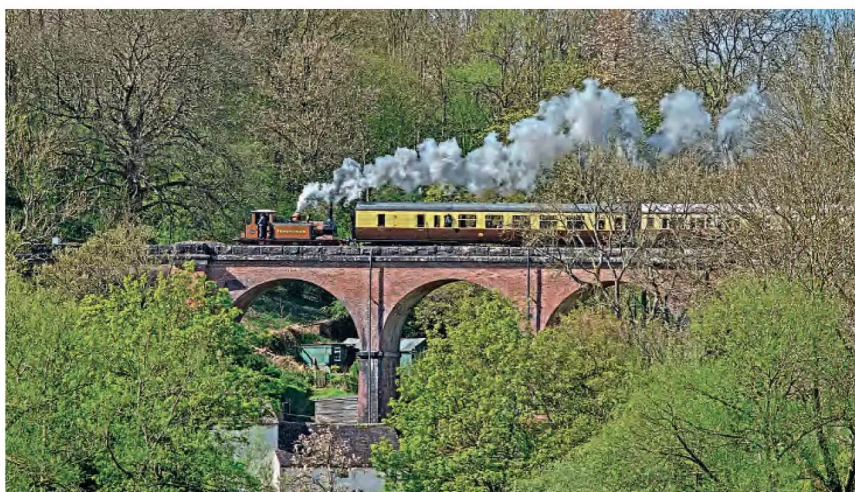
➔ For the latest information on the May 16-19 Spring Diesel Festival, visit <https://svr.co.uk/event/spring-diesel-festival/> and also see news page 16.



Despite a north-easterly wind, the exhaust lifts at Hay Bridge as GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* passes with the Great Western set on April 19. JOHN TITLOW



Pannier tanks Nos. 1369 and 7714 get the Great Western set away from Bewdley on April 21. JOHN TITLOW



'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* crosses Oldbury Viaduct with the local from Bridgnorth on April 20. JOHN TITLOW



HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Visiting LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 Fenchurch is well in control of the early-morning local on April 20 as it climbs away from Eardington Halt up the bank towards Bridgnorth, a rarely-photographed location which 'works' only in the early sunshine. JOHN TITLOW



'Fantastic' success for 'The Great Britain XVI' tour

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company, in partnership with Riley & Son E Ltd Locomotive Engineers and West Coast Railways, has again pulled off a hugely successful nine-day tour with 'The Great Britain XVI', covering 2047 miles.

Starting from London Victoria on Saturday, April 13, LMS 'Black Five' No 44871 took the train through South London, passing through Herne Hill, Bromley, and Rochester, before

pausing at Newington. Continuing on past Faversham, there was a water stop at Whitstable before the train passed Herne Bay and Margate, along the coast to Ramsgate.

Taking the Kent Coast Line, the tour then passed Sandwich and Dover, before following the white cliffs to Folkstone and Ashford.

Picking up the Maidstone Line at Ashford, No. 44871 steamed through Maidstone East and Swanley, before once again taking the Chatham Main Line to head towards Denmark Hill,

Kensington Olympia, and out onto the Great Western Main Line.

Go west

After a brief pause at Southall to pick up classmate No. 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier*, the train continued west past Reading and then turned north at Swindon on to the Golden Valley Line to conclude the day at Cheltenham Spa.

The next day, the destination was Lancaster. Leaving Cheltenham, the train travelled northwards towards

Bromsgrove to face the formidable 1-in-37 gradient of the Lickey Incline. Both Nos. 44871 and 45407 were working hard up the gradient and then around Birmingham to head towards Stafford and follow the West Coast Main Line through to Crewe then on to Lancaster.

On Monday, April 15, a change of motive power saw *Battle of Britain* 4-6-2 No. 34067 *Tangmere* taking the tour north from Lancaster, through Hellfield, and over the Settle and Carlisle line to Carlisle. Here the



Breaking the silence of a Sunday morning, 'Black Five' Nos. 45407 and 44871 storm the Lickey Incline on April 14, day two of 'The Great Britain XVI.' JOHN TITLOW

Bahamas heads for Swanage seaside getaway

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company has announced a rare opportunity to travel to Swanage on a railtour from the main line over the link from Wareham on Wednesday, June 26 with 'The Swanage Belle'.

The tour is planned to be hauled by Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* from London Victoria. The route will see the tour cross the Thames

at Battersea and Barnes, then pass through Feltham to stop at Staines to pick up additional passengers.

From here, the tour will again cross the Thames to join the South Western Main Line at Byfleet Junction, followed by another passenger pickup at Woking. There is planned to be a water stop at Winchfield before the final passenger pick-up at Basingstoke. At Worthing Junction, the tour will

head towards Winchester, then Southampton, Bournemouth, Poole, and finally Wareham for access to the Swanage Railway.

At Swanage, passengers will have about three hours to explore the resort.

The return journey will initially be diesel-hauled from Swanage via Wareham to Southampton, where *Bahamas* will take charge of the train again. The journey back to London

is then planned to be via a different route, turning north to Salisbury and then joining the West of England Main Line at Laverstock North Junction. From here, there will be a straight run back to London Victoria, setting down passengers en route.

Tickets are available in premier, first and standard class, with a discount for junior travellers and family tickets. For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

locomotive was exchanged for both 'Black Fives' again, which took the train over the Glasgow South Western route north, crossing the border into Scotland at Gretna Green, and then heading towards Dumfries and finally Glasgow.

Tuesday, April 16 saw both 'Black Fives' in charge again. Leaving Glasgow, the train headed eastwards through the suburbs towards Larbert and then took the line to Stirling, through Gleneagles and continued to Perth on the River Tay. After a water stop at Perth, it took the Highland Main Line to Blair Atholl and Inverness.

The following day, passengers who had chosen the steam-hauled excursion to the Kyle of Lochalsh were treated to 'Black Five' No 44871 flying solo along the line. No. 44871 then returned to Inverness via the same route for the passengers' overnight stay.

Edinburgh arrival

Leaving Inverness on Thursday, April 18, the train, with both 'Black Fives' at the head, followed the coastal route overlooking the Moray Firth before passing through Elgin, and turning slightly inland towards Keith.

The tour then took the Aberdeen to Inverness Line across country to the Granite City. From Aberdeen, the tour ran to Dundee, Perth, and via Ladybank and the Forth Bridge to arrive in Edinburgh Waverley in the late evening.

On Friday, April 19, the train left Edinburgh with both 'Black Fives' in charge again to head towards Carlisle. Here, *Tangmere* was exchanged for the pair and took the West Coast Main Line through Penrith and over Shap Summit to Wigan. The final part of the day's journey involved the line to Liverpool via St Helens, with Liverpool being the destination for the evening.

The next day, No. 45407 took passengers from Liverpool Lime Street to Chester, where No. 44871 was added. The tour then headed to Crewe before taking the Welsh Marches Line south to Shrewsbury on to Craven Arms for the Heart of Wales Line to Swansea and the last overnight stay of the tour. Sunday, April 21, the final day of



On a windy day – a feature of the Scottish section of the tour – the two 'Black Fives' near Dalnaspidal as they head along the Highland Main Line to Drumochter summit, the highest on the national network at 1480 feet, on April 16. DAVE COLLIER



The Vale of Glamorgan line sees only occasional steam. Working solo, LMS 'Black Five' No. 44871 passes Rhoose, near Barry, while working the section on 'The Great Britain XVI' from Swansea to Gloucester on April 21. DAVE COLLIER

the journey, saw the train leave Swansea behind No. 44871 and follow the Great Western Main Line to Cardiff. Crossing the border at the River Wye, the tour continued onto the Newport-Gloucester Line past Lydney to Gloucester, then over the Golden Valley Line. Passing Swindon,

the trip saw a final sprint along the Great Western Main Line on route back to Paddington. A total of 186 guests were carried.

RTC managing director Kelly Osborne said: "The Great Britain XVI' was absolutely fantastic. From an operational point of

view, it could not be faulted. We cannot thank operator West Coast Railways enough.

"For many on board, the highlights of the tour were the trip to the Kyle of Lochalsh and the journey over the Central Wales Line." (See picture, Contents, pages 4/5).

Head to the west with Saphos Trains 'The Golden Hind'

ON Thursday, July 11, Saphos Trains will run a tour to Plymouth under the title of 'The Golden Hind'.

It begins at Milton Keynes Central and will head south along the West Coast Main Line to pick up additional passengers at Leighton Buzzard, Hemel Hempstead and Watford Junction. From here, the train will skirt north-west London to take the Great Western Main

Line for further passenger pickups at Ealing Broadway, Slough and Maidenhead.

At Reading, the tour will head via Westbury to Taunton, where the motive power will be swapped for steam from a pool of either LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot*, West Country 4-6-2 No. 34046 *Braunton*, or BR Class 7 Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia*.

After Taunton, the train will head to Exeter via Dawlish and the South Devon Banks

Arriving in the early afternoon, there will be three hours to explore Plymouth before the return trip via the same route.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class and standard class. For more details and to book, visit saphostrains.com

PRE-ORDER ISSUE 320

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West Coast restarts 'The Jacobite' – but with 'modern' coaches

WEST Coast Railways restarted the popular 'The Jacobite' service from Fort William to Mallaig on April 15 – but using carriages from its fleet which have been fitted with central door locking (CDL) to comply with current regulations.

However, the trains are shorter than usual, with no Harry Potter-type compartment coaches and reduced first class capacity. Initially, only the morning service was being run, although the afternoon service is also expected to start from early May.

The carriages will be used while West Coast waits to hear whether its latest application to the Office of Rail and Road for an exemption to allow the use of the usual Mk.1 and Mk.2 coaches, which do not have CDL, will be granted.

West Coast commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are thrilled to have 'The Jacobite' back up and running and look forward to welcoming customers on board. The team has done an exceptional job in getting a fleet of carriages ready to kick-start our 2024 season.

"We continue to engage both the ORR and Department for Transport with a request for the temporary exemption so we can operate our heritage carriages on the main line.

"Our customers have told us for many years that travelling in these carriages is a highlight of 'The Jacobite' experience. The exemption will also enable us to run an extra first class carriage and our famous Harry Potter carriage.

"For now, we are delighted that we can start to take visitors across the Scottish Highlands to visit Fort William, Mallaig and Glenfinnan. We understand those communities have been impacted by the suspension of 'The Jacobite' and I hope this offers reassurance to local business owners."

Passengers whose previous bookings were cancelled when the temporary exemption application was previously refused have been invited to rebook. More details can be obtained by emailing enquiries@westcoastrailways.net

Rail Minister requested to intervene in 'The Jacobite' coaches dispute

By Robin Jones

EIGHT MPs from across the political spectrum have signed a letter to Rail Minister Huw Merriman MP to support West Coast Railways' bid to continue using its slam-door carriages during its 'The Jacobite' services on the West Highland Extension.

West Coast has operated the service for more than 30 years, and for nearly 20 of those years, the Office of Rail and Road has granted it an exemption to operate with hinged-door carriages on the main line. During this time, no serious injury has been attributable to the lack of central door locking (CDL), but the ORR is now insisting that all of its coaches used for the service are so fitted.

To operate this year's programme, WCR has again applied to the ORR to renew its long-term exemption certificate and requested a temporary exemption to operate from March, while the ORR assessed its longer-term submission. As *Heritage Railway* closed for press, no decision had been made by the ORR on the new application.

As previously reported, the ORR has not yet granted a temporary exemption, so WCR had no option but to suspend 'The Jacobite' services at the start of the season as it has no suitable CDL-fitted Mk. 1s, which, WCR claimed, significantly impacted the local economies of the communities it serves.

The eight MPs, who represent

constituencies in which WCR operates or who have an interest in preserving the UK's heritage railways, have written a joint letter to the Rail Minister highlighting that the ORR's policies allow for exceptions to fitting CDL for heritage carriages and that the ORR should therefore consider WCR's application, designed to meet one of those exceptions, with an open mind.

The MPs stated that in applying for a temporary exemption, West Coast is asking no more than to be treated in the same way as other operators who are currently operating hinged-door rolling stock on the main line. If the ORR is allowing other operators to use hinged-door carriages on the main line, there can be no safety reason to justify the refusal of the temporary exemption for West Coast, it is argued.

The ORR's approach should not be clouded by the fact that WCR has not to date made an application to fit CDL, said the MPs.

The eight who signed the letter are David Morris MP (Con, Morecambe and Lunesdale), Tim Farron MP (Lib Dem, Westmoreland and Lonsdale), Sarah Dines MP (Con, Derbyshire Dales), Jamie Stone MP (Lib Dem, Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross), James Wild MP (Con, North West Norfolk), Rt Hon Sir Graham Brady (Con, Altrincham and Sale West), Robbie Moore MP (Con, Keighley) and Cat Smith MP (Lab, Lancaster and Fleetwood).

The letter asks the Rail Minister

to engage with the ORR, saying: "Regulators have enormous powers which, if exercised unreasonably, have the capacity to bring businesses they regulate to a quick end. It is for that reason they are politically accountable – it is a vital democratic safeguard."

Worldwide appeal

West Coast commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are grateful to the MPs for voicing their concerns. The points in the letter concern the fairness of the regulator's approach to us. Our priority is to get a temporary exemption in place as soon as possible to minimise potential disruption to our programme and our customers.

"The Jacobite' service is enjoyed by thousands of people from around the world every year. It brings a huge boost to the local economy in western Scotland, as well as to UK tourism overall.

"We remain committed to working with the ORR to find a long-term solution which safeguards the future of heritage services on the main line and again appeal to it to reconsider our request for a temporary exemption."

The MPs are joined by thousands of members of the public have signed a petition, started by a Mallaig business owner, to get 'The Jacobite' back on track. Anyone who wants to add their name can sign at www.change.org/p/get-the-jacobite-steam-train-back-on-tracks



LNER A4 4-6-2 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* battling the 40mph-plus headwinds of Storm Kathleen near Ryther, in North Yorkshire, on the East Coast Mail Line with Steam Dreams' Newcastle-King's Cross excursion on April 6. RODNEY TOWERS



West Highland Extension landmark Glenfinnan Viaduct, completed in 1901 by Sir Robert McAlpine, was one of the last major constructions of the Victorian railway revolution. It cost £18,904 – more than £2 million in today's money – to build and is now undergoing £3.4 million of repairs. CONNOR MOLLISON/NR

Network Rail commences £3.4m repair project on iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct

NETWORK Rail has begun a £3.4 million project to repair the 123-year-old Glenfinnan Viaduct – a trademark feature of the West Highland Extension and a magnet for Harry Potter fans.

Along with principal contractor AmcoGiffen, engineers will assess the condition and strength of the viaduct, while carrying out work to protect it from water erosion, completing concrete repairs and making improvements beneath the track to keep the stone ballast in place.

The repairs to the longest concrete viaduct in Scotland, scheduled to

take just under a year to complete, are part of Network Rail's ongoing maintenance programme and will help futureproof the landmark, which sits 100 feet above the River Finnan, 17 miles from Fort William.

There will be no disruption to rail services during the work and no change to the appearance of the structure when complete.

Network Rail scheme project manager Laura Craig said: "The viaduct is an iconic landmark which attracts visitors from across the world, so we have worked hard to develop a solution which will help preserve the structure and respect

its historic significance, while minimising the visual impact of our work."

ScotRail service delivery director Mark Ilderton said: "ScotRail journeys on the West Highland Line, taking in the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct, are incredibly popular, and it is fantastic to see this work being carried out by our colleagues at Network Rail Scotland.

"There will be no disruption to any of our services during the work, and we look forward to giving as many people as possible the chance to experience the journey in the coming weeks and months."

An alternative to 'The Jacobite'?

WITH the start of West Coast Railways' 'The Jacobite' season being delayed, another operator used the opportunity to run trips over the West Highland Extension.

Locomotive Services Group ran two Class 37-hauled trips on April 8 and 9 under the banner of 'The West Highlanders' and using its Mk. 3 ScotRail livery set of carriages, which comply with the ORR requirement for central door locking.

The trains, which included an on-board buffet, departed Fort William at 8.50am for the magnificent 84-mile round trip to Mallaig, with a short break from 10.50am to 11.30pm, before returning to Fort William at 1.20pm. Tickets were available as 'pay on the day' from staff on board, and the trip repeated on April 19.

There had been speculation that ScotRail would increase services on the route to meet the demand from 'The Jacobite' customers, including Harry Potter fans. However, ScotRail said in a statement that it did not have enough capacity in the network to run any extra trains and, in the event, loading on the service trains was not adversely affected.



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SRPS main line Mk.1 set update

By Tim Hobman

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society's railtour division aims to resume main line excursions later this year following a period of inactivity on the network over the last 12 months while its carriages have undergone extensive repair works.

Early in 2023, SRPS Railtours announced it was pausing its programme of main line excursions while vital work was undertaken on its fleet of Mk. 1 carriages to ensure they would continue to be fit for service. Part of this scheme has vehicles fitted with central door locking, a system that has been a hot topic in main line circles, with operators like West Coast Railways applying to the Office of Rail and Road for extensions to exemptions to their stock.

The SRPS launched a £500,000 fundraising appeal to help finance

the work required, which has seen bodywork across many carriages repaired, as well as the regular crash pillar issues dealt with. However, as with many projects of this nature and magnitude, the work has ended up taking longer and costing more than was initially hoped for.

On April 15, it was announced that some of the group's vehicles would be departing the SRPS for completion works or repairs to be continued by third party contractors in a bid to expedite their return to service.

"The SRPS remains committed to main line operations which provide a valuable income stream to support its charitable objectives" a SRPS Railtours statement said.

"In doing so, the work has involved extensive refurbishment of the stock and the fitting of central door locking to all vehicles to ensure compliance with ORR regulations.



Scottish Railway Preservation Society Railtours' Mk.1s have been undergoing heavy repair works over the last 12 months, with hopes of a return to main line tours later this year. SRPS

"One of the reasons for the work taking so long is the need to keep vehicles operational to support an enhanced programme of events on the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway.

"However, with several vehicles now approaching completion, the decision has been made for some coaches to leave Bo'ness for completion by third party contractors to hopefully expedite the work. While the society will not advertise any excursions until

it is confident that it have sufficient operational vehicles, there is a desire to resume railtour operations during 2024."

Any donations towards the cost of the overhauls and help the society resume the popular railtours may be made via <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/20942>

With more than 60 carriages in its collection, the SRPS also disposed of three surplus coaches during March.

