SEVERN VALLEY GALA TO GO AHEAD DESPITE LANDSLIP

ISSUE 330 March 14 – April 11, 2025

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steams ahead to Mid-Hants launch event

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RETAILER OF THE YEAR!

With the last train of the day, BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 – the locomotive moved to run most Severn Valley Railway services after the Mor Brok landslip left the fleet marooned at Bridgnorth – climbs to Bewdley Tunnel on February 22. JOHN TITLOW

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'Never say die' – the keynote to survival

THE Severn Valley Railway carried off four prestigious accolades at the Heritage Railway Association Award 2025 ceremony in Gateshead on February 8, but it has now passed the acid test big time to show once and for all why it is a market leader – not in just our heritage sector, but in the overall scheme of tourism in our country.

The line suddenly found itself cut off from its Bridgnorth terminus and engine sheds by an unexpected freak landslip on January 29. Undeterred, officials set about successfully replanning the imminent half-term services, moving a locomotive by road to Kidderminster to run them and others, maybe only as far as Hampton Loade, but then initiated footplate rides as a significant draw at Bridgnorth, before deciding to go full steam ahead with its eagerly-awaited Spring Steam Gala at Easter.

Meanwhile, the public demonstrated the value it places on the line by donating more than £90,000 towards a resilience fund in less than a month in the wake of the slippage.

In time gone by, it would have been so easy and convenient to halt all proceedings and cut costs, but in its 60th year the SVR has yet again shown the world that it is made of far sterner stuff, and for its determined action plan and rescue efforts, richly deserved to survive as a shining example to us all in these cash-strapped time.

Last year, the Nene Valley Railway found its financial reserves depleted following the Covid-19 pandemic and launched its £300,000 Back On Track appeal to replenish them – in the event that it might suffer a similar calamity as just happened on the SVR. The public responded likewise, and now more than a third of that target has been raised.

The vast and, in many cases, untapped potential of this heritage line was magnificently showcased by the recent visit of *Flying Scotsman*, which saw six days of passenger services and 10,000 tickets completely sold out, with other people choosing to pay a modest sum to visit the footplate and walk through the tender corridor. Midway through its visit, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity arose to see the world's most famous steam locomotive haul a freight rake on a day-and-evening photographic charter booked by the excellent Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group.

> "A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity arose to see the world's most famous steam locomotive haul a freight rake..."

Here is a heritage railway which boasts a main line connection to nothing less than the East Coast Main Line, with the ability to accept incoming tours and also stable and service their locomotives. At its Peterborough terminus, which has the advantage of being a short walk from a vibrant city centre, the long-forgotten station building from Wansford Road is being re-erected and will form a joint gateway for the heritage line and the fascinating Railworld complex next door, itself a much-varied family attraction. Then, as reported in issue 328, the wagon group has drawn up plans to create a working goods yard at Overton for Ferry Meadows station.

The net result of all these initiatives will create a key destination near the centre of England for many day-trippers, generating a significant boon for the local economy – which is exactly what happens when the public and the powers that be give their support to local heritage.

Robin Jones Editor

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As it opened its doors for the start of the 2025 operating season, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway took part in Railway 200 celebrations with a four-day gala that welcomed back one old friend and marked the long service of another. Owen Hayward crossed the Solent to discover what was taking place.

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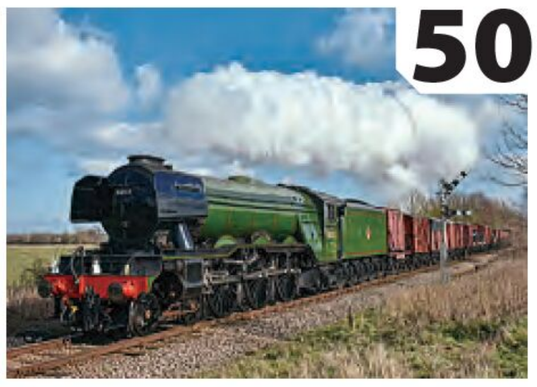
CONTENTS: LEFT: **On March 1, LMS Stanier 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45212 passes the Conwy Castle with 1Z67 'The Mancunian,' which ran from Manchester Victoria to Holyhead. Built by Edward I between 1283-89 during his conquest of Wales, it forms part of a UNESCO World Heritage site and is considered to be one of the finest examples of late 13th century and early 14th century military architecture in Europe. As it approached the end of its boiler ticket, 'The Mancunian' was one of the last few booked duties for the Stanier express locomotive prior to its upcoming withdrawal, following which it is expected to see work commence to return it to service fairly swiftly. A resident of the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway between its main line commitments, No. 45212 worked its last passenger services there in January, which included a first for the railway when, on January 18, it was worked by its first all-female locomotive crew.** RICHARD WALLIKER

ABOVE: **Setting the scene: A night shoot at Sheffield Park on February 18 saw Bluebell Railway resident 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* posed at the front of the former Metropolitan Railway Chesham carriages. Reenactors were positioned on the platforms either side, all of whom wore period attire to help further enhance the scene. While not strictly an authentic combination, many visitors, volunteers and enthusiasts agree that the sight of the 'Terrier' and these carriages combined 'just works', with the combination having worked together during the railway's February half-term services.** NICK GILLIAM

COVER: **An historic day: On February 28, A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* emerges from Yarwell Tunnel on the Nene Valley Railway during its first freight photographic charter since 1994. Gresley's A3 was partway through a sell-out visit to the Cambridgeshire heritage line; see Headline News, pages 6/7, and our special feature, pages 50-53.** OWEN HAYWARD



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Daniel Long recounts the life and times of one of preservation's revered narrow gauge icons.

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Nene Valley line is dazzled by *Scotsman* sell-out stunner!

By Robin Jones

Gresley A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* heads west with the 2.15pm Peterborough to Wansford Service on February 22, the first day of its hugely successful Nene Valley visit. PETER FOSTER

THE Nene Valley Railway is celebrating what may have been the most successful event in its history – when LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* made its first passenger journeys of the year as part of the nationwide Railway 200 celebrations.

The world's most famous locomotive and its support coach arrived from York by rail via Spalding on February 19. All 10,042 seats (costing £30 per adult) on the five daily round trips hauled by the locomotive from Wansford to Peterborough on February 22/23 and March 1/2 and 8/9 were sold out, with departures at 9.30am, 11am, 12.30pm, 2.15pm and 3.45pm.

In addition, the A3 hauled evening fish-and-chips specials on February 22, March 1 and 8, attracting another 477 bookings.

On non-operating days, visitors were allowed to visit the footplate at Wansford and walk through the corridor tender for £10 a time. A total of 1628 bookings were made for this, not counting walk-ins from visitors who turned up on the day.

Keen to catch a glimpse

On several days, visitors' cars lined both sides of the road leading from the A1 to the Wansford station level crossing for a distance several hundred yards, while at every overbridge and vantage point along the 7 ½-mile line, spectators turned out to see *Scotsman* pass. On several days, visitors had to buy £5 platform tickets to access Wansford station.

As highlighted in our special feature on pages 50-55, the Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group staged a photographic charter on February 28 giving a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see *Scotsman* haul a lengthy rake of superbly -estored BR goods vehicles.

The dazzling success of the visit by the A3, which on November 30, 1934, became the world's first steam locomotive to be officially recorded at 100mph on a light engine round from Grantham down Stoke Bank about 25 miles to the north, came less than year after the NVR launched its Back On Track SOS public appeal for £300,000 to boost its contingency funds in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, with operational expenses also increasing rapidly.

As this issue closed for press, £102,913 had been raised. A NVR spokesman said: "Obviously, we are thrilled to have raised more than a third of our target through donations.

"People have been very generous. Of course, there are other ways they can support us too, the most obvious being to buy a ticket to ride the train or attend an event. Right now, people can save up to 27% off last year's standard travel prices, which really is a bargain when you consider the cost to run a locomotive. This year we have murder mysteries, afternoon teas and fish-and-chips trains, among many others.

"As well as that, simply making a purchase in our shops or cafés supports us as well."

Star-studded visitors

In recent months, the NVR has been boosted by visits from other popular main line locomotives including LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* and new-build Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*, which, as reported in Main Line News, page 56, has been undergoing test runs in readiness for its main line comeback after an overhaul lasting more than two years. Furthermore, the railway has been used as a stabling point for locomotives on main line charters.

In a second 'Best of British' event marking the Railway 200 year, the next visitor will be BR Standard 7 4-6-2 No. 70000 *Britannia,* which will haul passenger services on March 15/16. On March 15, it will haul the evening 'Jolly fisherman' fish-and-chips special.

On March 12, No. 70000 will take centre stage in the Rule Britannia photographic charter; for more details visit nvr.org.uk, telephone 01780 784444, or email enquiries@nvrwagons.co.uk

➜ To donate to the Back On Track appeal, visit the abovementioned website or Wansford station booking office, or ask one of its travelling tickets inspectors.

Left: *Flying Scotsman* heads its passenger train on the 'long straight' from Overton on March 1. ROBIN JONES

Right: Emerging from beneath the atmospheric three-arch Mill Lane bridge at Castor, No. 60103 heads towards Wansford on March 1. ROBIN JONES

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Canadian Pacific prepares for debut at Mid-Hants

Words and pictures by Owen Hayward

SOUTHERN Railway 4-6-2 Merchant Navy No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* had just started running-in trials on the Mid-Hants Railway as its return to public service rapidly drew near as this issue of *Heritage Railway* closed for press.

The line's flagship has been the subject of an overhaul lasting more than a decade, which saw it based in the former Southern Region workshops at Eastleigh, the buildings of which are now owned Arlington Fleet Services. Arriving there in 2011 for undercover storage, overhaul started two years later when it was stripped to allow the full extent of the work to be assessed.

An application for grant funding was also submitted for Heritage Lottery Funding, which successfully gained approval in April 2015, providing a vital cash injection which has totalled £1,254,400 towards the £2 million project.

The boiler was overhauled at Ropley while Mid-Hants volunteers and engineering staff focused on the chassis at Eastleigh. However, a weight restriction was later imposed on a bridge providing road access to the site that meant the rolling chassis became trapped there. Several years passed and numerous options were explored before repairs were effected to the structure that strengthened it, allowing for dispensation to be granted which finally allowed the departure, which took place on April 28 last year.

Home at last

Since then, reassembly work saw the boiler refitted on September 19 following its first steam tests in June – the first time a fire had been lit in the firebox since the locomotive was withdrawn in 2008.

Over the winter, work has concentrated on refitting all of the pipework, boiler cladding and backhead fittings as the planned public launch date of March 20 rapidly approaches. On February 26, the boiler's final steam test was conducted in the presence of an inspector who passed it for service. Following this, *Canadian Pacific* made its first moves under its own power within the confines of Ropley locomotive yard.

The following day it undertook light engine test runs between Alresford and Medstead & Four Marks stations, with regular stops to check that bearings were not running hot and that all mechanical components were working as they should. Further trips along the full route took place on February 28 and into the start of March, with loaded test runs due to commence.

Testing was being carried out with the locomotive in a semi-completed condition; some of the cladding and smoke deflectors hinder access to some parts of the locomotive and it was determined that it would be better for these to be fitted once sufficient testing was completed in case any problems arose which required access to the areas concerned and which would otherwise have been hindered.

While it has run during the heritage era in BR express blue, an inauthentic livery for its class, No. 35005 will be turned out in Brunswick green; with no standard paint code for this colour, the exact shade was determined by a meeting of the Heritage Advisory Group, with the colour matching that applied to Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* on the Bluebell Railway.

Following a private event for supporters and railway volunteers, *Canadian Pacific* was due to enter service on Thursday, March 20, departing Alresford at about 9am with a train comprising BR(S) green Mk.1 and SR Bulleid carriages, the latter being a type once used on named expresses such as the 'Atlantic Coast Express' which the locomotive once worked. Breakfast will be served on board during the journey.

Later that same day, further dining trains will also run offering three-course meals as *Canadian Pacific* works its way through the Hampshire countryside.

Above: With drain cocks open and an attempt being made to hide itself behind a cloud of steam, No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* makes its first moves out along the line on February 27 as testing commences.

Right: *Canadian Pacific* sits in the glorious afternoon sunshine at Ropley following a day of test runs along the Mid-Hants Railway on February 27.

On March 21, No. 35005 will work its first standard public service trains, prior to a weekend of further trains immediately after.

Long-awaited achievement

Mid-Hants CEO Rebecca Dalley said: "This fantastic restoration of the historic locomotive *Canadian Pacific* is a testament to the dedication of our volunteers and the unwavering support of our partners. *Canadian Pacific* is not just a locomotive – it represents the rich heritage of British engineering and the enduring spirit of our railway community.

"During the past decade, the commitment from our volunteers has been nothing short of extraordinary. This project breathes new life into an historic locomotive and helps us inspire future generations to appreciate and preserve our railway heritage."

Canadian Pacific restoration team volunteer Steve Wilson said: "Both my parents worked at Eastleigh Works. My father was a blacksmith before the war and was later taken as a POW on the Burma Railway. My mother worked as a machinist on the capstan lathe during the war. It is wonderful to think that she may well have made studs that are still in *Canadian Pacific*'s frames today.