Fate sealed as demolition of Ayr Station Hotel scheduled

By Hugh Dougherty

SOUTH Ayrshire Council has announced that the remaining tower and the north section of Ayr Station Hotel will be demolished by mid-June.

Its removal will allow ScotRail to restore a full service of electric trains to and from Glasgow and to reinstate the diesel service to Girvan and Stranraer, which has not run since the initial hotel fire in September 2023.

The line south has been mothballed since then, and fears have been expressed by politicians and the community in Stranraer that it may not reopen, despite ScotRail and Network Rail stating that they are fully committed to doing so as soon as it is safe.

The demolition of the south range of the building was completed on April 11, and the council said that a structural survey of the tower and north range showed that there is no alternative but to demolish the remaining section of the former Grade B-listed hotel, built to a French-inspired design by the Glasgow & South Western Railway in 1885 as the pride of the line.

The news has come as a blow to heritage campaigners in Ayr and nationally, who have been pushing since 2007 for the hotel, owned by Malaysian businessman Eng Huat Ung, to be made safe, refurbished, and repurposed, both to preserve a priceless piece of Victorian railway heritage and to continue to be an asset to the town.



Saved for posterity thanks to Heritage Railway! The carved G&SWR crest that stood above the hotel's south range will go to a good home once a decision about its future has been made.
HUGH DOUGHERTY

Esther Clark, chair of Save Ayr Station Hotel Action Group, which enlisted support from bodies including Save Britain's Heritage, architects, politicians, both local and national, and railway enthusiasts, said: "We fought hard to try to avoid the final end of what was a superb building but have had to bow to what became inevitable after partial demolition started. It is a tragedy for Ayr and for our railway heritage.

"A building of national importance has been destroyed by a combination of neglect, wilful fire-raising by vandals, and the failure of all the agencies involved to take timely action. The whole seven-year saga, since we became involved, serves as a terrible warning to everyone who values historic railway buildings such



Work starts to demolish the north range of the station hotel, with the fire-damaged tower to the right. HUGH DOUGHERTY

as this which have been allowed to fall into a state of dangerous neglect to act quickly to save them before it becomes too late."

Following an enquiry made by Heritage Railway, asking if the unique carved stone Glasgow & South Western Railway crest which stood at roof level on the south range could be saved, the local authority took immediate steps to conserve it, and also did the same for the G&SWR War Memorial which sat on the platform wall of the hotel's north range.

A council spokesman said: "We made arrangements for our demolition contractors to ensure that the crest and memorial were removed safely, and both are now in store until decisions are made of where they should be placed."

Doon Valley Railway chairman Archie Thom has already said that the DVR would be happy to give the crest a permanent home at its Dalmellington base and has welcomed the conservation of the artefact and the war memorial.

ScotRail and Network Rail, in consultation with the council, will decide on the final location for the war memorial, which was installed at Glasgow St Enoch Station and, following St Enoch's closure in 1965, was transferred to Ayr.

"Although it is sad that the station hotel has had to be demolished, it's good to see that these two important pieces of G&SWR heritage have been saved, and our offer to give an appropriate and secure home to the unique crest still stands."

125 special for UK Railtours

A tour to Skegness on board a 125 High Speed Train under the title of 'The Return of the Jolly Fisherman 125 Special' is to be run by UK Railtours on Saturday, June 22.

In partnership with the 125 Group and Rail Adventure, UK Railtours will provide something a little bit different in terms of the look of the train, with the power cars being provided by Rail Adventure.

Painted in two-tone grey, they are usually employed in moving empty stock around the country. This arrangement means that passengers will have a rare chance to ride behind the locomotives in a passenger train.

Starting from St Pancras, the train will collect additional passengers at Luton Airport Parkway, Kettering and Leicester, before diverting from the Midland Main Line at Nottingham and heading east.

Passengers will have about four hours to explore the seaside resort before returning home via the same route. For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com



Merchant Navy 4-6-2 No. 35028 *Clan Line* heads through Chertsey on a test run on April 19 prior to its comeback trip eight days later (see Headline News, pages 8/9). JAMES CUMMINS/MNPLS

One way leads to big success for Western main line comeback

PATHFINDER Tours' April 14 'One Way Wizzo' proved a to be a winning combination for all as crowds descended to catch a glimpse of the Diesel Traction Group's Class 52 D1015 *Western Champion* on its first public main line outing since December 2016.

With a train packed to the brim and enthusiasts filling vantage points along the route, the trip was run as a single journey from Paddington to Birmingham New Street, comprising 13 coaches with a Class 57 at the rear for a total of 550 tonnes. The Western was put through its paces following main line testing carried out in March as engine repair work came to its conclusion.

The route saw the Class 52 skirt Didcot Railway Centre, where classmate D1023 *Western Fuselier* currently resides, having arrived there on loan from the National Railway Museum in January. The tour then took the diversionary line at Stechford towards Aston and Tame Bridge Parkway, before continuing to Bescot yard where *Western Champion* was detached. The service then reversed, with the Class 57 taking the stock to Birmingham New Street to allow passengers to alight.

With D1015 having successfully proven its capabilities once more, Pathfinder has confirmed that the locomotive will now operate its June 1 'English Riviera Airshow' trip from Tame Bridge Parkway to Paignton for the first day of that weekend's annual aerial display of classic aircraft.

Passengers will be able to join the service at Birmingham New Street, Dorridge, Leamington Spa, Banbury, Oxford and Swindon, with the tour departing from its originating station at 6.20am and making its



D1015 *Western Champion* pauses at Banbury for a photo stop during the April 14 'One Way Wizzo' to Birmingham. PAUL FINCH/WESTERN LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION

way through the West Midlands, Cherwell Valley, Blackdown Hills and along the iconic Dawlish sea wall on its way to Torquay (for the airshow) and Paignton.

The return journey will travel via Taunton and the Somerset Levels on its way towards Bristol, from where it then heads back towards Swindon to commence set-downs at all the same pick-up points, before arriving back at Tame Bridge Parkway at about 11pm.

D1015 will be timed to run at a maximum 75mph with a 12-coach load, plus a Class 50 locomotive on the rear that will be drawn from the Class 50 Alliance collection of locomotives. To book, visit www.pathfindertours.co.uk/events/the-english-riviera-airshow

There-and-back tours at North Norfolk ales gala

By Tim Hobman

THE Branch Line Society has announced plans for two railtours to coincide with the July 7-9 Rails and Ales event at the North Norfolk Railway.

'The Holt Hoover', operated by Hanson & Hall, is planned for Thursday, June 6, to transport customers to the event the day before. The railtour, involving locomotives Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* and Class 33 No. 33012 *Lt. Jenny Lewis R.N.*, will provide a way of the locomotives getting to Sheringham to participate in the weekend's running on the heritage line.

Starting from Eastleigh with Mk1 stock and No. 50008 leading, the tour will take the Wallers Ash Loop to Basingstoke, Reading and Slough, picking up passengers at each station. From here, the train will pass Greenford West Junction for further passengers to be picked up at South Ruislip, High Wycombe, Haddenham & Thame Parkway, Banbury and Warwick Parkway.

Passing Dorridge, Tyseley and Landor Street Junction, the next pick-up is planned to be Coleshill Parkway, before heading via Nuneaton to Leicester for another pick-up. The route will then see the railtour take the Peterborough line, via Melton Mowbray, with a brief pause at Humberstone Road Goods for *Thunderer* to run round to the rear of the train. The next pick-up point will be Peterborough, before the train heads via March Up Goods, Ely West Curve, and Brandon Down Goods Loop, to Norwich.

There will be an opportunity for passengers to alight at Norwich if they would rather spend the evening there.

Norwich is the final pick-up point, but as it is close to the tour's end point, there will be a reduction in fare. After a reverse move at Norwich, the train will head via Cromer to arrive in Sheringham in time for an evening meal. This is a one-way journey only, with tickets available in standard class.

Once the weekend activities are over at the NNR, there is a separate tour planned to return the locomotives and stock to the West Midlands. Under the title of 'The Cromer Crompton', the train is planned to leave Sheringham at just after 5pm on Sunday, June 9, with the first stop being Norwich to set down and pick up passengers. From here, there will be a reverse move towards Ely and onto the Trowse Up and Down Loop before arrival in Ely to set down passengers.

Another reverse move will see the train head via the March Down Goods line to Peterborough for another opportunity for passengers to alight. Heading for Leicester via Melton Mowbray, the tour will set down passengers at Leicester, Nuneaton, Coleshill Parkway and finally Water Orton.

Tickets are available for this trip in standard class, with a discount for passengers either travelling to Norwich or Ely. However, it should also be noted that this is also a one-way trip.

For further information and to book places, head online and visit www.branchline.uk

Tornado tour dates released

COMEBACK tours for A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* following the completion of its overhaul are now on sale.

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust has announced that on Saturday, June 29, 'The Ribbleshead Rambler' will run from Leicester, East Midlands Parkway, Chesterfield, Doncaster and Leeds to Carlisle, taking Settle and Carlisle line in both directions.

Friday, July 12 will offer nearly 300 miles of steam with 'The Caledonian Express' tour from Birmingham New Street, Tame Bridge Parkway, Wolverhampton, Stafford and Crewe to Edinburgh, crossing Shap and Beattock.

'The Aberdonian' will take the coastal route from Edinburgh via the Forth Bridge to the Granite City on July 18, 25 and 27, and September 5, 12 and 14.

Castle and distillery experiences are available.

Saturday, September 7 will see 'The Clyde Aberdonian' run from Glasgow and Stirling to Aberdeen; the castle and distillery experiences again being optional.

'The Chatsworth Pullman' on Thursday, September 19, sees *Tornado* and the Belmond British Pullman luxury train visit stately Chatsworth House from London Victoria.

More information is available, and bookings can be made at www.21stcenturysteam.co.uk or on 01325 488215.

Tornado was due to arrive at the Great Central Railway in early May for running-in to commence before visiting the Nene Valley Railway on May 21-27, as previously reported in *Heritage Railway*.



Hastings DEMU No. 1001 passes at speed through Hersham at sunset with the return journey of the April 6 'Cogload Climber' railtour to Exeter. The unit's next provisional outing is scheduled for June 8 with a trip to Skegness, providing viable timings can be obtained for the proposed run; see hastingsdiesels.co.uk/railtours for further details when available. JAMES CUMMINS

TABLE ONE: CARNFORTH TO CARLISLE

Date Saturday, March 16, 2024
Train 6.56am Birmingham New Street to Carlisle
Loco GWR 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*
Load Nine coaches, 312 tons tare 345 tons gross
Driver Alastair Meanley
Firemen Sam Perry
Recorder A Smeaton
Position Ninth coach
Weather Dry and cool

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Carnforth DGL	0.00	0.00	00	00	47 late
Carnforth	0.34		01	49	20½
MP 7	1.09		03	15	39/39½
MP 8	2.09		04	48	37½
MP 9	3.09		06	25	37/36
Yealand MP 9½	3.59		07	15	38
Burton and Holme	4.84		08	51	55½
MP 13	7.09		11	04	65
Minthorpe	7.63		11	35	63
Hincaster Jct	9.59		13	33	57½
MP 16½	10.59		14	38	55½
MP 17	11.09		15	10	57½
MP 18½	12.59		16	50	50½
Oxenholme	13.23	15.30	17	33	52½
MP 21	15.09		19	51	47
Hay Fell	16.59		21	53	43
MP 23½	17.59		23	19	41½
Lambrigg	18.34		24	25	39½
MP 25½	19.59		26	23	37½
MP 26	20.09		27	11	38
Grayrigg RR	20.26	24.30	27	27	39½
MP 27	21.09		28	31	52½
Low Gill	22.09		29	37	56
MP 29	23.09		30	39	61½
Dillicar	24.09		31	34	67½
MP 31½	25.59		32	52	71½
Tebay	26.30	31.30	33	29	68
MP 33	27.09		34	11	64½
MP 34	28.09		35	12	54½
MP 34½	28.59		35	46	49
Scout Green	29.24		36	38	42
MP 36	30.09		37	57	38½
MP 37	31.09		39	40	34
MP 37¼	31.34		40	07	34
MP 37½	31.59		40	32	36½
Summit Sign	31.70	40.00	40	43	39½
Shap Old Station	33.81		43	03	66½/66
Harrisons Sidings	35.75	44.00	44	44	71½
Thrimby Grange	37.09		45	49	76/76½
MP 44	38.09		46	39	68
MP 45	39.09		47	31	70½/77
Clifton	41.09		49	08	75½
Eden Valley Jct	42.09		49	57	64/22* sigs
MP 50	44.09		53	34	26½
Penrith	45.25	56.00	58	56	
	0.00		00	00	49 late
MP 53	1.84		04	25	47½
Plumpton	4.84		07	25	70½
Calthwaite	7.23		09	22	78
MP 60	8.84		10	37	76½/74½
Southwaite	10.59		12	00	76½
MP 63	11.84		12	58	78
Wreay	13.03		13	54	76½/76/77½
MP 66	14.84		15	20	73
Upperby	16.84		17	15	37*
Carlisle	17.88	24.30	21	07	45 late

*brakes or speed restriction

WITH FULL REGULATOR

LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



In his latest column, **Don Benn** covers the work of GWR Castle 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* on the Vintage Trains 'Shap Mountaineer' to Carlisle on March 16.

TYSELEY-BASED Vintage Trains is fitting central door locking to its traditional carriages and is able and prepared to run some of its trains free of a diesel tail gunner, as it is not using stock which requires power for air conditioning and lighting and so on. Owing to a prior commitment, I was unable to join the run over Shap to Carlisle on March 16, but my colleague Sandy Smeaton was, so here is his story of the day.

"Vintage Trains promised GWR Castle 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* both ways over Shap unassisted and duly delivered, despite surprisingly not filling the train. They were still making offers at the last minute, and on the day, there was no difficulty getting a milepost side seat – and this with a relatively small train. It is to be hoped that it does not prevent VT organising similar trips in the future. No. 5043 went to Carnforth on Friday, March 15 with its support coach and the water carrier.

"Class 47 D1755 had the less than arduous task of working seven coaches from New Street to Preston, arriving two minutes early. Here was a very unfortunate delay as a person on the train fell ill and the emergency services had to be called, so D1755 set off for Carnforth 53 late, eventually reaching 90 between Galgate and Oubeck. A check at Lancaster

meant only half a minute was recovered on the 30½ allowed."

Joined by Tangmere

"Fifteen minutes after our arrival into No. 1 road at Carnforth Down goods loop, No. 34067 *Tangmere* pulled into No. 2 loop with the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express', formed of 11 well-filled Mk2Fs, but sadly with the ETH-dictated 47 on the back. No. 5043, together with the GUV water carrier and support coach, replaced D1755 and we moved off 47 late with a load of 312 tons tare, about 345 gross.

"Table One shows the details of the run to Carlisle. A brisk start was made passing MP7 at 39mph, with a fall to 36 before MP9½. The maximum at MP3 was 65. Oxenholme was passed at 52½, Hay Fell at 43, and Lambrigg at 39½ with a minimum of 37½ (37.7 on the GPS) before Grayrigg.

"The exhaust had been dirty from the start and did not clear until approaching Hay Fell. Acceleration through the Lune Gorge produced a maximum of 71½ at MP31½. Greenholme, MP34, was passed at 54½, Scout Green at 42 with a minimum of 34 over the ¼-mile from MP37 before the summit, with the latter passed in 40 minutes and 43 seconds from the start. The power output was generally between 900 and 1000edbhp south of Lambrigg but rose to



Castle No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* at the head of 1Z43 at Carlisle on March 16. SANDY SMEATON



GWR 4-6-0 No. 5043 Earl of Mount Edgcumbe heading the empty coaching stock at Carlisle on March 16.
SANDY SMEATON

more than 1000 from there to Grayrigg. However, on the 1-in-75 to the summit, power steadily increased from 1165 between MP34 and MP35 to 1415 between MP37 and 37¼. The booked pathing stop was made at Penrith, where the late-running 10.04am Manchester Airport-Edinburgh overtook. There was then a brisk run down to Carlisle, arriving 45 late.

"D1755 eventually came onto the rear before the train ran north and reversed into Siding A. No. 5043 with its water carrier and support coach then came off and propelled out to Upperby to be serviced and turned on the triangle. The return leg started 10 minutes late from Platform 3 in very light rain but made steady progress to pass MP60 at 49, falling slightly to 47½ before the gradient eased at MP57.

"The maximum after Penrith was 67, starting the 1-in-125 climb to Harrison's at 59, falling to a steady 42½ requiring between 1100 and 1200edbhp. The short level at Shap's old station site produced 49½, with a final minimum of 44½ at the MP38¼ gradient change. The run down to Carnforth was controlled with nothing higher than 73 and then a checked approach to cross over the Up main to access Carnforth loop for the pathing stop".

Competent run

Table Two shows the detail of this section. "The restart was only one minute late, and 56mph was reached by Morecambe South Jn before a check approaching Lancaster, so the station was passed at no more than 41½, falling to 32 at the top of the mile at 1-in-98. By MP12, 70mph was reached momentarily, before easier running on to the Preston set-down, but time was kept almost exactly.

"The restart was four late, with Leyland passed at 48½ and Balshaw Lane at 60½, before a minimum of 47½ at Coppull Summit. Again, there was no excess of speed down to Wigan, but Winwick Junction was passed at 70½ before the Warrington stop. The 31 minutes allowed were exceeded by two minutes.

"The last section to Crewe allowed an easy 43 minutes for the 24 miles, so in fading light and slightly heavier rain, the highest speed was only 61½ coming off Dutton Viaduct, with a trundle in from Winsford to get a path over to Platform 12.

"At Crewe, D1755 came onto the front for the final run back to Birmingham New Street. Given the unfortunate event in the morning at Preston, we were lucky to get such a good path to Carlisle. The recent run wasn't quite as good as its previous two; nevertheless, it was competent enough and these days a rare and precious unassisted steam run."