"In the early 1950s, at about five years of age I was taken to the Eastleigh Works open days, and that was it – I was hooked! Being able to go back there and work on *Canadian Pacific* in the same place my parents worked was really nice.

"Seeing the locomotive return to steam is a dream come true for all of us who have been part of this journey. It's a true labour of love.

"I cannot wait for the public to experience the magic of *Canadian Pacific* once again."

Full coverage of the Merchant Navy's return to service will be included in the next issue of *Heritage Railway*.

Bluebell signs landmark collaborative agreement with Network Rail

MARCH 3 saw the Bluebell Railway sign a new agreement that will see redundant railway assets from Network Rail's Sussex route donated to the heritage line include rails and sleepers.

With heritage railways like the Bluebell running passenger services at slower speeds, the materials can be safely reused and repurposed for a new lease of life, ensuring the line can continue to welcome about 150,000 visitors each year. Under the agreement, NR will also use the Bluebell's facilities as part of its community engagement activities, including hosting rail experience days to promote the role of rail to people considering a career in the industry.

In return, the Bluebell will benefit from NR's in-kind expertise and time, with staff being able to use volunteering leave to support the maintenance and running of the line.

NR's Sussex route director, Lucy McAuliffe, said: "Wherever we can, we will work with heritage railways throughout our network to forge a new partnership so that materials that would otherwise be recycled elsewhere to be reused can find a new purpose.

"In turn, the Bluebell Railway also has some excellent facilities which, because it is separate from the main line network, provide the perfect opportunity for our colleagues to contribute to the local community.

"Working together through this Route Agreement provides a clear framework and we are excited about the possibilities it brings, not only to Network Rail and the Bluebell Railway, but wider society – and what better time to do it than in 2025, the bicentenary of the railway."

Severn Valley spring gala set to go ahead despite landslip

By John Titlow

THE Severn Railway Valley has given the green light to its planned Spring Steam Gala at Easter on April 18-21 despite its Bridgnorth terminus being cut off by the landslip at Mor Bridge.

Trains will operate between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade, with LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 5596 *Bahamas* booked and an announcement will be made about further guest locomotives. A timetable is being worked on.

The January 29 slip, reported in the last issue of *Heritage Railway*, was the major feature on the BBC Midlands Today news programme soon after it happened.

For those unfamiliar with the SVR, the bridge at Mor Brook is not to be confused with Sterns where much remedial work has been carried out. The SVR has never had any issues at Mor Brook bridge before, which is why the landslip came as a complete shock.

As investigative work progresses on the slippage, the railway put a completely new timetable in place for half-term. Bridgnorth departures were removed from sale with passengers transferred onto Kidderminster trains.

BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 has turned out to be the hero of the hour, leaving Bridgnorth on February 6 by low-loader for Kidderminster to operate half-term and weekend services on the open section of the line to Hampton Loade. Coal was also transported from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster.

In a surprise and unexpected move, steam did run at Bridgnorth during half-term on February 15/16, 18-20, and 22/23 and will continue on all operating days.

For about 15 minutes, visitors can join the driver and fireman on board the footplate at a cost of £20 for two trips travelling up and down the platform at Bridgnorth, venturing as far as the section signal by Oldbury Cutting.

The locomotive in use was supposed to be GWR 0-4-2T No. 1450, but a leaking lubrication pipe under the cladding had to be repaired and was completed by February 20. In the meantime, GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* was used.

To encourage people to Bridgnorth, parking charges are removed for those joining the footplate days, and the refreshment room and Railwayman's Arms pub are open. The line's Stove R brake van was positioned on Platform 1 for exhibitions.

From Kidderminster, timetables on February 15/16 and 22/23 saw three steam departures at 10.15am, 12.40pm and 3.10pm, and two diesel services at 11.10am and 1.40pm.

Midweek steam and diesel services during February 18-20 were identical but with the addition of DMU trains at 12.05pm and 2.35pm. Paddington Bear visited the Engine House at Highley midweek and the 12.05pm DMU was for his ticketholders only. These services proved very popular and were packed.

Observation saloons operated as planned. On the photographic shoot at Hampton Loade (see News, pages 38/39), No. 75069 covered for GWR pannier No. 7714 which was undergoing routine valve and piston examinations. There was also no change to the Boogie Lights Express,

The first Boogie Nights train at Kidderminster Town on February 28. JOHN TITLOW

two trains each evening departing Kidderminster at 6pm and 8pm, departing from Kidderminster and run on Friday and Saturday evenings until March 29.

A diesel dragged the train to Highley, where No. 75069 took over for the return to Kidderminster. The train made a dramatic entrance into Kidderminster festooned with internal and external lights.

The musical journey started in the 1960s and reached up to today, with the Rolling Stones, Abba, Boy George and the Village People among the tracks played. Coloured wristbands and changing lights created a fun scene of the like never experienced on an SVR steam train before.

Even though the line is split, a good day can still be had by visitors, firstly on the footplate rides before taking the train at Hampton Loade for a ride on the open section between there and Kidderminster. Parking is restricted at Hampton Loade.

Careful assessments

A statement from the railway said: "The SVR is working closely with structural and geotechnical experts to narrow down repair options for the significant landslip it has recently suffered.

"External experts met on February 12 with the SVR's consulting engineer to review the available topographical and borehole data, gathered since the incident happened at Mor Brook on January 29."

Antony Bartlam, of consulting, structural and civil engineer firm J Turner and Associates, said: "It was a very positive meeting. The good news is that we have narrowed down the possibilities to a couple of

The Severn Valley Modelu figurines are based on current and retired volunteers. MODELU

BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 on the low-loader, about to head off to Kidderminster on February 6 to haul half-term services. JOHN TITLOW

A still from the Tik-Tok fundraising film showing Francis Bourgeois talking to Severn Valley managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster. SVR