I am very grateful for Sandy for his continued encouragement and support enabling me to carry on with my column, albeit on an intermittent basis. **HR**

TABLE TWO: CARLISLE TO CARNFORTH

Date	Saturday, March 16, 2024				
Train	3.05pm Carlisle to Crewe				
Loco	GWR 4-6-0 No. 5043 Earl of Mount Edgcumbe				
Load	Nine coaches, 312 tons tare 345 tons gross				
Driver	Kevin Cronin				
Firemen	Simon Horrobin				
Recorder	A Smeaton				
Position	Third coach				
Weather	Occasional light rain				
	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Carlisle	0.00	0.00	00	00	10 late
Upperby	1.03		03	62	29½
MP 67	2.03		05	51	31
MP 66	3.03		07	44	32
MP 65	4.03		09	35	33½
Wreay	4.78		10	55	34½
MP 63	6.03		12	56	39½
Southwaite	7.28		14	39	46
MP 60	9.03		16	53	49
MP 59	10.03		18	07	48/48½
MP 58	11.03		19	21	48/47½
MP 57	12.03		20	37	50
Plumpton	13.03		21	44	57/59
MP 53½	15.53		24	22	56
Penrith	17.78	32.00	26	34	64½/64
MP 50¼	18.78		27	30	67
MP 49	20.03		28	39	62
Eden Valley Jct	21.03	36.30	29	37	59
Clifton	22.03		30	41	54
MP 46	23.03		31	50	50
MP 45	24.03		33	04	47½
MP 44	25.03		34	23	44½
Thrimby Grange	26.03		35	44	44
MP 42	27.03		37	06	42½
Harrisons Sidings	27.36		37	35	42½
MP 41	28.03		38	31	43½
MP 40	29.03		39	54	45
Shap Old Station	29.30		40	16	48/49½
MP 39	30.03		41	09	46½
MP 38¼	30.78		42	09	44½
Shap Summit	31.53	44.30	43	06	51½
Scout Green	33.88		45	22	70 max
Tebay	36.81	49.00	47	59	65½/68
MP 29	40.03		51	02	57½/60
Grayrigg	43.03	55.00	54	09	57
Lambrigg	44.78		55	45	71/73
Hay Fell	46.53		57	14	68/65/70½
Oxenholme	49.91	60.00	60	13	69
MP 17½	51.53		61	37	72
Hincaster Jct	53.53		63	18	69½
Minthorpe	55.49		65	00	69
Burton	58.28		67	42	53
MP 9½	59.53		69	22	38½
MP 7	62.03		74	15	24*/8* sigs
Carnforth	62.78	75.00	77	31	13½
Carnforth U&DL	63.18	76.30	80	26	14 late

* brakes or speed restriction

Camera mounted on Clun Castle in bid to catch trespassers

WHEN Vintage Trains recreates WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle*'s record-breaking trip from Bristol to Plymouth 60 years ago, there will be a GoPro camera on the front of the locomotive to record any incidents of trespass.

The two-day trip, 'The Great Western', runs from Birmingham to Plymouth on May 10 and Plymouth to London on May 11 along GWR main lines, departing from Birmingham Snow Hill and picking up at Widney Manor, Warwick Parkway, Banbury and Oxford.

On May 9, 1964, No. 7029 reached 96mph when covering Plymouth to Bristol in 133 minutes and nine seconds with the legendary Ian Allan 1Z48 railtour. It will also be 120 years since GWR 4-4-0 No. 3440 *City of Truro* reportedly topped 100 mph on the same route.

The reporting number is anticipated to again be 1Z48 and will be carried on the smokebox with authentic BR reporting numbers. There is expected to be a control office on board so performance can be managed in real time.

Meanwhile, Sunday, April 7 saw a successful start for Vintage Trains' new 'Shakespeare Express' season, running very well-loaded and hauled by Castle 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*.

The next 'Shakespeare Express' between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon runs on Sunday, June 16, Fathers' Day, while the regular summer Sunday season begins on July 21 and runs until September 1. For this season, additional 'Shakespeare Express' trips will be hauled by *Clun Castle* from Derby on May 26, Worcester on June 30, and Leicester on July 14, together with the usual popular Sunday lunch return between Stratford and Birmingham between these journeys.

For details and to book, visit <https://vintagetrains.co.uk/>

Britannia to Norwich and Bressingham

STEAM Dreams has announced a rare opportunity to travel from Windsor to Norwich and Bressingham Steam Museum on Tuesday, May 28 behind BR Standard Class 7 4-6-2 No. 70000 *Britannia*.

The tour will depart from Windsor & Eton Riverside before picking up additional passengers at Datchet, Staines, Kew Bridge and Clapham Junction. The train will then navigate its way through London to take the Great Eastern Main Line to the first stop of Ipswich.

Passengers will have about six hours to explore Ipswich.

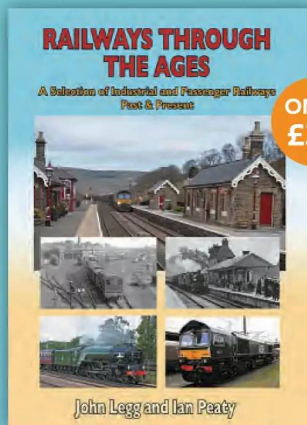
The next stop is Diss, where passengers can choose to alight the train and visit Bressingham Steam Museum. Road coaches will be waiting to transport customers to the attraction, with a supplementary fare for this experience.

Those who decide to stay aboard will travel to the final destination of Norwich, with about three and a half hours to look around the city.

Britannia will take passengers home via the same route.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class, and premium standard class, with a supplementary fare for those visiting Bressingham.

For more details and to book, visit steamdreams.co.uk

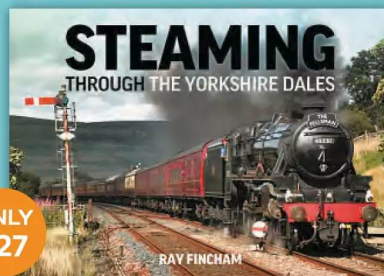


Railway Through the Ages

By John Legg & Ian Peaty

Dive deep into the history of railways from their early beginnings to today.

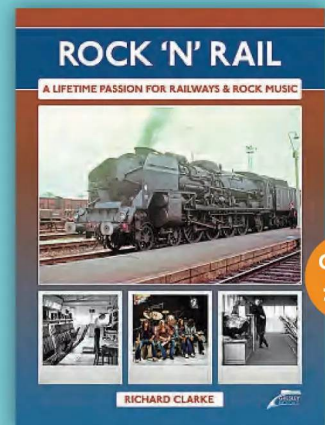
This book features a mixture of standard and narrow-gauge tracks, industrial and heritage lines, and iconic train stations.



Steaming Through the Yorkshire Dales

By Ray Fincham

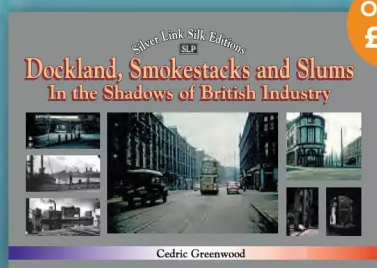
Explore the history of the 73-mile link between Settle and Carlisle that ran through the high fells and dales of Yorkshire and Cumberland.



Rock 'n' Rail

By Richard Clarke

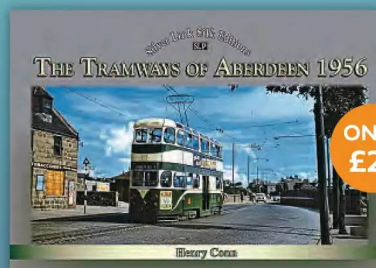
Rock 'n' Rail chronicles the changing scene of the rail industry from steam to privatisation – and the music industry from ballad through pop to rock.



Dockland, Smokestacks and Slums

by Cedric Greenwood

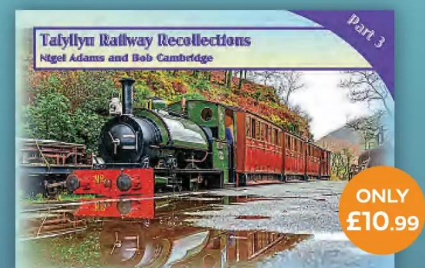
This book provides a photographic study of the 19th and early 20th century British industrial scene from its recovery following the Second World War to its decline in the mid-1980s.



The Tramways of Aberdeen 1956

By Henry Conn

This is the second book in a series that features the wonderful views of David and John Clarke taken in the year 1956.



Talyllyn Railway Recollections Part 3

By Nigel Adams & Bob Cambridge

The Talyllyn Railway is a remarkable survivor from a long past industrial age. Since 1865, it carried slate, then passengers. Enthusiasts saved it, volunteers maintain it. Enjoy its scenic, nostalgic journey in this book.

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May

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: Steam: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*.

Diesel: D213 *Andania*. 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

11 'Tyne Valley Pullman'

St Albans City, Carlisle and return.

Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

12 'The Return of the Jurassic Crompton'

Swanage, London Waterloo and Eastleigh only.

Locos: 33012 *Lt. Jenny Lewis RN*, Class 69

TBC. BLS

14 'The Welsh Marches Express'

Coventry, Shrewsbury and return. Steam-hauled to/from Bristol.

Loco: TBA. ST

16 Chatsworth & Barrow Hill Excursion

London Victoria, Barrow Hill and return. Diesel-hauled outward.

Loco: 46100 *Royal Scot*. SD

16 'The Cambrian Coast Express'

Cardiff Central, Pwllheli and return.

Locos: Class 67, 2x Class 97s TBA. PT

18 'The Edinburgh Flyer'

York, Edinburgh Waverly and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

18 'The Lakeland'

Nottingham, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Preston and Carlisle.

Loco: TBA. ST

18 'Exmoor Coast Pullman'

Whitchurch, Minehead and return.

Loco: Midland Pullman HST.

19 'The Pembroke Coast Express'

Bristol Temple Meads, Tenby, Pembroke Dock and return.

Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

23 'The Settle & Carlisle Fellsman'

Crewe, Carlisle and return.

Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. ST

25 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Darlington, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

25 'The Mancunian'

Manchester Piccadilly, Holyhead and return.

Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

25 'The Hanson Hanse'

Eastleigh, Kings Lynn and return.

Locos: 50008 *Thunderer* + Class 20 TBC.

BLS

25 'Blackpool Pullman'

Ayr, Blackpool North and return.



West Country class No. 34046 *Braunterton* passes through the cutting at Horbury on April 17 with Saphos Trains' 'The White Rose' excursion from York to Hereford. ALAN WEAVER

Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

26 'The Millbrook Meander'

Eastleigh, Weymouth and return.

Locos: 50008 *Thunderer* + Class 66 TBC.

BLS

28 Norwich Excursion

Windsor & Eaton, Norwich and return.

Loco: 70000 *Britannia*. SD

28 'Ben Nevis & Lochaber Pullman'

Morpeth, Fort William and return.

Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

30 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam

Circular tour from London Victoria.

Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

30 'Welsh Marches Express'

High Wycombe, Shrewsbury and return.

Steam-hauled between Bristol and Shrewsbury.

Loco: TBA. ST

31 'Torrey Riviera Pullman'

Carlisle, Paignton and return.

Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

Locos: 33012 *Lt. Jenny Lewis RN*, 50008

Thunderer. BLS

6 'The Dalesman'

York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Hellfield and Carlisle.

Loco: TBA. WCR

8 Skegness Excursion

Hastings, Skegness and return.

DEMU: 1001. HD

8 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Coventry, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

8 'The Tynesider'

King's Cross, Morpeth and return. Steam-

hauled between York and Morpeth.

Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les*

Ross. RTC

8 'The Lakeland'

Leeds, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled

between Preston and Carlisle.

Loco: TBA. ST

8 'The Blythe & Tyne'

Finsbury Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and

return.

Loco: Class 43 HST. UKRT

8 'The Ffestiniog Express'

Dorridge, Blaenau Ffestiniog and return.

Diesel-hauled between Llandudno

Junction and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Loco: TBA. VT

9 'The Cromer Crompton'

Sheringham to Water Orton only.

Locos: 33012 *Lt. Jenny Lewis RN*, 50008

Thunderer. BLS

11 'The Dalesman'

Chester, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled

between Hellfield and Carlisle.

Loco: TBA. WCR

13 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam

Circular tour from London Victoria.

Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

15 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Leeds, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled

between Carnforth (outward) and

Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

15 'The Bath & Bristol Steam Express'

Swanage, Bristol Temple Meads and

return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

15 Paignton Excursion

Paddington, Kingswear and return.

Steam-hauled between Taunton and

Kingswear.

Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

15 'The Ancient Kingdom'

King's Cross, Edinburgh and return.

Loco: TBA. UKRT

Regular Tours

Daily 'The Jacobite'

Fort William, Mallaig and return. Steam-

hauled throughout.

Locomotive: 44871, 45212 or 45407 *The*

Lancashire Fusilier. WCR

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
BLS	Branch Line Society branchline.uk
HD	Hastings Diesels hastingsdiesels.co.uk
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PT	Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR	West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

THE CHANGING FACE OF MAIN LINE RUNNING

Lineside photographer **John Titlow**, a *Heritage Railway* contributor since the first issue, looks back at the exploits of heritage traction on the national network during the last 25 years of the magazine's existence.

Since the first issue of *Heritage Railway* was published in spring 1999, steam on the main line has seen dramatic changes.

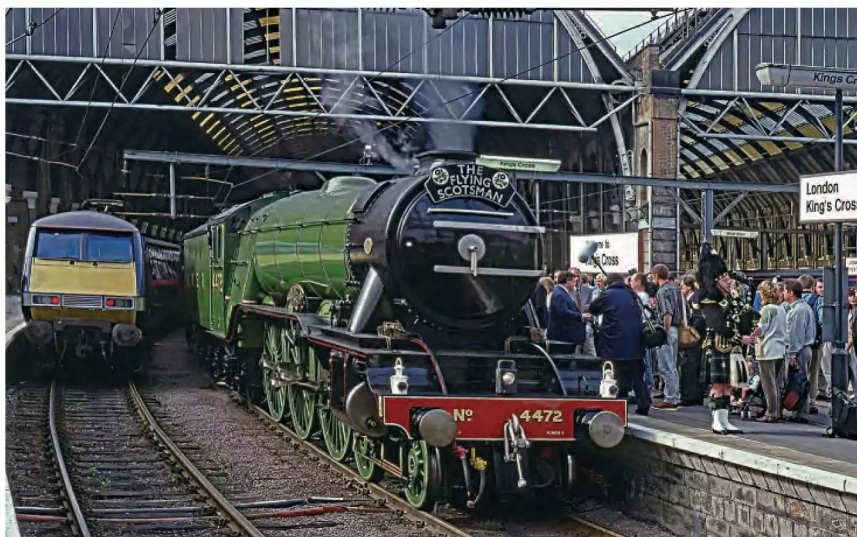
There is considerably more open access with steam running on lines we never thought possible, and more railtours than we could have ever imagined.

The Folkstone Harbour branch closed in 2014, while the Great Western main line and the North London lines have been electrified. Tours are organised less for the enthusiast and more for people who want to wine and dine in luxury, and there is a greater number of mid-week dining trains.

The railtour sector has become very upmarket, especially with market leader Locomotive Services Group using its own rakes of carriages and a superb fleet of steam and diesel locomotives.

A revolution in information technology has played a dramatic part in the way we live our lives, particularly regarding the internet and social media. How many of us had heard of social media in 1999, or even had a mobile telephone?

It is not just the main line that has changed, but also its surroundings – especially in our towns and cities. The countryside is ever



On April 7, 1999, a piper plays while Dr Tony Marchington is interviewed by the press at King's Cross alongside A3 No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman*, which he owned.

decreasing thanks to the continual construction of new houses. Cars have become very uniform in shape, and headboards have become a means of advertising.

Information, internet, and the digital technology revolution

Here is where the major changes have taken place, and it has certainly helped regarding timings. Go back 25 years and you had to have someone 'in the know' to get timings of steam movements. Now, all that information is readily available; the website Real Time Trains is a prime example. And it's not just the timings; on websites you can find out exactly where the train is and the signals ahead of it. Twenty-five years ago, we could never have even dreamed of this.

Nowadays, it is much easier to check locations using technology like Street View, satellite images, and photographic websites. Previously, it was word of mouth and hours spent looking at Ordnance Survey maps.

Having to drive a line to check locations from bridges is almost a thing of the past. By using various sites that map street views, you can see in advance if there is a possibility of a good shot, thus saving considerable time. It is still necessary to physically check because the view online will likely have been taken more than a year ago and vegetation could have grown.

There are websites like Sun Calc, which gives the angle of sun at a precise location at the time the train is booked to pass: this takes all the guesswork out of shooting into the sun – or even being wrong side of it. After



BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4Ts Nos. 80098 and 80079 pass Slough on the Great Western Main Line on May 22, 1999.



Then in black livery, LNER B12 No. 61572, the only British inside cylinder 4-6-0 to be preserved, heads a freight charter through Croyley station on the London Underground on May 14, 2000.

LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45110 crosses the Grand Union Canal at Watford while working on the London Underground on May 29, 1999.



doing your homework, it is simple to find the location by simply putting the postcode into your navigation device, as map reading is too becoming a thing of the past.

Social media sites have become a mouthpiece – for good or bad. News is now instant, and people rush to get their images and videos out first.

Everyone seems to own a mobile telephone now, making photography at stations less appealing. There is nothing worse than a lovely historic station, a steam train running through, and everyone on the platforms with arms outstretched, phone in hand. I wonder how many bother to even look at the images and videos afterwards?

In 1999, film was still the main media, and none of it was immediate. Digital was in its infancy but has long since taken over in the

publishing world: reporting on anything now is instantly in the public domain.

When it comes to looking back, one amazing source of information is Six Bells Junction, which covers railtours more than a century old. It has a great deal of information in it and well worth a look, especially before 1968.

Main tour companies

There are fewer railtour organisers now than in 1999. Back then there was no Crewe works as we know it today. Locomotive Services Group took over Crewe diesel depot in 2015 and invested substantial money in the works, which perhaps has to be the premier workshop for overhauling steam and diesel locomotives in the country.

In 2017, it acquired certification and became the third train operating company to operate

steam locomotives on the main line, running its first tour from Crewe to Kingussie the following year. Since then, the company has gone from strength to strength and now runs tours through Saphos, Steam Dreams, Midland Pullman and Statesman Rail.

West Coast Railways operates 'The Jacobite' over the Fort William to Mallaig line, frequent steam over the Settle to Carlisle route, the 'Scarborough Spa Express' and the 'Pendle Dalesman'. It has also hired locomotives and stock to other tour operators, mainly the Railway Touring Company.

Vintage Trains, operating out of Tyseley, specialises in the GWR, especially Castles, and runs regular tours like the 'Shakespeare Express' to Stratford-upon-Avon and the 'Polar Express' out of Birmingham Moor Street



A changing location: The footbridge on the exit of Whitehouse Farm Tunnel has been encased with mesh. GWR 4-6-0 No. 6024 exits as it approaches High Wycombe on December 18, 2005.



LNER V2 2-6-2 No. 4771 *Green Arrow* heads up the East Coast Main Line to King's Cross on November 18, 2006.



SR 4-6-0 No. 850 *Lord Nelson* departs Waterloo, with the Houses of Parliament in the background, on July 8, 2007.



BR Britannia Pacific No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* crosses Folkestone Harbour on March 14, 2009.

at Christmas. Pathfinder Railtours still has the tradition of catering more for the enthusiast through specialised trips on lines that do not see regular passenger trains.

Venice-Simplon Orient Express is now Belmond; it is a welcome sight to have Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* back at the head of this luxurious train once more.

Locomotives in and out of service – and notable absences

The general public's love affair with A3 Pacific *Flying Scotsman* has grown deeper over 25 years to the point of hysteria. Back then, No. 4472 could run without people trespassing over high-speed lines. I have one picture of it at Euston without a soul on the platform – unimaginable today!

It was owned by the late pharmaceutical entrepreneur Dr Tony Marchington, who spent £1 million on its restoration to working order. Its first run out of King's Cross for about 30 years took place on July 4, 1999.

Eventually, history repeated itself and Dr Marchington was declared bankrupt, placing *Scotsman's* future in jeopardy. The National Railway Museum's campaign to 'Save our

Scotsman' eventually succeeded in buying it thanks to donations, and it now runs as No. 60103.

In issue one of *Hertiage Railway* magazine, there was a small article about the first motion parts for Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* being made, which was still in the early stages of construction at the time.

The A1 took 18 years to build, at a cost of £3 million. In 2008, it started main line testing and ran its first passenger train on the network in 2009. Unimaginable events have since taken place, none more notable than the A1's 101mph run.

It feels like a long time since we have seen Nos. 850 *Lord Nelson* and 30777 *Sir Lamiel* out on the main line. No. 6024 *King Edward I* is sadly missed, but there are hopes that it will return in the future, while No. 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* is undergoing overhaul and is expected to make a return in the years to come.

We have had two A4s running in the form of Nos. 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley* and 4464 *Bittern*. A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* is about to return after testing on the SVR.

Two Britannia Pacifics have been running in Nos. 70000 *Britannia* and 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*, two Scots in Nos. 6115 *Scots*

Guardsman and 6100 *Royal Scot*, four Bulleid Pacifics in Nos. 34067 *Tangmere*, 34027 *Taw Valley* and 34046 *Braunton*, with 35028 *Clan Line* returning on April 27 after undertaking test runs, and three Jubilees, Nos. 45690 *Leander*, 45699 *Galatea* and 45596 *Bahamas*.

Unique No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* is about to return after an extensive overhaul. Go-anywhere 'Black Fives' appear to be the stalwarts of main line running, continuing doing the job they were built for.

One notable absence is V2 No. 4771 *Green Arrow*, its future uncertain, and it is unsure if we will ever see it return to steam.

When did we last see BR Standard 4MTs on the national network? The last pannier tanks I remember on the main line were Nos. 9600 and 9466 doing a tour of the Midlands. Even the Royal Train has been steam-hauled on occasions. With such a great variety, we must consider ourselves very fortunate.

One major change has been the addition of Train Protection Warning System apparatus, which has added many thousands of pounds to the cost of an overhaul but is now obligatory for main line running.

Another marked change is the use of diesels on the rear of trains nowadays.



LNER A4 No. 4464 *Bittern* rounds the curve at Harringay, crossing the North London Line, on June 14, 2013.



An open day at Old Oak Common with Class 40s D200 and D345 on May 8, 2000.



Class 52 D1015 *Western Champion* and Class 47 D1755 at Marylebone on February 9, 2014.



My first digital picture was BR 4-6-2 No. 70000 Britannia in black, passing through Bickley.

Strange goings-on

Filming occasionally brings out some strange workings, none more so than Bluebell's C 0-6-0 No. 592 and a motley collection of carriages which were dragged to King's Cross for filming.

Another filming job at the Cross was when 'Black Fives' Nos. 44932 and 45231 made an appearance – and who would have ever thought an N2 would once again visit King's Cross in steam in 2016, commemorating the 75th anniversary of Sir Nigel Gresley's death?

Obscure anniversaries have taken place, like the Seaford 150th running into Newhaven Marine; this station has since closed.

Meanwhile, we have seen greater uniformity in rolling stock, and even Mk2 carriages have

been painted into carmine and cream livery. Safety has changed considerably too, with windows now fixed to discourage people leaning their heads out. Mk1 carriages have had to make big changes, including retention tanks and central door locking – unheard of 25 years ago.

Disappearing infrastructure

Paddington and the main GWR line have been electrified; running under wires and on third rail lines is now the norm. Folkstone Harbour branch and Newhaven are just two of the lines which saw steam running but have now closed. Palisade fencing is appearing everywhere, ruining many locations,

especially around Dawlish where the sea wall has been rebuilt. Many cliffs, especially the Folkstone Warren and those around Dawlish, have been meshed and fenced heavily to prevent landslips onto the lines.

Semaphore signalling and signalboxes are slowly disappearing; Shrewsbury is a great example of its continued use. Sleaford North signalbox has been demolished, while huge aerials on poles are now at many locations for centralised train control.

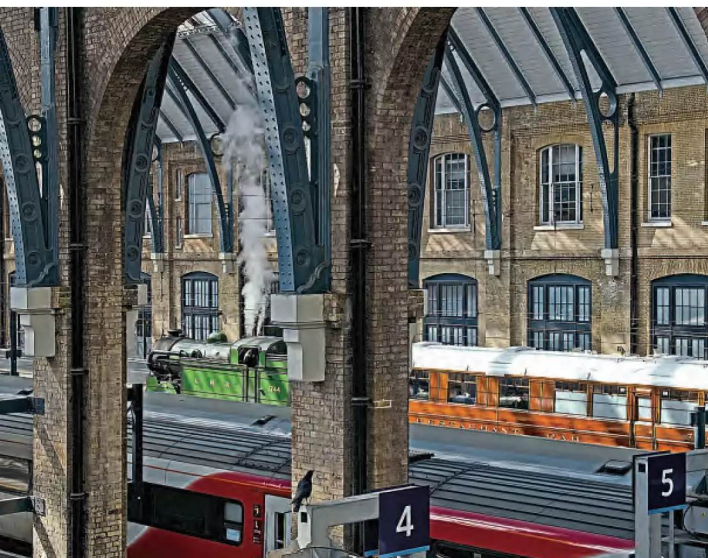
Bridges have been enclosed, especially in large cities, to stop vandals throwing objects at passing trains. These enclosures make photography very difficult – if not impossible – from them.



Unique BR Pacific No. 71000 Duke of Gloucester departs Paddington with 'The Great Britain' on April 6, 2007.



LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley passes Dawlish on April 19, 2014.



Above: In the shadow of Battersea Power Station, Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* passes Stewarts Lane Junction on March 1, 2014.

Left: LNER N2 0-6-2T No. 1744 at King's Cross for the unveiling of the statue of Sir Nigel Gresley on May 4, 2016.



LMS 4-6-2 No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* climbing out of Euston on Camden Bank on April 16, 2016.

Stations have become difficult places to photograph because of everyone with arms outstretched, taking images on their mobile telephones. Linesides have become nature reserves and are now not cut back.

Trees have grown, ruining views in many places, and even worse, some people have grown trees to prevent photography over their gardens.

My message here is to get out and photograph what is left of our railway infrastructure – do not take it for granted.

Changing London scenes

One of the major changes has been steam working around London. Most terminals have had at least one working, but the rarest has to be departures from London Bridge and Cannon Street.

The London skyline has changed dramatically over 25 years, with tower blocks taking over. I have a shot of No. 80079 departing Fenchurch Street on a warm, clag-free early May Day in 1999 with the City of London as a backdrop. The skyline is vastly different now; buildings like the Gherkin, which we take for granted, did not exist then.

King's Cross and Paddington have not escaped a modern backdrop either, and



Above: LMS 'Black Five' No. 44932 at Newhaven Harbour station, heading back to Brighton on June 8, 2014.

Left: Then carrying BR express passenger blue livery, A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* approaches Haringay on the North London Line on June 25, 2013, and is about to join the East Coast Main Line.



LMS Pacific No. 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* running at speed past Ladywood while heading for Worcester on November 20, 2021.

apartment blocks and offices now blight their traditional backgrounds.

Eurostar trains ran to Waterloo International alongside the original LSWR terminus. Steam departures still take place, though Victoria is used more often now.

One highlight over the last 25 years had to be steam running through the Metropolitan tunnels to celebrate the Metropolitan Railway's 150th anniversary. Metropolitan Railway No. 1 was in charge, hauling the restored milk wagon and the Bluebell's rake of wooden-bodied Metropolitan carriages.

There used to be regular running from Watford to Chesham using a variety of steam locomotives, including Metropolitan Railway No. 1 and 'Black Five' No. 45110.

This was once a very popular and successful event, but it has not taken place again since 2000.

Graffiti spoilers

Graffiti has become prolific, ruining many good locations.

Taggers risk their lives by climbing up signal gantries, crossing live third rails, and getting into the most dangerous places where even track workers, after intensive training, would go only when trains were not running, and electricity isolated.

Much money is spent by Network Rail to remove this and personally, I refuse to send a photograph for publication with a tag on it – unless it's to prove a point. A recent example of this was the Pathfinder Tours train left overnight in Bristol when the carriages were tagged.

End of an era

In 2011, I finally – and regrettably – gave up using film after 43 years, when my last roll

of Kodachrome 64 came to an end. I did try Agfa but found the colours unreal and way to contrasty. My last slide was of No. 44932 running through Forest Gate on October 10, 2010.

The following year I bought my first digital camera. One advantage I have found with digital is that I look at my scanned slides a lot more.

Conclusion

Who knows what we will see next year to celebrate of the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway?

It could – and should – be the greatest show on earth.

We should consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have witnessed some fantastic events on our main line – and long may it continue to surprise us. **HR**



The now-demolished Sleaford North signalbox is passed by A4 Pacific No. 4464 *Bittern* on an icy December 30, 2014.



WR 0-6-0-PTs Nos. 9600 and 9466 cross the River Trent at Stapenhill while approaching Burton-upon-Trent on May 13, 2017.

TRA boss hails live saleroom 'buzz'

WITH all five main line steam locomotive nameplates having been sold for between £3000 and £10,000 and an A3 class smokebox numberplate joining the action with a realisation of £5200, as reported in last month's column, Talisman Railwayana boss Roger Phipps was able to reflect on a successful saleroom auction at Newark Showground on March 23.

Below these heights was much locomotive memorabilia activity, including nameplate *Bounds Green* from HST125 power car No. 43057, which sold for £3600, a 1948 Darlington worksplate (works No. 2056) from Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60137 *Redgauntlet* (£2700), and the smokebox numberplate from LMS Royal Scot No. 46146 *The Rifle Brigade* (£2000).



Added to these was a Southern Railway cabside numberplate from U class 2-6-0 No. 1809 that went under the hammer for £2100.

At £1750 was a GWR cabside numberplate from ROD class 2-8-0 No. 3017 that was withdrawn in October 1956 and recorded the highest mileage in the class of 761,945 miles.

From a more modern era came a Gorton 1952 worksplate (works

No. 1039) from Class EM1 electric locomotive No. 26032 (£1150).

Station totems have become a force that shows no sign of abating, and this was illustrated by BR(NE) Stockton at £3200, BR(W) Princes Risborough and BR(M) Coalville Town each at £2200, and the three-line BR(S) totem Sittingbourne and Milton Regis at £2100. Other enamels were BR(M) signalbox nameboard Godley Junction from the Woodhead route

that also went for £2200 and a BR(M) 'Permanent way inspector' doorplate that fetched £1200, while the top clock was a Midland Railway 12in dial example (£1550). Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

Of the day's events, Roger said: "It went exceptionally well, with our largest attendance ever. We had so many kind comments about continuing with saleroom auctions, and the buzz in the room was brilliant."

Beeson perfection in auction house 'special event'

EM 18mm gauge models of LMS Class 6P5F 2-6-0 No. 2706 and Class 7F 0-8-0 No. 9547, built by James Beeson, who to this day is universally regarded as one of the greatest model train makers ever, sold for £7000 each at a live online auction held by Gildings of Market Harborough on March 27.

Willesden-born Beeson (1906-90) had links to the film industry, including making model trains for the 1932 movie *Rome Express* and the 1938 Alfred Hitchcock classic *The Lady Vanishes*. The two models that went under the hammer were

commissioned in 1966 by Leonard Bramson, who designed film posters and advertising leaflets for Columbia Pictures.

Beeson's models are referred to as the Fabergé of model trains due to the unsurpassed metalcraft he achieved using jeweller's tools.

In a 55-year career that began in 1924, he strived for perfection and insisted on making every part of each model himself, including the wheels, mechanisms, and castings.

Gildings' toys and model railway specialist Alex Bradbury said: "A

Beeson model coming to auction is always a special event, and the prices achieved are testament to his incredible craftsmanship and unrivalled reputation among collectors. It is a trend we are seeing across all areas of collecting – when the real rarities emerge, collectors are there and willing to bid strongly for them."

Although Beeson's models were the stand-out headliners for the LMS in the sale, three Gauge 1 live steam models by Aster of Japan put on a determined show.

The leader of this three-strong selection at £2700 was GNR Stirling single 4-2-2 No. 1, ably supported by GWR No. 5027 *Farleigh Castle* (£2300), and the most famous of them all, LNER A3 No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman*, which fetched £2100.

Completing the four-figure realisation line-up were two O-gauge models, LMS Jubilee No. 5593 *Kolhapur* (£1700) and a live steam Talylyn Railway 0-4-2ST No. 4 *Edward Thomas*, which went to a new home for £1300. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 20% (+ VAT).



Railwaymen's badges of honour exceed sale expectations

FIRST World War railway service badges starred in a Great Central two-day 'Bloxham style' live online auction of general railwayana on April 4/5, when three examples from the North London, Furness, and Highland railways sold respectively for £1550, £1050, and £1000.

Behind this trio came an LBSCR signalman's cap badge carrying the number four that went under the hammer

for £920, a GWR May 1899 coal stage cast iron notice (£620), and a fourth First World War railway service badge, issued by the LBSCR, that sold for £600. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

Auctioneer Mike Soden said post-sale: "It certainly exceeded our expectations, especially the war service badges, which was totally unexpected. It is also who noting that we had a lot of new bidders."



Nameplates home and away in the GCRA mix

MAIN line steam nameplates from three pre-Grouping locomotives that didn't make it into BR stock, a plate carried by an engine that saw service with three railway companies, a quartet that operated on 'Big Four' and BR trains, and an Irish representative will provide a wide-ranging mix at the forefront of Great Central's auction on June 1.

The first of the non-BR representatives is *Peveril Point* from LBSCR H1 class 4-4-2 No. 41, built by Kitson & Co in February 1906 and withdrawn as SR No. 2041 in March 1944. The two others are both from LNWR locomotives: *Medusa* from Precursor 4-4-0 No. 366/LMS No. 5292, built in May 1905 and withdrawn in April 1945, and *Staffordshire* from George Whale Experiment class 4-6-0 No. 677/LMS No. 5542, which was outshopped by Crewe in December 1909 and taken out of service in December 1933.

Nameplate *Robert H Selbie* is next up, from Metropolitan Railway G class 0-6-4T No. 95 that was built by Yorkshire Engine Co in January 1916 and named after the company's general manager. It became LNER No. 6155 and reclassified Class M2 and was withdrawn by BR from Neasden (14D) in October 1948 before its new No. 69076 could be applied.

From the GWR come *Farnborough Hall* (No. 4927, built May 1929 and withdrawn September 1963 when allocated to 87F Llanelly)

and *Haberfield Hall* from classmate No. 6949, which entered traffic in December 1942 and was pensioned off in May 1961 when a resident of Shrewsbury (84G). This 4-6-0's cabside numberplate will also be going under the hammer, separately from its nameplate.

Returning to the LNER, we find *Inverness-Shire* and *Loch Long* from, respectively, D49 class 4-4-0 No. 62725, built at Darlington in August 1928 and withdrawn from Stirling (63B) in November 1958, and K4 class 2-6-0 No. 61993, another Darlington product that was built in January 1937 and withdrawn in October 1961 when shedded at Thornton Junction (62A).

Nameplate *Lissanoure Castle* from across the Irish Sea rounds off main line nameplate proceedings. This plate is from Northern Counties Committee U2 class No. 84, which emerged from the NCC York Road, Belfast, works in December 1929 and was taken out of service in December 1961. The cabside numberplate from this 4-4-0 will



also be in the sale, separately from its nameplate.

An industrial locomotive nameplate is *Pilton*, from an 0-6-0ST built by Avonside Engine Co of Bristol in 1919 (works No. 1832) that operated at the Rutland ironstone quarry after which it was named until the site's closure in 1969.

In addition to Nos. 6949 and 84, cabside numberplates 4918 from *Dartington Hall* and 7923 from *Speke Hall* will go under the hammer, as will the former's smokebox numberplate, while there is a Great Central Railway Gorton 1922 worksplate from class D11 4-4-0 No. 62665 *Mons*, a North

Eastern Region Darlington 1948 example (works No. 2042) from LNER L1 class 2-6-4T No. 67724, and an English Electric 1968 plate from Class 50 Co-Co D429/50029 *Renown*. Another smokebox numberplate is from Class 9F 2-10-0 No. 92076.

Among the totem station signs line-up are BR(E) pair Peterborough North and Peterborough East, Southern Railway targets include Penshurst and Mayfield, and another enamel is a BR(M) 'Beware of trains cycling prohibited' warning sign. The auction is live online and starts at 10am.



If only we'd kept all those trainspotting notebooks...

FOR most of us steam era trainspotters, our scruffy notebooks went into the bin once they had served their purpose and 'cops' had been underlined in our Ian Allan ABCs. Some of us kept the detailed logs of trains at certain stations – and 65 years later I'm so pleased I did – but the notepads were irretrievably consigned to history.

Not, though, by everyone, and one such enthusiast was the late Tony Hill of Paignton, who started trainspotting in the 1950s and continued for 50 years. He retained his entire collection of notebooks, and these will be going under the hammer in a JustaClickAgo auction being held on May 20-26.