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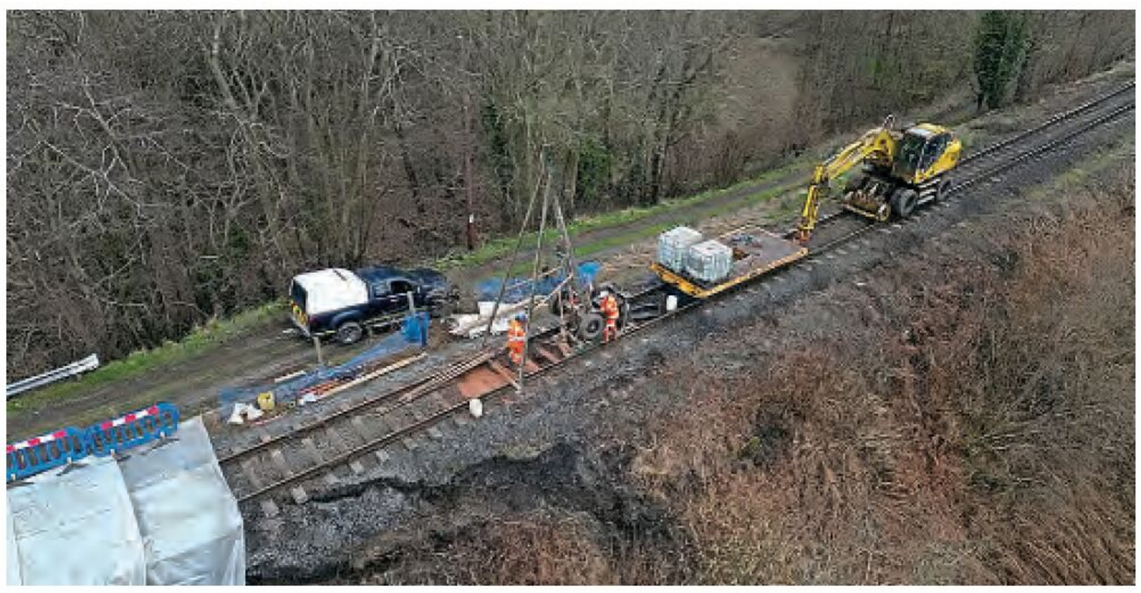
A drone image showing the extent of the Mor Brook slip, with Network Rail engineers advising on the engineering solutions. GARY ESSEX/SVR



Engineers from SEP Rail Services drill a borehole to investigate ground conditions at the Mor Brook slip site. GARY ESSEX/SVR

Looking south into Oldbury Cutting, the section signal is the limit of running from Bridgnorth as GWR 0-4-2T No. 1450 performs footplate duties on March 1. JOHN TITLOW

potential solutions. However, there is some further work to do before the project team finalises the route we will take, and that's when we will be able to understand more about the timescale and the costs."

SVR's head of infrastructure, Chris Bond, added: "This really isn't a thing we can rush. It's important to bear in mind that there are extra complications involved with this particular problem.

"As well as choosing the best repair option, we will have to liaise with external agencies and third parties, such as landowners and National Grid, whose power lines are very close to the slip site.

"There's a lot of preparatory work to do before there are spades on the ground. We are determined to deliver a safe, long-lasting and cost-effective repair as quickly as circumstances will allow, so we can open up the northernmost section of our line."

The SVR is now running a three-train service at weekends. No. 75069 which faces south will top-and-tail services with a diesel to avoid run-rounds at Hampton Loade, with departure times from Kidderminster at 10.15am, 12.40pm and 3.05pm.

SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "We are delighted that we've still got 12 miles of the line in full operation.

"Getting the full line back in operation is of course a huge priority for us, and in civil engineering terms, we're making great progress."

The public appeal for funds to help tackle the slippage had exceeded £90,000 as this issue of *Heritage Railway* closed for press.

Four awards for the SVR

South Shropshire MP Stuart Anderson congratulated the SVR on its recent Heritage Railway Association 2025 Awards success, at which it won four prestigious accolades, and has also asked how he can offer support in the restoration efforts as he appreciates how vital the railway is to the community and heritage.

As reported last issue, Eardington station scooped the HRA award for Station of the Year.

The SVR was also a joint winner of the Achievement of the Year award for its landmark partnership with Network Rail, the first and only one of its kind in the UK.

Veteran SVR supporter and volunteer David Williams won a lifetime achievement award, becoming the Railway Magazine Preservationist of the Year for 2025. David has been involved with the SVR since its very early days, and served 57 years as editor of its supporter publication, SVR News. He has also volunteered as a locomotive driver and held positions at board level.

The SVR-based Diesel Traction Group received the Rail Express Modern Traction Award, which recognises its continuing involvement in preserving main line diesels.

Meanwhile, social media trainspotting legend Francis Bourgeois is backing the appeal.

He visited the site of the landslip and was shown round by Jonathan to see for himself how bad the damage is.

In a special film released in February, he explained to his more than five million followers on TikTok and Instagram what they can do to help.

"I was shocked at the true extent of the damage," he said. "From a railway enthusiast's point of view, that section of line is my absolute favourite. This brilliant part of the SVR has now been cut off by the landslide."

He also heard how the SVR has received offers of assistance from Network Rail and other main line companies, as well as financial support from thousands of individuals. "It highlights how much this railway means to people really," he added. "It's amazing to see how this hasn't just pulled together the heritage community – it's a railway-wide operation now."

Jonathan said: "We will be looking at a bill of hundreds of thousands of pounds, without doubt.

"It's a massive boost to know that we have his backing to get this sorted out, and that he is reaching out via social media to millions of people." *Donations towards the cost of the repairs are invited at https://svr.co.uk/resilience/

A model contribution

Chipping Sodbury-based Modelu has created a set of eight figurines that accurately depict individual SVR volunteers in a variety of railway roles, including footplate crew, signalman and inspector. The company has used its specially developed 3D scanner to capture the likenesses of the volunteers.

Modelu owner Alan Buttler said: "We want to create figures that are incredibly accurate, down to the last detail. Working with real-life volunteers means that we can get poses that are authentic and realistic.

"Our bodyscanner has a rig of 105 separate cameras and can capture a pose in a fraction of a second.

"When we heard about the SVR's landslip and realised how much it's going to impact the railway, it gave us an idea. We wanted to give something back to the line in recognition of the time and support its volunteers have given us to help develop our business.'

Jonathan said: "This is a wonderful show of support from Modelu, and we are so grateful to the company for doing this.

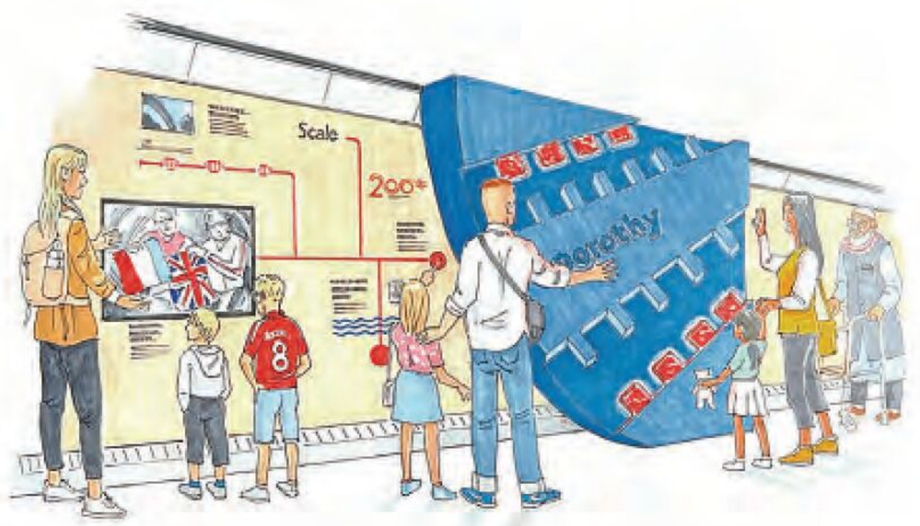
"The figurine sets really are astonishingly accurate and it's great to see our own recognisable volunteers portrayed in action!"

Modelu is donating 50% of the sales price for each set of figurines it sells. Sets are available in a range of scales, including N, O and OO, from modelu3d.co.uk, with prices starting at £24.95.

Railway 200 exhibition train makes Severn Valley its first port of call

By Robin Jones

Network Rail Central route director Denise Wetton, station staff, Severn Valley managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster and No. 75069 with its crew at Kidderminster Town on February 27. JOHN TITLOW



An artist's impression of the interior of *Inspiration* carriage Railway Firsts. NR

THE Severn Valley Railway has been announced as the first stop for a unique train on a 12-month tour of Britain celebrating 200 years of the modern railway.

The Railway 200 train, named *Inspiration*, is planned to call at 60 destinations up to summer 2026 as part of its journey to promote the past, present and future of the railway and inspire the next generation of workers.

More than 200,000 people, including many schoolchildren, are expected to visit the one-of-a-kind train as it makes its way around the national rail network. It will be made up of four specially decorated carriages, each with its own theme and focus.

Sporting an eye-catching livery, *Inspiration* will comprise four reconfigured Mk. 3 coaches procured by Network Rail. The mobile Railway 200 exhibition is designed to inspire schoolchildren and others to consider a career in rail, shining a spotlight on the wide range of roles available, and to create a more diverse workforce.

Engaging exhibition

Rail's innovation and pioneering pedigree will be explored in Railway Firsts, highlighting landmark moments in the development of the railway. Alongside will be a Wonderlab on Wheels, inviting visitors to test their engineering skills with a range of interactive exhibits.

A carriage called Your Railway Future will showcase some of the more hidden roles in rail and encourage people to join the railway to shape the next 200 years. There will also be a Partner Zone, offering free, flexible exhibition space.

Admission to the train will be free, but normal entry charges to heritage railways and private sites where it is located will apply. Prior booking is required, with early registrations of interest now open at railway200.co.uk/inspiration.

Inspiration will arrive at Kidderminster Town station on June 26, ahead of being open to visitors between June 27 and July 6.

To celebrate being the first station to host the train, teams from Network Rail's Central route and the SVR attended Kidderminster Town on February 27.

The second stop for the exhibition train will be Birmingham Moor Street station on July 8-10, before the train resumes its journey and heads to Euston station.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's Central route director, said: "Birmingham and the West Midlands are at the heart of Britain's railway, so it is fitting that this fantastic exhibition train, celebrating 200 years of the rail industry, is making its first two stops here.

"The railway has always been, and remains, a vital part of Britain and this train celebrates the past, present and future of an invention which changed the world.

"I can't wait for it to arrive and inspire thousands of visitors from the West Midlands who will be some of the first people in Britain to see it."

Perfect timing

SVR managing director Gus Dunster said: "We are delighted to have been chosen as *Inspiration*'s first regional venue. During its time with us, there will be a special programme of school visits, during which children will be able to travel on a heritage train.

"*Inspiration*'s 10-day stay at the SVR will coincide with the Railway 200 weekend on July 5/6, with plenty of exciting attractions. There will be a theme of trains through the ages, and we hope to have special guest vehicles spanning from the 1800s to the very latest in modern technology."

Emma Roberts, Railway 200's programme manager, said: "This special exhibition train will provide a unique visitor experience for hundreds of thousands of people around Britain, including many schoolchildren. *Inspiration* will excite, enlighten, entertain and encourage people to take a fresh view of the railway as part of its bicentenary celebrations.

"It will also invite visitors to consider a career in rail by showcasing the extensive variety of roles available. We look forward to welcoming them onboard for an unforgettable and potentially life-changing experience."

The NRM's Charlotte Kingston added: "We are thrilled that *Inspiration* will be touring the country, sharing our stories with so many people. Railways have shaped our world in so many ways, from what we eat to where we go on holiday, and to inspire people and give them a chance to get involved in this celebration is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The train's itinerary after the West Midlands is Euston (July 12-15); Waterloo (July 18-19); Margate (July 20/21); Bluebell railway (July 23-29); Alstom's Litchurch Lane site for The Greatest Gathering (August 1-3); Norwich (August 7-10); Lowestoft (August 11-14); Freightliner Doncaster Railport (August 16/17); National Railway Museum, York as part of 50th birthday celebrations (August 23-31); Darlington station, as part of Stockton & Darlington Railway200 (September 10-17) and Locomotion in Shildon (September 20-October 1).

For more than 275 Railway 200 events, visit www.railway200.co.uk

Thameslink offers free travel to Rail 200 @ Bluebell for 9000 youngsters

AS summer gets underway this June, the Bluebell Railway will be celebrating Railway 200 at Horsted Keynes station – and Britain's biggest train operator is offering free tickets on its services for students to help them attend the events.

School visits to the heritage line will be available every Monday-Wednesday between June 2 and July 2, with a focus on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) learning, featuring workshops delivered by industry experts, displays of cutting-edge rail technology and more. In order to help those planning to take advantage of such educational visits, main line operator Govia Thameslink Railway is offering 9000 schoolchildren and college students from Surrey and Greater London free tickets aboard its services for the journey to East Grinstead.

GTR chief executive officer Angie Doll said: "Two hundred years ago, the modern railway came into existence and utterly transformed our society. The inventions, science and technology that created it makes for fascinating learning, which the Bluebell Railway is the perfect partner to deliver in a fun, engaging way. Working together, we hope to educate and inspire young people in rail's past and future. We want to attract a new generation from all backgrounds into an industry with a rich heritage that remains relevant today."

Bluebell Railway chairman Neil Glaskin added: "Educational visits are an important part of our Railway 200 event. GTR's generous donation of free travel tickets will make these even more affordable for schools close to Southern stations in London and Surrey.

"School visits to Railway 200 @ Bluebell Railway are heavily subsidised, and schools taking advantage of GTR's free tickets will save further on travel costs.

"Interested schools should email railway200event@bluebell-railway.com."

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UK's oldest working steam locomotive boosts steam roster for summertime Greatest Gathering

By Robin Jones

FURNESS Railway A5 0-4-0 No. 20 – the oldest working steam locomotive in Britain – has joined the line-up for The Greatest Gathering to be staged at Alstom's Litchurch Lane site in Derby as one of the premier events of the Railway 200 programme.