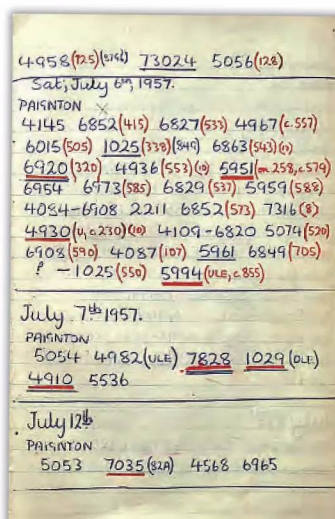
The auction house's principal, Simon Stewart, said: "From cycling trips to shed bashes, summer holidays and organised trips, the books take us on a journey from 1954 through to the 2000s. The details include some train and reporting numbers, minutes late, locomotive failures, details of nameplates missing, the number of

carriages, and doodles of station and sidings track plans, all among the numbers and locations.

"There are also his books from trips abroad, including Germany, Switzerland, Norway South Africa, and India, among others."

Negatives of mainly Western and Southern Region BR steam from the mid-1960s will also feature in the auction, as will colour slides of BR steam in the 1960s and industrial steam from the same decade and the 1970s, cine films from the two same decades comprising BR steam in the Buxton area and overseas, and industrial prints, many from the Industrial Railway Society archive.

Also from overseas will be slides of 1960s steam in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Romania, and back home, several lots of luggage labels, including LSWR, LBSCR, and GER, and for heritage modern traction enthusiasts, Class 52 'Western' diesel-hydraulics.



A fair cop: One of the pages from the late Tony Hill's trainspotting logs that will be going under the hammer at a JustaClickAgo auction on May 20-26. Some of the annotations have baffled the auction house's Simon Stewart, although he believes the underlinings indicate 'cops' and that some of the other references are train reporting numbers. SIMON STEWART

Railwayana Auction Calendar

■ May 20-26

JustaClickAgo (photographs, negatives and slides)

■ May 30

Vectis (model trains)

■ June 1

Great Central Railwayana



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→ THREE garden scale (G-scale) live steam model locomotives sold for £530, £430 and £400 at a Thirsk Railwayana auction on April 13, followed at £320 for a collection of books relating to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 12% (+ VAT).

→ SOUTHERN Railway No. 21C151 *Winston Churchill* made the running in a Vectis model train auction on March 28 when an Ace Trains O-gauge version of the Battle of Britain Pacific sold for £580. The locomotive on which the model was based was numbered 34051 by BR and became part of the National Collection when withdrawn in October 1965. The price excludes buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).



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GNRA pole goes to LNER, but LMS is a close second

POLE position in Great Northern's online sale that ran from April 3-13 went to the LNER, when the smokebox numberplate from Nigel Gresley A4 No. 60027 *Merlin* sold for £5000, but the LMS and William Stanier weren't far behind following the £4000 realisation for nameplate *Tobago* from Jubilee No. 45635.

The LNER returned to take third place on the grid, albeit with the help of BR, thanks to a 1949 Doncaster worksplate (works No. 2054) from Peppercorn-designed, BR-built A1 Pacific No. 60160 *Auld Reekie* going to a new home for £3500, and then it was back to the LMS and headboard 'The Thames-Clyde Express,' which went for £2600.

This London St. Pancras-Glasgow train was launched by the LMS in 1927 and was one of the highlights for Midland Main Line trainspotters as its usual motive power was a named locomotive. I logged it at Bedford Midland Road on March 7, 1960, when the Down working was headed by Patriot 4-6-0 No. 45536 *Private W. Wood, V.C.*, one of the members of the class that was fitted with a larger boiler and double chimney in the late 1940s, giving it a noticeable increase in power.



Another highlight of the auction was a selection of 11 O-gauge models, the highest prices for which were £970 for LMS Ivatt 2-6-0 Class 2 No. 46406 and £720 for another LMS 2-6-0, Hughes Class 6P5F No. 42703. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15%.

Pacific and 0-4-0 lead the model pack at toy and collectors' sale

LIVE steam in 5in gauge headlined the model train selection in a Lacy Scott & Knight toys and collectors' models sale at Bury St Edmunds on April 12, with the leader of the pack being a

coal-fired freelance design unidentified Pacific carrying the early BR steam emblem on its tender that went for £4000.

Following with a realisation

of £1350 was another coal-fired model, a JGS Clarke design 'Polly 2' 0-4-0, and at £1250 a gas-fired, green-liveried Simplex-style 0-6-0T named *Irene*. The highest-priced

non-live steam model was an OO-gauge Wrenn 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* that sold for £700. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

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25 years and still we are full steam ahead

WHEN editor Robin Jones launched *Heritage Railway* magazine a quarter of a century ago, little might he have imagined that the magazine would be here and still going strong in 2024.

The fact that it is here and thriving is testament to the entire team, to people like Robin, former deputy editors Brian Sharpe and Gareth Evans, current staff writer Owen Hayward, plus our army of invaluable writers bringing you the very best content every four weeks.

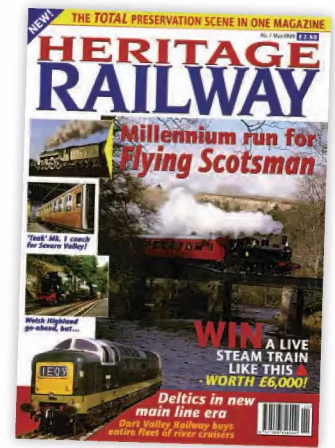
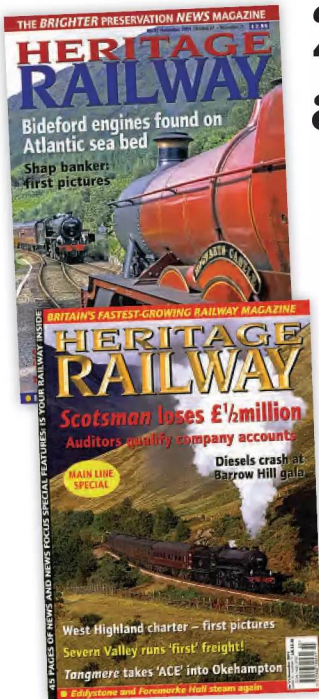
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Some have been with us since those early years, some joined more recently, but all know it's the best way to communicate with you, our readers... the real enthusiasts in this lively and vibrant scene.

Our thanks to them all... especially those on these pages who help us celebrate a landmark first 25 years.



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MEETING HIGH DEMANDS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

After 2023 proved to be a year of record passenger numbers, **Owen Hayward** sat down with the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's general manager Marc Huws to talk about how the railway plans to grow further and the challenges of attracting visitors to the island without over-exerting itself, and reports in words and pictures.

BR Ivatt 2-6-2 No. 41313 approaches Deacons Lane bridge with the 11am from Smallbrook Junction on March 24. NICK GILLIAM



You might think that a railway on an island off the south coast of England, where there are already several other lines competing for visitors, would find it a challenge to attract the numbers it needs.

Yet, in January the Isle of Wight Steam Railway reported a record 130,000 visitors to this 5½-mile line. Its general manager, Marc Huws, thinks that although this is, of course, excellent news in the current economic climate, there is still a bigger market to tap into.

“Our market is very mainstream as it’s visitors to the Isle of Wight,” he said. “Last year was, in theory, actually about 4% up on 2022, though the reality was only 3% because we lost a very busy day during Halloween when we were flooded – and that’s even with having to raise

prices. The more people brought to the island, the higher the proportion of those who have come for a day out at an attraction – and that’s the market we really have to appeal to.

“Our Trip Advisor reviews are really good because it’s not just about the locomotives – it’s a day out, it’s the quality of the place. The regular comments are that we are ‘much better’ and ‘much more’ than people expected.

“Isle of Wight tourism is very word-of-mouth, so they’ll go back to their hotels or back home and tell others about their experiences, and guest houses will direct people to us too.

“Fundamentally, we are marketing to people already here. The island is peculiar in that the ferry companies effectively regulate how many people will come based on how expensive it is, affecting the market of the IOW itself.

“We are the third-largest visitor attraction on the island in terms of numbers, but perhaps the main thing is we don’t think we’ve anywhere near tapped into the local market.

“The island’s population is about 140,000, so there’s still much to do to encourage the locals to come to us as well. It’s also important as when their friends and family come to stay, we can be a day out for them that they then take away and share again.

“This year we’ve taken on a PR agency to help us with this in part, which will help us identify the areas to focus on and how we reach them.

“What I’d really like is for us to aim for something like Beamish Museum; it’s that overall experience. The train is clearly and absolutely part of it, but we are aiming for that immersive step back in time. ➔



"Havenstreet is a bit like that already. You're not next to a main A road and you haven't got a new housing estate next to you. Once you walk in through the booking office, the rest of the world disappears from around you, and we don't really touch that."

"The whole experience is very much that you can forget where you are, and that's where we need to keep pushing towards."

Marc is also well aware that today's audiences are looking for more than just a train ride and that providing additional activities will benefit the railway further through secondary spend, which, for many lines, is a primary source of income. In the IOWSR, this is rising considerably well, and that ties in to how the railway sells to its audience; the railway aims to hold its visitor numbers steady but drive up secondary spend by encouraging people to remain on-site longer.

Visitors can take advantage of the amenities on offer and the events hosted. Over the winter, a new café and bar building was created at



Above: The frames for E1 No. 110 *Burgundy* (which will adopt the guise of W2 Yarmouth) sit sheeted in the yard at Havenstreet awaiting the new boiler to be delivered. This is expected to be in early 2025, with a return to steam estimated for 2026. Behind is flagship LSWR 02 No. 24 *Calbourne* up on stands (top), which has had its wheels sent away for new tyres to be fitted – the first time this has had to be done in preservation. To the right, Ivatt No. 41298 awaits its turn in the overhaul queue.



The beautifully restored Ryde Pier tramcar will soon gain a reconstructed trailer, which has had a new body built by local boat builders and fitted out by railway volunteers on a replica chassis. Once completed, the rear driving end in the first car will be removed. With hopes of being completed by the end of the year, it will prove an invaluable asset to the railway for low season workings.

Havenstreet station, adjacent to a large field that is regularly used for birds of prey displays and outdoor events.

"Havenstreet is fortunate as we own this field, which we use as an events space, and it can cater for events into multiple thousands of people," he says. "We have third party events and concerts here but need to make some improvements. That will be another project for the coming winter, when we'll put a better structure in for these types of things with improved drainage, lighting, power, water and fibre so we can set things up more professionally. That way it's always ready for whatever is taking place, and that may then encourage groups and organisations to approach us and ask about using it rather than always us searching for them.

"We also have a partnership with a falconry display group that flies birds at intervals on certain days, which is another attraction to keep people on site, and being right next to our new café means that when the display finishes, people tend to go in there for refreshments. That's been with us for nine years, but the relationship comes to an end this year and we'll be looking to replace it with something new and interactive.

"With the island also being one of the few places in the south of the UK where you can see red squirrels, we are also making improvements to our woodland area, and we will be creating a hide as a further activity.

"Some people say that having everything in one place and nothing at either end isn't good, but actually it's served us quite well; it's about striking a balance. There's no reason to get off at Smallbrook Junction – there's not enough there and no access by foot or road, so all you can do is wait for a train. Wootton is maybe worse because you *can* get off or turn up and start a day there. The goods shed recreation project being put up there won't be enough to make it a destination, but it will provide something to fill the time if you do turn up and have to wait a little while for a train. It'll be something to do, something to look at, and while it might not last the whole time you have to wait, it will at least give you something to fill the gap. Conversely, we have to be careful not to entice people off the train on a one-train operating day, otherwise they may end up needing to wait an hour and a half for the next service and thus end up frustrated.

"We are well aware of the situation some other railways are in and it's always a fear that nobody is ever really that far away from it. You should always act cautiously, as though you're near it, but don't let it stop you investing. We've just spent £85,000 on the new café because you've



No. 41313 approaches Callaways Crossing shortly after departure from Smallbrook Junction.

got to have those amenities and facilities. Over the next three or four years we will probably spend that sort of some again purely on the visitor experience – not heritage or 'nice things to do', but things we really *should* be doing.

"We will maybe install a new playground next year and then refurbish the other café after that. After all, out of a £3-million turnover, what's £100,000 on something as important as these things? It's all about scale and context. They will be what keep people on site longer and buying tea, coffee and refreshments from our catering outlets rather than going elsewhere.

"That visitor experience must keep getting better and better because their expectations are rising and rising. They expect things to be pristine – we're competing against top-quality commercial attractions. We'll be trying this coming winter to tidy up a lot more of our site.

"In some ways we are probably too tidy – Havenstreet used to have minimal daily passengers back in the 1960s; for us, on some days we're trying to manage 1000-plus, so the station will never be exactly how it was as we have to make sure it is fit for those numbers, but we try and keep the core part of it in period.

"We've improved little details like planters being in barrels as they would have been in the 1960s, or not having an excess of unnecessary signage about.

"One area we are tackling is the Palin fencing that has somewhat taken over Havenstreet, which is nice but not historically correct. In its place we'll be putting in the original-style post and wire, which is far less visually intrusive.

Maintaining the restored

One of the IOWSR's unique areas is that there is not a Mk.1 carriage in sight – it operates with authentic wooden-bodied bogie and four-wheel rolling stock that makes it stand out from its peers.

Marc is proud that the railway has maintained its fleet well but recognises that some of it is starting to reach the point of needing attention and so plans are in place to tackle this *before* it becomes an issue, something that comes with a psychological challenge.

"Having spent decades restoring vehicles, we are at that point where we now need to go from restoring stuff to run to actually dismantling something we'd previously completed.

"One of our mantras is to operate and conserve the railway holistically. We don't run stock and then leave it; we're not running stuff that is heavily deteriorating – it's all good to be out there in service. However, we are now reaching that tipping point where a fair number of the original bogie stock hasn't had a full



Havenstreet station has become slightly dominated by 'fence rash', with general manager Marc Huws keen to see the yellow picket style replaced with something more authentic in the near future.



Over the winter, a new café building has been created at Havenstreet to offer improved facilities to meet the rising expectations from customers. An opening ceremony on June 7 will unveil some original signage that will adorn the exterior.



Recently arrived from the Penrhyn Castle Museum and now under IOWSR ownership, Robert Stephenson 0-6-0T No. 2309 *Haydock* will be cosmetically refurbished into original condition to resemble a similar contractor's locomotive that built part of the Island's railways. There are, however, no plans to return this locomotive to steam.



Former London Underground 38 stock unit No. 007, which was retired from use on the Island Line in 2021, is on display in Train Story, covering the more recent history of the Island's rail network.

overhaul since 1966/67, so over the next 15 years we will be looking to complete one a year to ensure they're good to carry on.

"That could, of course, slow our restoration rate as we've sometimes had two or three projects on the go concurrently, with one of those slots now to be taken by a vehicle in this scheme of work, but it is absolutely vital that we balance both overhauls and restorations."

The railway is fortunate too in having a varied locomotive fleet and it looks to keep as much of this running as possible without sitting inactive for too long.

"Our policy is to not leave locomotives standing around too long between overhauls. We try and roll them through every 12 years, so we're not doing that common practice of running it for 10 years, leaving it for 10 years, and then bring it back in. It's more maintenance-based than overhaul-based so we can keep the fleet running, although things have slipped because of Covid-19 and as we try to get out the more powerful locomotives to keep the main services running. We've a clear plan in place to get the eight engines back onto a cycle."

Presently, there are 0-6-0ST Austerities Nos. 192 *Waggoner* and 198 *Royal Engineer* and BR Ivatt 2MT No. 41313 in service, with LSWR 0-4-4T O2 No. W24 *Calbourne* stopped for new tyres to be fitted to the wheels, and is due back

into service around July. It currently wears SR Malachite green.

Elsewhere, LBSCR 0-6-0T 'Terrier' No. W8 *Freshwater* is gradually being reassembled having undergone an extensive overhaul, with a target completion date of about September. Newly out-of-ticket classmate No. W11 *Newport*, however, will have to wait a few years before it goes in for overhaul, with the workshops due to focus on the railway's second Ivatt No. 41298 and completing the restoration of E1 No. 110 *Burgundy* (which will assume the identity of W2 *Yarmouth*).

The boiler for the E1 is being built by boilermaker Israel Newtons and is expected to be ready in the first quarter of 2025, with the rest of the locomotive having been stripped back and returned to 'as built' condition, having been modified when a different boiler was fitted some time around the late 1920s to early 1930s after it was acquired by the Cannock and Rugeley Colliery Company.

With the class not known for being a particularly smooth ride – but equally, nobody has driven one since it last steamed in 1997 – Marc admits he's not entirely sure how it will perform and whether it will cope with modern demands.

"Of the heritage locos, *Calbourne* is the only one that can manage the heavy peak trains," he said. "I think, going forward, the strategy will

be to put the four historic locos (Terriers, E1 and O2) out on special days to help preserve them better long-term, but also to find and create more specific opportunities around them. This will leave main services to the Austerities and Ivatts, which should manage the heavier trains better, with three of these running and one out for overhaul in rotation.

"It additionally means that when they come out, it is something a bit more special."

The railway has volunteers who watch auction listings to identify any assets of interest that might help tell its broader transport story, and as a result of this was able to secure the original nameplates and one builders' plate for its Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3850 *Juno*, a locomotive which remains an untouched original example of its class and is currently on static display at the Locomotion museum in Shildon.

United front

Marc attributes one of the reasons for success on the railway to the fact that there are no internal squabbles. "Nobody here is of the mindset 'we're only working on this project' or 'we'll take that engine away' because we don't have separate operating and owning companies. We have one board – one company that owns everything. As a result, we have a really strong purpose and control our capital costs.



Above: The replica Smallbrook Junction signalbox which has been placed on the foundations of the original.

Left: Vintage carriages in the workshop upon which the railway entirely relies to operate its services, with no Mk.1s ever making it to the island. The Oldbury carriage (left) will be part of a rake that will see limited use at special events or on private charters to help ensure this rare vehicle's longevity.



The Train Story museum at Havenstreet is now 10 years old, and IOWSR general manager Marc Huws is looking at ways it can be refurbished and improved to better convey the history of the railways. Additionally, a new three-road carriage shed is planned to be built on the left-hand side of the existing structure to provide additional undercover storage.

We're able to look strategically at our capital programme and balance the priorities."

The new barn café is an example of this, and while already open for business, a formal ceremony will be held on June 7 to include the unveiling of a host of stunning island signage, much of which has not seen the light of day since the 1960s.

At Smallbrook Junction, a recreation of the former signalbox has been erected there, having been built offsite and later transported by train as the site has no road access. Like the café, this will also be opened on June 7, with a little of history returned too.