Another new addition to the guest list for the UK's biggest-ever gathering of historic rail vehicles, to be held on August 1-3, is LNWR 0-6-2 Coal Tank No. 1054, which will accompany LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* to the event – for which all 24,000 tickets available to the general public sold out within days. Alstom aims to welcome 10,000 visitors a day to the festival, the remainder comprising industry guests.

History is repeating itself for the Bahamas Locomotive Society, which owns Nos. 45596 and 1054. For the Stockton & Darlington 150th celebrations at Shildon in 1974, it was also represented by a pair of engines, Jubilee No. 5690 *Leander* and McEwan Pratt 0-4-0 *Jacob*, the world's oldest standard gauge internal combustion railway locomotive.

This year, however, will be the last for *Bahamas*. The main line ticket for the Jubilee expires at the end of September, when it will be withdrawn for its next overhaul to return it to the main line as soon as possible.

The society is also planning to stage its own events to help celebrate Rail 200 at its Engine Shed museum at Ingrow on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, and more information will follow once arrangements are in place.

Other steam locomotive guests booked so far for The Greatest Gathering as this issue closed for press are LNER A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*, Merchant Navy Pacifics Nos. 35018 *British India Line* and 35028 *Clan Line*, LMS No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* and an LMS 'Black Five' from West Coast Railways.

Above: Furness Railway No. 20 and LNWR Coal Tank No. 1054 at Blaenavon on September 9, 2023. PETE SKELLON

Right: LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* approaches Overton for Ferry Meadows station on January 4 during its recent visit to the Nene Valley Railway. ROBIN JONES

Diesels and more

Diesels signed up include a Class 31 from A1A Locomotives Ltd, Class 33 No. 33012, Class 35 D7076, Class 40 No. 40106 *Atlantic Conveyor*, a Class 47 and a Class 57 from West Coast Railways, Class 50 No. 50033 *Glorious*, Class 55s No. 55009 *Alycidon*, D9015 *Tulyar* and No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* from the Deltic Preservation Society, a Class 60 courtesy of DCRail and Cappagh Group, and Class 66 No. 66301 from GB Railfreight. Electric locomotives on the guest list are Class 91 No. 91110 *Battle of Britain Memorial Flight* and a Class 93 from the Rail Operations Group. Units include 4 VEP No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt,* Class 507 No. 507001, a Class 43 from the 125 Group, a Class 108 from the DMU Group (West Midlands), Class 390 No. 390119 Progress, a Class 331 from Northern and a Class 755 and Class 720 from Greater Anglia.

Annual Cotswold Festival will have a Railway 200 theme

THE first guest for the May 24-26 Cotswold Festival of Steam at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway – which will have Celebrating Railway 200 as its theme – will be Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells*.

No. 34092, owned by the East Lancashire Railway, previously visited the festival in 2015. It will again run alongside 'big sister' Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental SN Co*; both locomotives were residents of Salisbury depot in the 1960s.

The railway expects to announce further visitors over coming weeks.

Tom Willson, chairman of the event's organising team, said: "The Cotswold Festival of Steam has become a landmark event for the railway, always putting on a spectacular show with an interesting range of visiting locomotives.

"We expect to be working at least eight steam locomotives to an intensive timetable.

"We will also be throwing open the doors of our locomotive depot at Toddington, as well as the carriage and wagon works at Winchcombe."

Several traction engines will in steam at Toddington as well as miniatures, while the Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway at Toddington plans to run two steam locomotives.

The event will also see the private grounds at Gotherington station open, including its siding on which visitors can work a pump trolley.

Advance discounted tickets are now available online at www.gwsr.com

Meanwhile, Toddington's GWR 2-8-0 No. 2807 is to visit the West Somerset Railway at the end of March and will work regular services there until the line's May 2-5 Spring Steam Spectacular. It will run alongside other guests, LBSCR A1 0-6-0T 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch,* from the Bluebell Railway, and LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas*, as reported last issue, and WR Manor 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, from the Severn Valley, which will remain there on hire until 2027. After the gala, No. 2807 will return home to Gloucestershire.

West Country light Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells* arrives at Bury Bolton Street on the East Lancashire on August 14, 2024. It will be heading to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway in May. TONY WINWARD

Advance tickets for the WSR gala and other events can be purchased from www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk or by telephoning 01643 704996.

Tenterden's 'tiny' springtime steam gala

By Owen Hayward

A CELEBRATION of locomotives of smaller stature will be taking place on April 26/27 as the Kent & East Sussex Railway breaks new ground with 'Dwarves of Steam' – its first gala of the year which promises to show that small can be mighty.

The heritage line is no stranger to small locomotives both in its heyday and as part of its 50-year preservation era. However, the demands of modern operation mean that these smaller engines cannot always be used and are sometimes overlooked in favour of their larger and (arguably) more glamorous counterparts. Dwarves of Steam will celebrate the unique characteristics of diminutive engines, allowing visitors to enjoy the sights and sounds of these steam heroes demonstrating their true power.

Sponsored by local model manufacturer Rapido Trains UK and planned by Andy Hardy, the company's general manager, the event will place the tiniest members of the railway's fleet in the spotlight including his own diminutive Peckett 0-4-0T No. 1631 *Marcia,* as well as Mike Hart's Hunslet 0-6-0ST No 469 *Hastings* and KESR stalwart LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 2678 *Knowle*.

To accompany these, two suitably small visitors have been provisionally arranged to attend (subject to the signing of final contracts).

Swapping Cornish countryside for that of Kent, Bagnall 0-4-0ST No. 2572 *Judy* is the first of these. Built in 1937, having been specially commissioned to deal with the challenging restrictions of Par harbour, where engines had to pass a bridge just eight feet in height, *Judy* and fellow Bagnall *Alfred* gained celebrity status not only for their unusual size but also because they were two of the last working steam locomotives in Cornwall. For many they are known better as the characters of Bill and Ben in the Rev Wilbert Awdry's Thomas the Tank Engine stories.

Still resident in the region and based at the Bodmin Railway, *Judy*'s visit to the KESR will mark its first appearance in the south-east of the country.

Continuing the trend of quirky designs, Kerr Stuart 0-4-0WT No. 3063 *Willy the Well Tank* is also planned to appear, courtesy of Bill Parker. Built to an earlier E Borrows & Sons design in 1918, *Willy* spent its whole working life at the National Shipyard in Chepstow. In 1982 it was sold and moved to the Flour Mill Workshops at Bream in the Forest of Dean, where it was overhauled and first returned to steam in 2012. A subsequent overhaul was completed in 2023.

Small but mighty

Together, these five locomotives will operate the line as far as Wittersham Road, where they will head back towards Tenterden Town and tackle the steep gradient between Rolvenden and the line's main terminus station. A two-train service will run with one set of carriages comprising three Victorian-era four-wheel vehicles and another of two larger BR Mk.1s.

Tours of Rolvenden workshops will be available which will offer a glimpse of GWR 4200 2-8-0 No. 4253, a locomotive at the opposite end of the spectrum and which is nearing the end of a comprehensive restoration.

"While many of us enjoy marvelling at the sheer size of many steam engines, it is safe to say that the humble little ones were the backbone of the railway system," said Andy.

"Employed as works or depot shunters on the main line, working on branch lines or suburban services, or keeping the wheels of industry turning in industrial settings, these little engines kept the UK on track.

"Many heritage railways look to big engines as gala guests, but we thought it was high time to celebrate these pocket-sized ones. Having recently bought *Marcia*, and with Rapido making so many little models of smaller prototypes, we couldn't think of a better time to try something new with Dwarves of Steam.

"I, for one, cannot wait to see the little engines tackling the climb up to Tenterden."

KESR general manager Robin Coombes added: "Heritage railways have long celebrated the giants of steam, but this event highlights the unsung heroes – small locomotives that played a vital role in keeping industry and branch lines running. The Dwarves of Steam Gala is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the strength and versatility of these engines, and we are delighted to bring together such a unique collection, including two very special visiting locomotives.

"It promises to be a fantastic weekend for enthusiasts and families alike, proving that when it comes to steam power, size isn't everything."

Above: Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Judy* will be making a rare trip away from its Cornish home this April to visit the Kent & East Sussex Railway. DAVID NELSON-BROWN

Right: Kerr Stuart No. 3063 *Willy* will round off the line-up of quirky looking line-up of steam locomotives at the Dwarves of Steam gala on April 26/27. SWINDON & CRICKLADE RAILWAY

Abandoned railway tunnel set for brief reopening at anniversary gala event

CELEBRATIONS to mark the anniversary of a closure which gave way to a heritage line may see a long-closed railway tunnel reopened temporarily for walking tours this June.

On June 13-15, the Spa Valley Railway will mark 60 years since the closure of the Cuckoo Line, which ran from Polegate to Eridge before branching off towards Tunbridge Wells at Birchden Junction. The nickname was used by drivers over the route and came from a tradition at the annual Heathfield Fair, where a woman would release 'the first cuckoo of spring' from a basket.

The line was built by the LBSCR in two parts, with the starting branch from Polegate to Heathfield on May 14, 1849, and Eridge being reached in September 1880. Train services during the event are expected to feature a number of locomotives once regularly seen along the line in BR days, including the railway's Class 207 'Thumper' DEMU which ran one of the final services prior to its full closure.

As part of this celebration, the railway is also working with Heathfield Parish Council and Wealden District Council to temporarily reopen the 265-yard-long Heathfield tunnel for walking tours. Although it was previously open as part of the Cuckoo Trail foot and cycle path, antisocial behaviour has meant it has been closed to public use for some years, with the temporary opening during this event likely to be the only opportunity to step inside it for the foreseeable future.

Photographic displays and artefacts from the line will also feature, with further details expected to be published soon.

Heathfield tunnel may temporarily be reopened for public access when the Spa Valley Railway celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Cuckoo Line closure this June. SPA VALLEY RAILWAY

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Bradley Manor back running again – after six years

WR 4-6-0 No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* moved under its own power within Bridgnorth shed's yard on Severn Valley Railway on March 3 for the first time since its recent overhaul at Tyseley Locomotive Works. After passing its steam test at Tyseley on January 10, it was transported to Bridgnorth for testing and was anticipated to complete full line running in duties, but the landslip at Mor Brook has stopped this.

Paired with the tender from GWR 2-8-0 No. 2807, instead it ran up and down through Bridgnorth station on March 4 to the section signal, testing its new cylinder blocks.

It will soon enter Bridgnorth's paint shop, with the repaint anticipated to take about three weeks.

No. 7802 last ran in service in July 2019 when it suffered a smashed right-hand cylinder and broken piston rod while running on the West Somerset Railway. New cylinder blocks were cast at a Preston foundry soon afterwards.

No. 7802 is pictured alongside sister No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* at Bridgnorth. *Erlestoke Manor* is to visit the Gwili Railway, and following a gauging run – a locomotive of this type has not run there since the 1980s – will take part in the March 15/16 gala and remain there for photographic charters the following weekend. It will then return to Kidderminster (having been marooned at Bridgnorth following the Mor Brook landslip) and will take part in the Easter steam gala. JOHN TITLOW

Promotions among changes at the top for the Erlestoke Manor Fund

JANE Preece has taken over as chairman of the Erlestoke Manor Fund Trust Board.

Jane was appointed fund secretary in September 2020 and elected as a trustee in 2021. She was the Severn Valley Railway's first human resources manager, also running the Heritage Skills Training Academy from 2016 until February 2020, when she became an SVR working member. Her career in the public, private, and not-for-profit sector has focused on human resources and governance, and she currently sits on a number of housing association boards. She became the fund's membership secretary in 2021, along with regularly running its sales coach at Bewdley station.

Adrian Hassell, chairman since 2021, is staying on the trustee board.

Young blood

Chris Field, the youngest trustee within the fund, has become vice-chairman.

Once old enough, Chris joined the SVR motive power department at Bewdley. Professionally, he has been working in maintenance at Tyseley TMD for more than a decade and recently gained the reliability technician role. He is also a qualified fireman on the SVR, alongside being a keen and active fine-scale O gauge modeler.

Tim Hargest is becoming company secretary alongside his role as treasurer.

Chinnor books S160 to see line through this year's season

THE Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway has booked USATC 2-8-0 No. 6046 as its locomotive to see it through its 2025 operating season, making it the largest locomotive to work on the former GWR Watlington branch.

Built by the Baldwin Locomotive Company in Philadelphia in 1945, it was exported straight to France to help with the war effort. Once their use with the French state railways came to an end, many of its classmates were scrapped, with No. 6046 being exported to Hungary where it worked until withdrawal.

It was formally preserved as part of the Hungarian National Collection, but due to an administrative error it was sent for scrap.

Saved from the cutter's torch, it was brought to the UK and arrived at the Churnet Valley Railway in 2006, where restoration was completed in 2012.

No. 6046 will be working the CPRR's services from March 30 and is expected to feature as part of the line's October 31-November 2 steam gala. To facilitate the visit of this particular locomotive, volunteers have undertaken repair work on some of the bridges along the route to ensure that they will take the weight of the 2-8-0.