"When we took the building down to Smallbrook by rail, we invited Lord Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail, to see it," Marc added. "He brought along his friend who turned up with the original sign off the 'box

which hasn't been seen since 1967, after the railway closed. We are also trying to find the original frame to return to it; it was known to be in the collection at the National Railway Museum at some point, and they are assisting us in trying to locate it now."

To the future

Looking ahead, Marc is carefully studying the market to identify opportunities that might currently be missed – be it running days with the Ryde Pier tramcar in the off-peak months or developing the events calendar to include offerings (such as concerts at Havenstreet) that take place in the evenings and do not require a substantial investment of labour and finance to turn a profit. "The last trains can often be quiet, so rather than extending service, which can be a challenge as you need to get extra crews,

fitters and so on to maintain working hours," he pointed out.

"Events like our summer proms draw people in who make use of that final round trip and then stay into the evening. It then doesn't cost us all that much more to lay on, so the upcoming investment in the field will really allow us to explore the opportunities and make best use of it."

There are also plans to refresh the Train Story museum shed, which, at a decade old, will allow for a little more focus on the story the railway intends to tell. A new three-road shed will also be built alongside to allow more undercover storage of the precious rolling stock and will also prolong its working life.

One thing is absolutely for certain – the future of the railway is certainly bright on the Isle of Wight. **HB**



At Wootton, a small goods shed is in the process of being built that will convey the way freight was handled by the railway. On March 27, the groundwork was well and truly underway, though recent heavy rainfall had temporarily halted progress.



No. 41313 passes Whitefield Farm on March 27.

Bachmann narrow gauge gets upscaled for fresh new range

ANY manufacturer entering a new scale must be confident in the success of its first products – and Bachmann has done just that as it takes its first steps into O-16.5 (7mm gauge), with almost everything you need to create a Welsh quarry scene.

With the success of its 009 scale Quarry Hunslet locomotives proving a winner with narrow gauge modellers, the manufacturer has enlarged these as it now tackles the O gauge market (O-16.5 being narrow gauge to this scale) with its new NG7 range.

Revealing the starting line-up at Statfold Barn's April 13/14 model railway exhibition weekend, the O-4-0ST Quarry Hunslets will be the first locomotive to be released for the scale by the manufacturer, with tooling once again catering for a myriad range of differences across the design, including open and closed cab variations.

Welsh quarry icons

Bachmann has promised that its models of these iconic locomotives – which could be found working quarries such as those at Penrhyn, Dinorwic and Pen-Yr-Orsedd – will be strong and robust yet intricately detailed, with a high number of individually fitted components. The cab in particular will feature a hinged firebox door and firebox lighting, while the chassis block and gearbox



will be diecast metal for added weight and improved adhesion. Also, a new coupling system for the range has been developed to allow for as many options as possible, while simultaneously retaining an authentic and as-close-to-scale appearance as possible; locomotive NEM pockets will cater for chopper-style couplings, a miniaturisation of the type found in use at many of the UK's narrow gauge heritage lines, as well as the 'traditional' hook and loop-style of coupling that features on the manufacturer's 009 range of models.

To accompany the locomotives,

a range of wagons has also been developed, based on those that could be found in use at Dinorwic Quarry. The initial three wagons comprise a flat bed (which would have been used to transport slate slabs from rock faces to dressing and finishing buildings), a traditional slate wagon (for transporting dressed slates to transshipment yards and docks) and a coal wagon. The latter two vehicles will be supplied with appropriate loads, which will also be available separately.

The wagons will also be fitted with a new coupling system, namely a discreet pin-and-eye coupling which

has been employed on some 009 scale wagons. To be able to couple to locomotives, a pair of chopper-style couplings will also be supplied for fitting to suit the user's requirements.

Completing the scene

Not content with stopping there, also announced alongside the locomotives and wagons were three buildings for the scale – another scaling up of existing 009 products. The slate engine shed, coal store and water tower are too based on structures that could be found at Dinorwic Quarry, meaning that modellers looking to enter this larger scale will have an excellent number of products with which to create a quarry scene from the off.

Finally, a set of ready-painted locomotive crew figures will be available and have been designed to fit in both open and enclosed cab variations.

Production is already complete, with the range expected to hit shelves this summer. The full details of livery and identity variations, along with prices, are set to be confirmed in Bachmann's summer 2024 announcement package.



Heljan Co-Bos revived by Rails following Hattons closure

THE BR Class 28 locomotives will again return to 4mm scale thanks to Rails of Sheffield's acquisition of the Heljan tooling from the now-defunct retailer Hattons, which previously had the models produced exclusively for it in 2011.

Five new models are being offered, covering the most popular liveries of the previous runs, as well as a previously unreleased BR blue variation, all of

which will be exclusively available via the retailer's physical and online stores.

Also available for the first time will be DCC sound-fitted examples (or provision for it on DCC-ready examples), with the promise of an enhanced livery application on the upcoming range of models. Prices start at £199.95, with a delivery date yet to be confirmed.





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RIDE TO DARTMOUTH TO MARK D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Both South Devon and world history will be restaged on the Dartmouth Steam Railway with special services over three days to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day – by a locomotive of a type historically appropriate to the line in the 1940s and named after one of the Normandy beach landings on June 6, 1944, reports **Robin Jones**.

The Dartmouth Steam Railway has long been renowned as one of Europe's finest standard gauge seaside heritage lines, its trademark being its combination of breathtaking coastal and estuarine scenery packed into its near seven-mile length which has delighted generations of holidaymakers – and will continue to do so.

However, in 1944 there was a very different scenario for the GWR Kingswear branch, and indeed much of the South Devon coast, which played a vital role in the preparations for the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France.

Dartmouth and Kingswear were key embarkation ports for the American landing forces, and regular trains delivered personnel and supplies to the ships waiting to take part in

the biggest seaborne invasion in history. Many of these trains were not headed by locomotives from the regular GWR fleet, but a new type of locomotive designed and built especially for the war effort – the United States Army Transportation Corps S160 2-8-0s.

As the Second World War developed, the whole UK railway system struggled, and priority was given to the movement around the country of vital munitions and equipment, rather than movement

of passengers, except for the endless troop trains. Civilians were actively discouraged from using trains unless essential.

The network took a pounding from Luftwaffe raids, leading to an acute shortage of motive power, especially freight locomotives.

In 1941, the American Lend Lease agreement was signed, and the US Government gave the United States Army Transport Corps the job of designing and constructing a locomotive suitable for heavy freight haulage, initially

in the UK and later for continental Europe and Africa.

Major JW Marsh, of the US Army Corps of Engineers, adapted an earlier type of locomotive, the S159, an updated First World War design, and used many of its features when drawing up plans for his S160s.

He had to design his locomotive to fit the UK loading gauge which was smaller than that of the USA, and it had to be of the Austerity type, where fast construction, rather than long life, was the pressing need. Accordingly, the main frames were of a cast steel bar construction rather than the traditional solid sheet steel; rolled plate was used in favour of castings and grease lubricators for the axleboxes.

Some design features, standard to the US but not seen in Britain, were a self-cleaning smokebox,



USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 2253 *Omaha* heads past Goodrington Sands with a Dartmouth Steam Railway service bound for Kingswear. DSR





Omaha heads a regular service train over the iconic row of classic beach huts at Goodrington Sands. DSR



Omaha leaves Kingswear station for a return journey to Paignton on March 23, 2022. MARIKA REINHOLDS/CREATIVE COMMONS



Omaha stands at Paignton Queen's Park station platform. DSR

rocking firebox grates and hopper ash pans. Indeed, these became standard features on postwar Midland Railway locomotives and all BR Standards.

Initially, nearly 800 S160s in 13 batches were built by Baldwin, Lima and the American Locomotive Co in 1942/43 to be transported to the UK prior to any invasion of occupied Europe, with the first 400 entering immediate use, mainly on War Department heavy freight trains. A second batch of 400 was delivered and put into storage at Ebbw Junction. However, their Austerity build led to a high failure rate due to boiler issues and hot axleboxes. The expected working life of the locomotives was just 90 days, and they were designed to be expendable.

From a total of 2120 S160s built, which saw service throughout much of the world, including Europe and North Africa, 26 examples have survived into preservation globally, with eight in the UK, including No. 2253, which was built by Baldwin of Philadelphia in 1943 Works number 69496, before being shipped to Britain in May that year. It was allocated to the LNER, with Leeds Neville Hill its home

shed, to work freight trains in and around the West Riding.

In October 1943, 174 160s were sent to the GWR, including 11 allocated at Newton Abbot shed, and they became a common sight on the Kingswear branch. The following January, thousands of US troops arrived in the UK to begin preparation for the invasion, and most ports on the south coast saw a massive influx of men and machinery – including Dartmouth and Kingswear.

As the tide of war began to turn in favour of the Allies, April 1943 saw plans being drawn up for an invasion force to be launched from the south coast across the English Channel to secret locations on mainland Europe, and the code name Operation Overlord applied for the first time. So great was the operation to invade that planning commenced on training immediately.

For the invasion to have any chance of success, Eisenhower was convinced that the thousands of young Americans under his command had to be hardened up by training under real battle conditions on beaches as close as possible to those chosen for attack.

Every part of the British coast was examined, and Slapton

Sands, between Dartmouth and Salcombe, best resembled the Normandy beaches, so was an ideal choice for the thousands of troops involved to be trained.

Dartmouth once again became a port of huge significance and the Kingswear branch its lifeline. Landing craft and ships of all sizes began to mass in the estuary, with vast amounts of supplies, equipment and troops, mostly American, all being delivered to the area mainly by train; the importance of the railway became greater by the day.

Although Plymouth had been heavily bombed, mainly due to the Royal Navy dockyards, and Dartmouth, to the east, targeted due to the Royal Navy college, the South Hams remained a rural area devoted to agriculture, providing food for the country. However, the area found itself at the centre of the conflict leading up to D-Day.

In order to maintain complete secrecy regarding the training of troops, the civilian population of about 3000, along with pets and livestock, was evacuated from 30,000 acres of the South Hams, including Blackawton, Chillington, East Allington, Sherford, Slapton, Stokenham, Strete and Torcross by December

30, 1943, having been given just five weeks' notice.

In appreciation of the sacrifices made, a large granite obelisk presented by the United States in 1954 stands between Strete Gate and Torcross. It pays tribute to the people of the South Hams who generously left their homes and land to provide a battle practice area for the successful assault in Normandy in June 1944. Their actions resulted in many hundreds of lives saved and contributed in no small measure to the success of the operation.

The Operation Tiger tragedy

South Devon became the scene of a major disaster in April 1944. During a training exercise over two successive days at Slapton Sands, to the south of Dartmouth, 450 US troops were killed by friendly fire, and a further 749 died when German e-boats sunk US troop carriers off the coast – 10 times more than those perished in the invasion of Utah beach.

The entire exercise was held in the strictest secrecy and so the disaster went unreported until after the invasion had begun, and even then, only brief details were released. It would be many





Above: Cabside plaque detailing the history of No. 2253 *Omaha*. DSR

Right: Flying the flags of two nations: S160 *Omaha* at Kidderminster Town station during a visit to the Severn Valley Railway on a wet and windy November 27, 2023. STEVE KNIGHT/CREATIVE COMMONS



years before the true extent of the disaster was revealed.

Planned to practice for every part of the Normandy invasion, the exercise began on April 22, with the landing on Slapton Sands scheduled for April 27-30. To simulate the length of the English Channel crossing, the practice invasion fleet sailed around Lyme Bay, arriving off Slapton at dawn on the 27th.

The practice landings at Slapton Sands were to begin at 7.30am and designated to familiarise the troops to the sights and sounds of a full naval bombardment. British heavy cruiser *HMS Hawkins* was deployed and directed to start the bombardment with live ammunition for 30 minutes at a given time. However, because many of the landing craft had been delayed, the US admiral in command ordered the time to be moved back by an hour to 8.30am – but many of the landing craft did not receive that order. The result was disaster, with troops

landing on the sands just as the bombardment began.

Nonetheless, the exercise continued. The next evening, a second convoy, formed of British corvette *HMS Azalea* and eight American tank landing craft, each crewed by up to 120 US seaman, set off for the voyage around Lyme Bay and onto Slapton.

A planned second escort, *HMS Scimitar*, had been in collision with a landing craft and sent to Plymouth for repairs. Because British naval headquarters and the US landing craft were operating on different radio frequencies, the Americans were unaware of the missing escort and so the convoy departed as planned. Likewise, reports from other British ships of the sighting of German E Boats in the English Channel, although received by the corvette commander, were not forwarded to the US landing craft.

Nine German E-boats which sailed from Cherbourg the previous evening had been missed

by Allied forces patrolling the English Channel, and on sighting the convoy early on April 28, they attacked with devastating results. One landing craft sank after being torpedoed, a second was abandoned after catching fire, a third was damaged by 'friendly fire,' and a fourth set on fire but made it back to port. The remaining craft and the escort then responded and the E-boats made no more attacks.

On June 3-5, 1944, a US Navy amphibious force with Royal Navy escorts sailed from Kingswear, Dartmouth and Salcombe, primarily to Omaha and Utah beaches, which had been allocated to the Americans. Gold beach was allocated to the British troops, Juno beach to the British and Canadians forces, and Sword beach to British and Free French attack. A total of 156,000 troops were deployed.

After D-Day, as the Allies advanced through France and into Germany, there was a chronic

requirement for locomotives to maintain their supply lines. The hundreds of S160s working for 'Big Four' companies, plus those in storage in the UK, were shipped to Europe. These included No. 2253, which was shipped to France and supported the advance into Belgium and Germany, before finally being sold as part of the 1947 Marshall Plan to PKP, the Polish State Railways.

The locomotive named after 'Bloody' Omaha

Becoming a member of the Tr203 class, No. 2253 was numbered TY-203.288. It then worked continually until 1980 when it was withdrawn from the Olesnica works near Wroclaw and placed in store from where it was purchased by Steam Powered Services Limited, the locomotive owning company formed by Peter Best in 1992.

He had it restored at the ZNTK works at Olesnica, and it arrived at Pickering on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in October 1992. A deal was done for SPS to buy and pay for the locomotive to be restored, and for it to be given to the line for use.

It made its NYMR debut in the spring of 1993, covering more than 41000 miles before it was stopped in 2000 with a firebox issue and placed in store once again. Ownership had been transferred to the NYMR, but circumstances prevented the line from restoring it. It was repurchased by SPS, which cosmetically restored it before it went on display at the Locomotion museum in Shildon until September 2015.

In late 2015, Peter decided to again restore No. 2253 to full operating condition. The overhaul involved work on major all parts, including new tyres, with the boiler being contracted out to Northern Steam Engineering Services of Stockton-on-Tees, where an inspection found that much of the boiler needed replacing.



The late Torcross guest house owner Ken Small began to investigate locals' tales of Operation Tiger after finding shrapnel, bullet cases and tunic buttons while beachcombing on Slapton Sands. A local fisherman told him about a large object on the seabed, 60 feet below the surface, and he organised a team of divers to investigate. They found an American Sherman tank almost completely covered in fishing nets. Ken bought it from the US government for \$50 and had it raised, placing it in 1984 near the sea in Torcross, where it stands today as a permanent memorial. An 80th anniversary Operation Tiger memorial service was held on Sunday, April 28. ROBIN JONES



A landing craft from the *USS Samuel Chase* disembarks American troops wading onto the Fox Green section of Omaha beach on the morning of June 6, 1944.

The locomotive was moved to the NYMR to complete the overhaul and was lit up for the first time on June 5, 2018.

No. 2253 was then due to start trials and running-in, before going on a 10-year loan to the Dartmouth line.

Sadly, delays in the completion of the restoration meant that No. 2253 missed the opportunity to feature in the D-day 75th anniversary commemorations on June 6, 2019, its steam test not taking place until June 11, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 256.

Repaired in a maroon livery matching that of preserved Canadian Pacific 'Royal Hudson' streamlined 4-6-4, No. 2253 entered service on its new home line later that summer.

Omaha the locomotive

Peter chose to name his locomotive *Omaha*, in remembrance of the bitter battle for a crucial five-mile stretch of the Normandy coast – and in which his father, radar specialist Squadron Leader Norman Best, took part.

The American invasion force, whose target was to link the British landings to the east at Gold with those of the Americans at Utah, and consisted of 43,250 infantry, two battleships, three cruisers and 13 destroyers and 1010 other vessels, were pitted against the German 352 Infantry Division.

It is believed that at Omaha beach, between 5000 and 6000 Allied service personnel were killed, wounded, or reported missing.

The heaviest losses were incurred by the infantry, tanks and engineers in the first landings, while the German 352nd division suffered 1200 killed, wounded, and missing – about 20% of its strength.

It is an often-overlooked fact that not all the troops who landed on Omaha beach were American GIs.

To provide nighttime air cover over the beachhead, a small mobile radar unit, No. GCI 15082 of No. 21 Base Defence Sector, Royal Air Force, worked with US forces for controlling Allied night fighters destroying enemy aircraft which entered the area in the vicinity of Omaha and Utah beaches.

GCI 15082 comprised about 60-80 officers and airmen, plus personnel from mobile signals units and other attached units, giving an overall total of about 160 personnel. It landed 30 vehicles from five landing craft in the early evening of June 6. Because of strong resistance,

GCI 15082 had to land at low tide under heavy fire and as a result sustained 47 casualties, more than a quarter of its strength; 10 were fatalities.

Only eight of the 35 vehicles were capable of being driven off the beach, the rest having sunk or been destroyed by gunfire. Nonetheless, with replacement men and vehicles, the unit was back in action by the evening of June 9 and operated on behalf of the US forces until late September 1944.

Because of their work during D-Day, four officers of the unit – including Squadron Leader Best – were awarded the Military Cross for their bravery. One airman and one SNCO received the Military Medal and one SNCO the Croix de Guerre. Only 69 Military Crosses were awarded to RAF officers during the entire war, highlighting the courage and fortitude displayed by all ranks during this key 24-hour period.

Peter also named his S160 to commemorate the unreported band of RAF Radar personnel who suffered extensive casualties, but also for all those brave US troops who were on the beach on June 6, 1944, and gave their lives at 'Bloody' Omaha, where they encountered the strongest and hardest resistance from the Germans.

"Many veterans who have faced hostilities and witnessed death and mutilations choose not to discuss their experiences, even with their families and loved one," said Peter.

"This was the case with my father, Squadron Leader Norman Best.

"We knew that he served in the RAF as a radar expert, and that he was at the D-Day invasion, where

he won the Military Cross.

"Other than these basic facts, we knew nothing until clearing my late mother's house following her passing, where we discovered a few remarkable documents that has led me to compiling the theratamahabeach.com website.

"We found a handwritten diary from his time just before D-Day right up to the time he returned from France in July 1944, together with an article he wrote about his experiences that appeared in his group's house magazine and a few photographs.

"These discoveries led me to research the men and their mission, including interviewing a few of the then-surviving veterans to understand their remarkable story, while trying to share their experiences to a wider audience.

"With the anniversary upon us, this task continues, acknowledging that while Omaha beach was predominately an American beach, 150 brave and courageous RAF Radar personnel flew the flag for British forces and suffered terribly on that day.

"No wonder my father did not want to talk about it."

Hostilities continued for a further 11 months before peace was declared.

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FROM VOLUNTEER TO GENERAL MANAGER

In his new role as the Tanfield Railway's general manager, David Watchman – a volunteer for 25 years – is preparing the line for its 300th anniversary celebrations in 2025, reports **Dave Wilson** in words and pictures.

Opened in 1725, the Tanfield Waggonway was a vital artery in the movement of coal from the collieries of the Durham coal fields to the River Tyne.

Carrying the original waggonway over Causey Burn was the Causey Arch, which, when it was constructed during 1725/6, was the largest single-span stone-built railway arch in the world. Today, Causey Arch is a Grade I-listed structure.

The successor to the Tanfield Waggonway is today's Tanfield Railway, established as a heritage line in 1969 and now the custodian of 300 years of industrial railway history in the Durham coalfields and Tyneside.

Earlier this year, David Watchman became the new general manager at Tanfield; a railway he has been involved with since he was a boy.

"I began coming to the railway with my dad when I was about seven and joined the railway's youth group when I was 12," he said. "Before being asked to become general manager, I had been a volunteer here for 25 years and have done almost every job on the railway, from laying the tables on the afternoon tea trains to being the responsible officer during galas and operating days.

"In between the volunteering, I have had two spells working at Beamish Museum, on the transport collection and in the museum's communications team, putting my degree skills to good use."

Like anyone new to a position of responsibility, David has plans and ideas for the way the railway should develop. However, he was keen to stress that any new projects

would all be in line with the railway's core values.

"The locomotive policy will continue to be to collect and use locomotives built and/or used in the North East, in a setting based on the industrial and minor railways of the North East, such as those at Bowes, Lambton, and Ashington Colliery railways during the period between 1920 and 1950; the buildings and staff attire will endeavour to maintain this overall theme.

"There was never any intention to recreate a main line railway, and there are no grease-topped caps to be seen. The railway even maintains a stock of period clothing for the volunteers to use."

A flexible mix

I asked David about the current situation regarding the active fleet and future restorations. On the locomotive front, the railway has six engines to choose from. There are two small locomotives, *Keighley Gasworks* No.2, a 1911-built Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST, and *Sir Cecil A. Cochrane*, a Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn 0-4-0ST built in 1948.

The two medium-sized locomotives are 1920-built Barclay No.32 *Stanley*, which returned to traffic in 2023, and Barclay 0-6-0ST *Horden* of 1904.

The two large engines are the Robert Stephenson 0-6-0ST *Austerity* No. 49 of 1943 and the 1891-built Robert Stephenson 0-6-0T No. 3 *Twizell*, which is currently nearing the end of its 10-year overhaul and will be running a little later this year.

"Having this mix of locomotives allows us a degree of flexibility and means that no one engine is being worked to death over its 10-year period in traffic," said David. "It helps with maintenance and ensures that if an issue does arise, there is time to carry out repairs without any pressure to rush the engine back in service."

The 'project' locomotive is 1954-built Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn 0-6-0ST No.38. David said: "Having a 'project' locomotive helps the railway's youth group volunteers gain hands-on experience in a variety of skills, as well as the life skills of working within a team.

"We are also about to restore a former NER Officers Saloon to expand the afternoon teas and VIP experiences (see separate story). Work is already well underway on another NER saloon, No.456, which, when the work is complete, will give us a carriage with access for wheelchair users.

"We like to be able to provide new volunteers with a diverse range of activities within a group structure. We like to encourage them to learn new skills, to work as part of a team, but also, if they show a liking or aptitude for any particular aspect of our activities, they are encouraged to pursue their own choices."

With the railway's 300th anniversary coming up in 2025, I asked David what plans there were for celebrating this major milestone. "The main project under development is recreating a 300-yard section of the original wooden waggonway alongside our station at Causey and on the elevation of the original trackbed," he said.



Above and right: The new signage at Andrews House and East Tanfield, all part of the railway's plan to improve the visitor experience.

Left: New general manager David Watchman stands in front of the Pontop & Jarrow Railway waggon, once used on the line for transporting coal.





Barclay 0-6-0ST Horden hauls the first freight train footplate experience of the day away from East Tanfield on March 24.

“Excavating the site for the new wooden track to be laid has already started. The plan is to operate a couple of replica waggons, based on the wooden originals, hauled by a horse as they would have been in 1725.

‘Cradle of railways’

“What we are aiming for is providing our visitors with the story of the development of coal transport and mining within the area which, in effect, became the ‘cradle of railways’.

“In early 2025, there are plans to hold an ‘old locomotives’ event and we are making approaches for early locomotives around the country.”

I asked David about the possibility of the replica Puffing Billy and the Steam Elephant coming over from nearby Beamish Museum. He said he did not expect the Steam Elephant to make a visit but was a little coy on the subject of Puffing Billy putting in an appearance. However, he did expect that No. 3 Twizell would be available.

Events to celebrate the 300th anniversary are not being confined to 2025, and plans are in the pipeline for 2026 and 2027, with various themes celebrating the development of Tanfield, railways and technology. “We want to develop the way we do things to provide our visitors with more than a train ride, and



Youth group volunteers David Reed, Logan Pye and Oliver Jobson, under the watchful eye of Derek Smith, hard at work tracklaying in the carriage sidings at East Tanfield.



Chris Walker and David Reed, who last year was nominated for the Heritage Railway Association’s Volunteer of the Year Award, set the tables for the afternoon tea train. David progressed through the youth group, worked the crossing a Bobgins, relayed track, and is now permanent way foreman and qualified to act as responsible officer on operating days.



Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn 0-6-0ST No.38 before it entered the workshops, where it is now dismantled and under overhaul.

we want to do that through the Waggonway project at Causey and by making more of the existing facilities at Marley Hill,” said David.

“We are looking at ways to bring visitors into the Marley Hill site area by train, reopening the station at Marley Hill, which was the starting point for journeys before we opened the line down to East Tanfield.

“We have plans to run shed and workshops tours, reinstating the working forge and giving demonstrations of the type of work done with it, as well as explaining how the engines were serviced and maintained when Marley Hill shed was an active part of the colliery railway system.

“In developing the Marley Hill site, we hope to be able to provide covered accommodation for our historic fleet of wooden-bodied goods waggons. Getting the waggons under cover will also allow us to explain their uses and development – an important story for any industrial railway to tell.

“In telling the story of the industrial railways of the North East, we want to make more use of our wagon fleet, and to do that, we are running freight trains on the last Sunday of each month.

Footplate fun

“A new venture we are trialling at this time is footplate journeys between East Tanfield and Sunnyside on the freight train. Each participant will make one round trip on the footplate of *Horden* or No. 49, whichever is in service, as well as being able to ride on the passenger services and take home a Tanfield Railway goody bag.

“There’s no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic did set us back a bit, but things are beginning to pick up again now and we are planning to increase the number of operating days, as well as how we use the site more dynamically – opening through the weekend and so on. It takes about 30 volunteers to run the railway on an operating day – platform staff at Andrews House and East Tanfield, signallers at Marley Hill and Bobgins crossing, staffing the tearooms, bookshop and shed, and having a responsible officer on site at all times – and guards and footplate crews, too!”

The Tanfield Railway has a long and colourful history, and everything points



The Tanfield Railway’s new general manager, David Watchman, driving Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST No. 2. His fireman is Matt Pickering, one of several Tanfield volunteers who also work at the Beamish Open Air Museum.



Left: A happy customer enjoying his freight train footplate experience before leaving East Tanfield. First trialled in February, the popular experience is now fully booked until the end of September. A TR spokesman said: “We hope to be able to put on a few more footplate experience days to cope with the demand.”

towards it having a successful future with a dedicated and enthusiastic management team, and equally importantly, a hard-working group of motivated volunteers of all ages.

And almost to emphasise the point, as I finished writing this interview with David, new signage appeared at Andrews House and East Tanfield stations. **HR**

The Railway Children carriage reborn – restoration of historic carriage from iconic film commences

WORK has commenced in the Tanfield Railway’s workshop at Marley Hill on restoring a North Eastern Railway carriage which was once a part of the set in the original *The Railway Children* film starring Jenny Agutter.

Carriage No. 1173, a wooden-bodied four-wheel first-class saloon, entered service in 1870 before being ‘renovated’ in 1892.

In 1897, No.1173 was repurposed as an Officers Saloon for the use of Mr P Burtt, who was superintendent of the line at the time. No.1173 remained in his service until 1911, by which time he had been promoted to general traffic manager.

In its Officer’s Saloon guise, No.1173 had seating for 10; one end of the carriage had three windows and at the other end an attendant’s compartment with a small gas cooker and gas ring.

Following its duties with Mr Burtt, No. 1173’s next allocation was to the district engineer and No.1173 was a common sight alongside platform 1 at Hull Paragon station for 30-plus years.

Undoubtedly, the fact that No. 1173 survived in active duty for more than 50 years after the other carriages of its age and type had been withdrawn contributed to its remarkable survival into the heritage era.

Tanfield aims to have No. 1173 back in service in 2025 in time to celebrate the line’s 300th anniversary, when the coach will be 155 years old.

In order to return No. 1173 to traffic, a replacement

buffer beam is being manufactured and it will be given a full mechanical overhaul and repaint. A sympathetic restoration of the interior will allow No. 1173 to provide travel accommodation for visitors wishing to enjoy a first-class party experience, and it will also be used to provide additional seating on Tanfield’s popular afternoon cream tea train services which run from March to the end of September.



Carriage No.1173 in Marley Hill yard prior to entering the workshop for overhaul. TR



The interior of No.1173, prior to restoration, with the end windows clearly visible. TR

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TWO MORE GALA SUCCESSES FOR GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

Two very different special events held on successive weekends in April on the Great Central railway again proved a hit with the visiting public, reports **Robin Jones**.

In the wake of the March 16/17 gala held in conjunction with sister line the GCR (Nottingham) to mark the 125th anniversary of the London Extension, as featured last issue, the Great Central Railway held two more successful events in April.

About 1000 visitors attended the Road Rail Steam event on April 20/21, which featured traction engines, road rollers, and miniatures in steam at Quorn & Woodhouse station. Working demonstrations including sawing, straw threshing and road rolling.

In service on regular passenger trains were LMS Stanier 8F 2-8-0 No. 48305 and BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73156, with footplate visits being offered at Leicester

North. Similar visits were offered on BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92203, which was parked out of ticket at Quorn and also proved very popular.

The April 27/28 Spring Diesel Gala featured special guests A1A Locomotives Ltd's Class 31 No. 31108 from the Midland Railway – Butterley and the Deltic Preservation Society's Class 55 No. 55009 *Alycidon*, masquerading as No. 55013 *The Black Watch*, from Barrow Hill Roundhouse.

The pair ran in traffic alongside the home fleet of Class 37s D6700 and No. 37714 *Cardiff Canton*, Class 45 D123 and Class 50 No. 50017, while the two-recently-arrived Class 153 'Super Sprinter' railcars, Nos. 153308 and 153371,

made their debut together, and BR Derby Lightweight railcar No. M79000 was on loan from the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

The 'Sprinter' units are for the railway's testing and training department to use in supporting train operating companies to train their crews.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "It was a hugely successful weekend, and I was delighted by the positive comments from both our volunteers and our visitors."

"We tried some new attractions for this event, including Driver for a Tenner with a Class 08, and 65 people took up that experience over two days. Footplate passes were very popular and almost all that we had available were sold

out, and the use of a real ale bar car all day, in addition to our usual catering service, was also successful. We will definitely be repeating these for future events."

Forthcoming diesel events include the No. 31108 Mileage Day on June 7; the English Electric Running Day on July 12, with five locomotives in traffic, including guests Class 20 D8001 and No. 31108; the Sulzer Running Day on August 18; the Autumn Diesel Gala on September 6-8, with an even bigger line-up including visiting Class 20 No. 20001 and home-based Class 31 No. 31297; and a Deltic Running Day on September 29. **HR**

→ For more details, visit www.gcrailway.co.uk



LMS Stanier 8F 2-8-0 No. 48305 at Leicester North with the first train on the day on April 20 during the Road Rail Steam event. ROBIN JONES



BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73156 heading a service train pulls up alongside BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92203 at Quorn & Woodhouse during the Road Rail Steam event. PAUL MAYO/GCR



The recently-arrived Class 153 railcars pass Swithland Reservoir on April 27 during the Spring Diesel Gala. PAUL MAYO/GCR



Class 55 No. 55009 Alycidon masquerading as No. 55013 The Black Watch heads south to Leicester North on April 27. PAUL MAYO/GCR



Class 31 No. 31108 visiting from the Midland Railway – Butterley. PAUL MAYO/GCR

“It was a hugely successful weekend, and I was delighted by the positive comments from both our volunteers and our visitors.”



Footplate visits at Leicester North were a popular feature at recent Great Central Railway galas. ROBIN JONES



Class 37 No. 37714 Cardiff Canton returns 'The Robin Hood' to Loughborough. PAUL MAYO/GCR

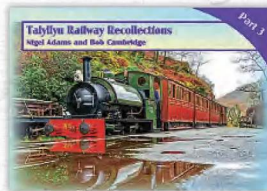
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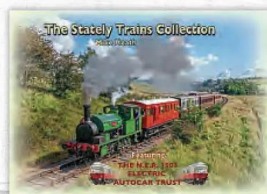
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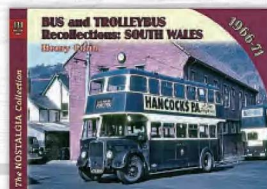
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Bluebell Railway

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Running: Weds-Suns, sch hols.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.

Running: Weds + May 18/19, 30/31, June 2.

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.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway

10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.

Running: W/Es, sch hols, bank 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.

Open: Suns, bank hols + June 1.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es + Sats from June 1.

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, bank hols + May 14, 21, 28.

Lavender Line

Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.

Running: May 19, 26/27, June 16.

Mid-Hants Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.

Running: Thurs-Suns, bank hols, sch hols.

Mizens Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922.

Running: Suns.

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: Daily.

Royal Victoria Railway

10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.

Running: W/Es.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, 1¼ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 29.

Spa Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Tel: 01892 300141.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 28-30.

Volk's Electric Railway

2ft 8¼in gauge, one mile. Brighton.

Running: Daily.

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538.

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 25, 29, June 1, 7/8.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway

Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall.

Tel: 01208 73555.

Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns + May 11, 25, 27, June 8.

Bristol Harbour Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.

M Shed Museum open daily. Running: W/Es.

Dartmouth Steam Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles.

Paignton, Devon. Tel: 01803 555872.

Running: Daily.

Devon Railway Centre

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon.

Tel: 01884 855671.

Open: Thurs-Suns, sch hols.

East Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset.

Tel: 01749 880417.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + Thurs from June 6.

Gartell Light Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset.

Tel: 01963 370752.

Running: May 27, June 30.

Helston Railway

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles.

Helston, Cornwall.

Tel: 07901 977 597.

Running: Thurs, Suns + May 27, June 15.

Lappa Valley Railway

7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile.

Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.

Open: Daily.

Launceston Steam Railway

1ft 11¼in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665.

Running: May 26-31 then Suns-Tues.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon.

Tel: 01598 763487.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

Moors Valley Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415. Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Daily from June 1.

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 + May 25.

Seaton Tramway

2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.

Running: Daily.

Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221.

Running: Suns + May 11, 27, 29.

South Devon Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.

Running: Daily.

Swanage Railway

Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.

Running: Daily.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway

Standard gauge, three miles.

Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.

Running: Suns + May 11, 24/25, June 15.

West Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, 20 miles.

Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.

Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es, bank hols + Thurs from May 30, June 7.

Yeovil Railway Centre

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.

Running: May 11/12, 26, 28, June 2, 16, 30.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum

Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.

Open: Daily.

Bure Valley Railway

15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858.

Running: Daily.

Colne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.

Running: Suns + May 18, 25, 27, 29/30, June 1.

East Anglian Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Running: May 25-27, 29, June 2.

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, Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.



Home to one of the largest collections of 2ft gauge diesel locomotives in the UK, on May 27 the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway will showcase some of this fleet at its new 'Diesel Gala (With a Hint of Steam)' event. With no fewer than nine locomotives in service, hauling a variety of passenger and freight services up and down the line, there will be opportunities to see double and triple-headed services, too. Nine passenger departures are scheduled, along with six freight and locomotive positioning moves also planned. Seven internal combustion locomotives will be working demonstration trains on one of Britain's only double-tracked narrow gauge lines. For those looking for a steam fix, Kerr Stuart 'Wren' class 0-4-0ST *Peter Pan* will be in service, possibly in tandem with an additional small engine (to be confirmed). For details and tickets, see www.buzzrail.co.uk



Fine dining with Hampshire steam

The Mid-Hants Railway has launched a new dining service, 'The Royal Wessex', which offers a delicious and locally sourced three-course Sunday lunch in its elegant first class Pullman-style carriages while the train passes through the beautiful South Downs countryside. On April 14, the Commanding Officer of the Royal Wessex Yeomanry, Lt Col Anthony Sharman, inaugurated the first train by cutting a red ribbon before joining other invited guests aboard the maiden journey.

MHR CEO Rebecca Dalley said: "Our diners can relax in the sumptuous comfort of 'The Royal Wessex' carriages furnished with richly upholstered seats, cosy table lamps

in the windows, and tables laid with white damask cloths. The gastronomic lunch, prepared by Lemon Stone Events, is served with a selection of fine wines, including English sparkling wines. It's a chance to return to a bygone era and sure to be an unforgettable experience. It's already proving to be a popular choice."

The original 'Royal Wessex' service was introduced by British Railways in May 1951. It was one of a number of named trains introduced to commemorate the Festival of Britain of that year, and transported people from the South Coast to the festival in London. Ideal for a special celebration or family occasion, the train will run on select dates during the year.

→ To book, visit www.watercressline.co.uk/all-experiences/dining-experiences/the-royal-wessex-gastro-sunday-lunch/

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Brockford, Suffolk.

Tel: 01449 766899.

Running: Suns from May 26 + May 12, 27.

Nene Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs.

Tel: 01780 784444.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

North Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA.

Tel: 01263 820800.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols, sch hols.

Wells & Walsingham Railway

10¼in gauge, four miles.

Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.

Tel: 01328 711630.

Running: Daily.

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, bank hols.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles.

Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366

Running: Suns + May 27, 30, June 1.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles.

Wallingford, Oxon.

Tel: 01491 835067

Running: May 11/12, June 1/2, 15/16.

Didcot Railway Centre

Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.

Tel: 01235 817200.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Epping Ongar Railway

Standard gauge, six miles.

Ongar, Essex.

Tel: 01277 365200.

Running: W/Es + May 27, 29, June 5.

Great Whipsnade Railway

2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.

Tel: 0344 225 1826.

Running: Daily.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway

2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.

Tel: 01932 212235.

Running: Suns + May 18, June 15.

Leighton Buzzard Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard,

Beds. Tel: 01525 373888

Running: Suns + May 27, 29/30.

London Museum of Water & Steam

2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.

Tel: 0208 568 4757. Open: Thurs-Suns.

MIDLANDS

Abbey Pumping Station

2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road,

Leicester, LE4 5PX. Tel: 0116 299 5111.

Open: Daily.

Amerton Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Stowe-by-Chartley,

Staffs. Tel: 01889 271337. Running: Suns.

Apedale Valley Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-

under-Lyme, Staffs. Tel: 0845 094 1953.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

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 + May 27-30.

Cambrian Heritage Railways

Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry),

¾ mile (Llynclys).

Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire.

Tel: 01691 728131.

Running: Suns, bank hols + Weds & Sats from May 29.

Chasewater Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Walsall, West Midlands.

Tel: 01543 452623.

Open: Daily. Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Churnet Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 5¼ miles.

Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.

Running: Weds, W/Es.

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

Crich Tramway Village

Standard gauge, one mile.
Crich, Derbyshire.

Tel: 01773 854321

Open: Sats-Thurs + May 31.

Dean Forest Railway

Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Northcote, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + Fris from May 24.

Echills Wood Railway

7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.

Running: Suns.

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, May 18, 27, 31, June 1.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Standard gauge, 15 miles. Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

Great Central Railway

Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.

Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 29-31.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.

Open: W/Es.

Leek & Rudyard Railway

10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs. Tel: 01538 269948.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Midland Railway – Butterley

Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 29.

Northampton & Lampport Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Pitsford, Northants. Tel: 01604 820327.

Running: Suns, bank hols + June 1.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles.

Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Tel: 01604 702031.

Running: May 19, 26/27, June 2, 16, 30.

Peak Rail

Standard gauge, four miles.

Matlock, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 580381.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + May 30.

Perrygrove Railway

15in gauge. B4228, Coleford, Gloucestershire.

Tel: 01594 834991.

Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

Rocks by Rail

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore, Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.

Open: Tues, Thurs. Running: May 12, 26/27, June 16.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants. Tel: 0300 3023 150.

Running: TBA.

Severn Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.

Running: Thurs, W/Es, sch hols + May 22.

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 + June 8.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Gloucestershire

Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.

Running: Suns from May 26 + May 11, 18, 25, 27.

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours

Standard gauge, 11 miles. Blackpool, Lancs.

Tel: 01253 209521.

www.blackpoolheritage.com

Depot: Mons, Sats.

Heritage tram tours: W/Es + May 27, 29.

East Lancashire Railway

Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.

Tel: 0333 320 2830.

Running: W/Es + May 27, 29-31.

Eden Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles.

Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

Great Laxey Mine Railway

19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man.

Tel: 01624 862007/670386.

Running: Sats.

Groudle Glen Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453.

Running: Suns.

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: Weds-Mons. Daily from May 28

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.

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. Daily from May 27.

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 + May 26/27.

South Tynedale Railway

2ft gauge, 4¾ miles.

Alston, Cumbria.

Tel: 01434 338212.

Running: W/Es + May 27-29, June 4, 6.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria.

Tel: 01768 779747.

Opens: Tues-Suns.

West Lancashire Light Railway

2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs.

Tel: 01772 815881.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

NORTH EAST

Ain Valley Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Alnwick, Northumberland.

Tel: 0300 030 3311.

Running: W/Es from May 25 + May 18, 27, 29.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe

Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.

Tel: 07889 297271.

Running: May 11, 18, 25, June 1, 8, 15.

Bowes Railway

Standard gauge, 1¾ miles. Springwell, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07850 916484.

Open: Tues & Thurs to pre-booked groups only.

Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles. Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire. Tel: 01472 604657.

Running: Daily.

Derwent Valley Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Embsay, North Yorks.

Tel: 01756 795189.

Running: Tues, W/Es + May 28-31.

Heatherslaw Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles.

Ford Forge, Northumberland.

Tel: 01890 820244.

Running: Daily.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ. Tel: 01535 645214.

Running: Weds, W/Es, sch hols + Thurs from June 6.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway

2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.

Tel: 07407 500884.

Running: May 26, June 15.



The Bodmin & Wenford Railway will hold its Branch Line Gala over the weekend of May 25/26. An intensive timetable will see GWR prairie No. 5552 heading service trains, with Class 121 'Bubblecar' No. 121020 offering trips and Port of Par Bagnall 0-4-OST No. 2572 Judy offering brake van rides, both within station limits and also up and down the line. On static display will be Beattie 2-4-0WT No. 30587, Port of Par Bagnall 0-4-OST No. 3058 of 1953 Alfred, Bagnall 0-4-OST No. 2962 of 1950 No. 19 and GWR 0-6-OPT No. 4612. Guided workshop tours will be offered throughout both days, and children will travel free all weekend. Gala-specific activity sheets will be free to all youngsters.

On September 7/8, a mixed-traction China Clay Gala will take place, followed by the Diesel Gala on September 28/29. Visit <https://bodminrailway.co.uk/>

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire.

Tel: 01507 363881.

Running: Suns + May 27.

Middleton Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunslet, Leeds.

Tel: 0845 680 1758.

Running: W/Es + May 29.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Grosmont, North Yorks.

Tel: 01751 472508.

Running: Daily.

Scarborough North Bay Railway

20in gauge, 7⁄8 mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.

Running: Daily.

Stephenson Steam Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

North Shields. Tel: 0191 277 7135.

Open: W/Es, bank hols. Running: Suns + May 27, 30.

Tanfield Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

Tel: 07508 092365.

Running: Suns + May 25, 27.

Weardale Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Stanhope, Co. Durham.

Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es + May 27.

Wensleydale Railway

Standard gauge, 22 miles.

Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.

Tel: 01677 425805.

Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es, + May 27.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)

15in gauge, four miles.

Huddersfield, West Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.

Open: W/Es, sch hols + May 25.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

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 + May 27, 29.

Brecon Mountain Railway

1ft 11¼in gauge, five miles.

Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

Corris Railway

2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile. Corris, near Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.

Running: Sats + bank hols + May 26

Fairbourne Railway

12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne, Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

The details in this list were correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise that you confirm details with the venue concerned. Pre-booking is often essential. TBA = To Be Announced

Ffestiniog Railway

2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Daily.

Gwili Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire.

Tel: 01267 238213.

Running: Weds, Thurs, Suns, bank hols.

Llanberis Lake Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd.

Tel: 01286 870549.

Running: Suns-Fris. Daily from May 25.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.

Tel: 07956 082305.

Reopens: TBA.

Llangollen Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles.

Llangollen, Denbighshire.

Tel: 01978 860979.

Running: Thurs-Suns, bank hols + Weds from June 5.

Rhyl Miniature Railway

15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.

Tel: 01352 759109.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Snowdon Mountain Railway

800mm gauge, 4½ miles.

Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.

Running: Daily.

Talyllyn Railway

2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.

Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.

Running: Daily.

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.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols + Tues from June 4.

Welsh Highland Railway

2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Daily.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair

Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.

Running: Tues, W/Es, + May 24.

Caledonian Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Brechin, Angus.

Tel: 01356 622992.

Running: Suns from June 2 + May 11,

June 1, 8, 15.

Doon Valley Railway

Standard gauge. Dunaskin, Ayrshire.

Running: May 26.

Keith & Dufftown Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles.

Dufftown, Banffshire. Tel: 01340 821181.

Running: W/Es + Fris from June 7.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and heritage events in the coming weeks

MAY

- 10-12 Bluebell Railway Branch Line Weekend
- 10-12 Didcot Railway Centre 55th Anniversary Celebration
- 10-12 Swanage Railway Diesel Gala
- 11 Welsh Highland Railway Caernarfon Food Fair
- 11/12 Great Central Railway Open Extravaganza
- 11/12 Isle of Wight Steam Railway Model Railway Weekend
- 11/12 Statfold Country Park Steam in Miniature
- 12 Crich Tramway Village Model Trams Exhibition
- 12 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Vintage Road & Rail Rally
- 12 Mid-Norfolk Railway Vintage Bus Day
- 16-19 Severn Valley Railway Spring Diesel Festival
- 18/19 Bluebell Railway Road Meets Rail
- 18/19 Ffestiniog Railway Model Railway Workshop
- 18/19 Great Central Railway Heritage Bus Rally and Railcar Weekend
- 18/19 Kent & East Sussex Railway 1940s Weekend
- 19 Crich Tramway Village Dog friendly day
- 19 Isle of Wight Steam Railway Festival of Transport
- 25/26 Dean Forest Railway Spring Steam Gala
- 25-27 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Cotswold Festival of Steam
- 25-27 Mid-Norfolk Railway Diesel Gala
- 25-31 Crich Tramway Village Seaside Fun Week
- 26 Talyllyn Railway Tracksider Takeover
- 26/27 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Middy in the Forties
- 27 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Dragon Adventure
- 30 Talyllyn Railway Children's Day

JUNE

- 1/2 Avon Valley Railway 'Brick Express'

- 1/2 Bluebell Railway Southern at War
- 1/2 Kent & East Sussex Railway 50th Anniversary Gala
- 1/2 Llangollen Railway Diesel and Industrial Gala
- 2 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Colne Valley Car Club
- 6-8 West Somerset Railway Summer Diesel Festival
- 7/8 Welsh Highland Railway Beer Festival
- 7-9 Avon Valley Railway Bitton Beer Bash
- 8/9 Statfold Country Park Summer Spectacle of Steam
- 9 Crich Tramway Village Model Trams Exhibition
- 9 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Brake Van Day
- 13 Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Ratty Arms 50th Anniversary
- 14/15 Kent & East Sussex Railway Beer Festival
- 14-16 North Yorkshire Moors Railway Diesel Gala
- 15 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Music Festival
- 15/16 Epping Ongar Railway 1940s Weekend
- 15/16 Middleton Railway Model Railway Exhibition
- 16 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Ridgeway Run Classic Vehicles 40th Anniversary
- 16 Great Central Railway Railwayana Swapmeet
- 16 West Lancashire Light Railway Strawberries and Steam
- 20-23 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway Diesel Gala
- 21-23 Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Beer Festival
- 22/23 Crich Tramway Village Living History Weekend
- 22/23 Didcot Railway Centre Model Railway Exhibition
- 22/23 Statfold Country Park Midlands Fire & Rescue Event
- 23 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway East Anglian Classics

Organising a gala or other big event and want it included? Let us know by emailing Owen Hayward at: ohayward@mortons.co.uk

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway

3ft gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down.

Tel: +353 71 963 8599.

Running: Sats-Mons.

Downpatrick & County Down Railway

5ft 3in gauge.

Drumod, Co. Leitrim.

Tel: 028 4461 5779. Reopens: TBA.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

5ft 3in gauge.

Whitehead, Co. Antrim.

Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.

Museum open: Thurs-Sats.

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY FOOTPLATE EXPERIENCES

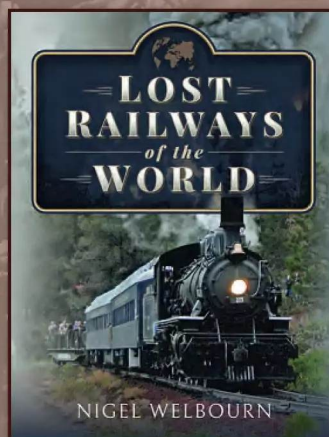
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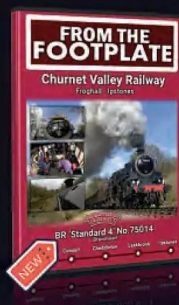
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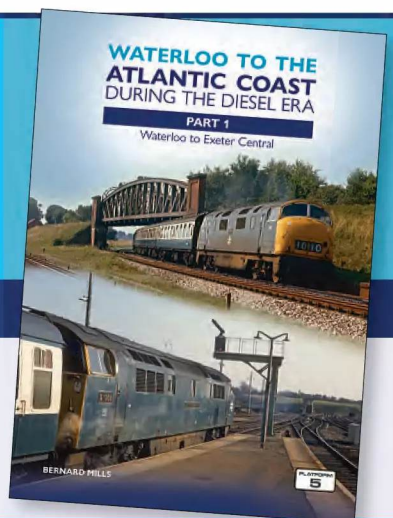
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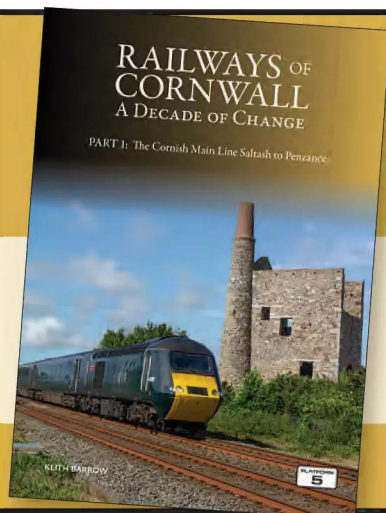


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Simultaneous comeback for the two Thomases also boasts a pair of firsts

By Owen Hayward

HE is known to pull the crowds and has inspired a generation of enthusiasts to start volunteering at heritage lines, so the Mid-Hants Railway and Buckinghamshire Railway Centre's Day Out With Thomas events are vital fixtures in its calendar. However, for a successful day out, you need a Thomas, of course – and the race was on for both lines to complete overhauls of their own locomotives to play the part.

For the BRC, that honour has fallen to Hunslet 'Fitzwilliam' 0-6-0 No. 3782 *Arthur*, which has steamed for the first time in the heritage era following its conversion from a saddle tank to a side tank locomotive. Built in 1953 for the National Coal Board's Markham Main Colliery near Doncaster, it was withdrawn in 1976, after which it joined a private collection of industrial locomotives before arriving at Quanton Road in 1979.

Picked for conversion

Restoration commenced after it was found to be an ideal candidate for conversion into the popular blue engine, which has seen the boiler receive a new front tubeplate and



Converted from Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3781 *Linda* in 1994, the Mid-Hants Railway's *Thomas* returned to service in March after an overhaul that saw new cylinders fitted – a preservation first for an example of this class. RICHARD BENTLEY/MHR

fabrication of side tanks. A hydraulic test of the boiler was successfully passed at the start of the year, with a subsequent steam test on March 15, after which it was a race against time to reassemble the locomotive for the Easter weekend event, which included a number of early starts and late nights by the museums dedicated volunteers and contractor JM Engineering.

Despite best efforts, *Arthur/Thomas* was not quite finished in time to operate services on March 29-31 as hoped; however, it was visually complete enough to portray the character while on static display. In the weeks following, the final jobs were



Looking the part: Hunslet 0-6-0 No. 3782 *Arthur* on March 27 ahead of the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre's Day Out With Thomas weekend, at which it was on static display having not quite been completed in time. BRC

checked off, allowing for its testing to commence, and it was due to appear at the centre's May 5/6 event.

Old locomotive, new cylinders

At the same time, the Mid-Hants Railway was completing its overhaul of its own Hunslet conversion; *Arthur's* numeric predecessor, Austerity No. 3781 *Linda*, was rebuilt to portray the character on the railway in 1994 and is regularly hired out for DOWT events at other railways.

Its most recent overhaul has seen a new cylinder block produced – a first for an Austerity in preservation – with improvements to the cab layout made in order to make it more user-friendly

for use at times outside of these events. The result is a more spacious cab that will additionally bring the benefit of an ideal economical locomotive for use on introductory footplates experience courses.

After passing its steam tests and undertaking some running-in during mid March, *Linda* then departed for its first appearance at Tyseley Locomotive Works' DOWT event that took place on April 3-6.

Although the MHR has previously run two separate full weeks of Thomas events each year, for 2024 just one event will take place, on May 25-June 2.

Minehead dinosaurs roar now as well as 200 million years ago!

DINOSAURS not only pushed up Easter passenger figures and revenue on the West Somerset Railway, but also springboarded Blue Anchor on to the international stage days later.

From March 29 until April 14, the railway held its Easter Eggstravaganza, which included a dinosaur trail. Passengers were invited to spot the prehistoric reptile giants which could be seen at the lineside, and if all were spotted, they were rewarded with a sticker for their efforts.

On Easter Sunday, March 31, and Bank Holiday Monday, April 1, a Roar and Explore – Dino Days experience

saw a velociraptor, triceratops and baby dinosaurs supplied by the Experiences Group visit Minehead station at intervals.

The event proved a big hit with the public. Easter passenger numbers rose from 1936 in 2023 to 2398, with income rising from £32,000 last year to £43,162.

However, far bigger prehistoric news was to break on the doorstep in the coming days. Newspapers around the world reported the discovery of a new species of ichthyosaur, a giant swimming reptile, as evidenced by a fossil jawbone collected by Ruby

Reynolds, then aged 11, and her dad Justin on the beach at Blue Anchor, a short hop from the station. Further digs uncovered 11 more fragments.

Scientists who examined the fossils believe that the creature lived 200 million years ago at the end of the Triassic period and could have been the largest-ever marine reptile. They named the new species *ichthyotitan severnensis*, meaning 'giant fish lizard of the Severn'. It is also unique among the ichthyosaurs known to science.

The finding was published on April 17 in a paper by Dr Dean Lomax, an internationally-recognised



A prehistoric visitor to Minehead station over the Easter weekend. WSR

palaeontologist at the University of Bristol, who said: "Based on the size of the jawbones – one of them a metre long and the other two metres long – we can work out that the entire animal would have been about 25 metres long."

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 320 out June 7

Full coverage of the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's eagerly-awaited annual Cotswold Festival of Steam on May 25-27.

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