USATC S160 No. 6046 will become the largest locomotive to work the Chinnor line in the heritage era. OWEN HAYWARD

Leo Barcoe (right), who became the youngest person to date to qualify as fireman on the Chinnor & Princess Risborough Railway, is seen shaking hands with assessor Allan Vigar following his promotion at the end of 2024. JIM HENDERSON/C&PRR

Keen to encourage younger volunteers to start being involved, the railway also announced that at the end of its 2024 operating season it had also passed out Leo Barcoe as fireman within the steam department. At 21 years old, Leo is the youngest volunteer to make the grade to date among the volunteers there.

"I joined the railway when I was about 12 years old as I'd been fascinated with steam engines from being a little kid, with a certain blue tank engine to blame," Leo said. "I started as a locomotive cleaner when I turned 16 and from there I learned more about how they work, what the different components do, and in time how to fire them.

"I don't think I'd be where I am today without the people I met here who I now consider good friends. Thanks to their knowledge and support, I have qualified after four years of training. That's what's so great about our railway – it's one big family. We all work together to give the passengers a feel of what it was like travelling by rail behind these machines all those years ago.

"I hope more young people will join us in the steam department; we've currently got a couple of young trainee firemen, so it's a start, but the more the merrier."

Autocar draws the crowds to curtailed Moorsline school holiday services

By Owen Hayward

While the autocar worked between Grosmont and Goathland, steam services continued to Whitby with SR Schools 4-4-0 No. 926 *Repton* (inset) on duty on February 19. BARBARA PRINCE

OPERATION may have been restricted to the line between Grosmont and Goathland, but that did not stop the North Yorkshire Moors Railway from reopening its doors in time for the recent school half-term.

The captive market that comes with the holidays was given a further boost by the accompanying visit of the unique NER autocar which was drafted in to work in between the steam-hauled services to the port town of Whitby.

Two petrol-electric autocars were built by the NER in May 1903. They originally contained a 85hp Napier engine driving a dynamo to produce power for two electric motors, alhough the Napier equipment was later swapped for Wolseley engines after proving problematic.

Numbered 3170 and 3171, they were put to use between Hartlepool and West Hartlepool (where they could complete the journey in half the time of trams) and Scarborough and Filey. Both led short lives, with No. 71 withdrawn first in 1930 and No. 70 the following April.

The first was scrapped, while the latter was sold to a North Yorkshire landowner who converted the body for use as a holiday home. It was later bought by Stephen Middleton in 2003, who placed it in storage while searching for a suitable underframe on which to rebuild it, with the NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust later formed to manage the process.

Following an extensive restoration, which included fitting motors to a former Southern Region Class 416 bogie which in turn was fitted under a redundant crane runner chassis, it entered service in 2018.

Accompanying the motor coach is trailer No. 3543, which had been in store at the NYMR prior to being donated to run with the revived No. 3170 by its previous owner, the North Eastern Railway Carriage Association.

The bodywork of both vehicles was restored back to NER condition, with driving controls being added to the end of the autotrailer to allow it to form an Edwardian era multiple unit. Though these two vehicles are not believed to have ever worked together, archive pictures show No. 3170 pulling a clerestory coach of similar appearance.

With the connection that half of this train has with the Moorsline, it was rather apt that the pair should finally visit and work on part of it between February 15-23.

Services between Goathland and Pickering were suspended for the duration of the week owing to engineering work taking place along this section. This curtailment of the line failed to deter visitors, with the unusual train in high demand and often departing full. A railway spokesman said: "We have loved having the beautifully restored diesel-powered NER Electric Autocar at the NYMR during half-term, and families have really enjoyed travelling on this special vehicle.

"We are also pleased that it is staying with us and running on Sundays in April, May and June between Pickering and Grosmont."

On February 22, a minor incident occurred at Grosmont which saw trailer coach No. 3543 collide with a set of portable steel steps. No injuries were reported, but No. 3170 worked the final two days solo while its accompanying carriage was inspected. The spokesman said: "We can confirm that an incident occurred when the autocar collided with a steel gantry near the running shed at Grosmont station. This caused light damage to the north end of the trailer car.

"Senior managers visited the site, with a team removing the trapped gantry and assessing damage. When this work was completed, the autocar was then parked in the running shed and the owners were contacted and made aware of the incident."

Heart attack survivor walks Bluebell line for charity

AN 86-year-old who survived a heart attack has walked the 11-mile Bluebell Railway to raise money for the British Heart Foundation.

John Deane, of East Hoathly, in Sussex, strode the full length of line from East Grinstead to Sheffield Park on March 4 in what is described as a "remarkable turnaround" in his health, having feared he may never enjoy his passion for walking again.

Having retired to Spain, John worked as a mountain walk leader but in 2008 began to experience symptoms including fatigue and breathlessness, which he initially dismissed as caused by a virus.

However, when they persisted he sought medical advice and was rushed to hospital when it was discovered that he had suffered a silent heart attack.

"On the way there, I was able to see one of my favourite mountains, the Puig Campana, through the ambulance window," John said. "I recall thinking, 'I won't be climbing you again.'

"At the hospital, I learned I'd had a silent heart attack. The surgeon put two stents in later that day to reopen arteries in my heart and another stent a couple of days later."

Following a two-week stay, he was discharged and allowed to recover in the comfort of his own home.

"I was in pretty low spirits," he said. "On my first attempt at walking, I only got as far as the house next door before I had to stop."

After gradually building up his stamina, John returned to walking the mountains within 12 months. He moved back to the UK in 2011 and joined the heritage line where he has helped with lineside vegetation management.

In 2022, John had further treatment to his heart which saw his aortic valve replaced. Rather than through open-heart surgery, a specialist was able to replace the valve by implanting an artificial valve via a blood vessel in his upper leg.

Grateful for what he described as a "17-year extension" to his walking life, John arranged his track trek with a view to raising £1500 for the British Heart Foundation – a target he had almost doubled as this issue went to press.

"I've benefitted first-hand from the amazing developments in cardiac technology," he explained. "Since my heart attack, I have been able to continue pursuing several activities I love. By supporting BHF research, I hope to contribute to new discoveries that will help others suffering heart problems in the future."

Bluebell volunteer John Deane, 86, who walked the full length of the heritage line to raise money for charity. BLUEBELL RAILWAY

➜ To donate to John's fundraiser, visit justgiving.com/page/johndeanebluebellwalk

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Taking flight: No. 4464 *Bittern* is collected for the long journey by road to Crewe, where overhaul of the 'Streak' will be started...

...as No. 46100 *Royal Scot* arrives in Margate on February 26. BOTH: ANDY STROUD

Bittern flies the coop in steam swap at Margate

FEBRUARY was a busy month for Locomotive Services Group (LSG), as not only was the boiler for No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* returned to the frames as its overhaul approaches conclusion (see separate story, Main Line News, page 60), but two of its other high-profile named locomotives were spotted travelling about the country – but by road, rather than rail.

Following its second 'final' farewell on a private charter to Holyhead on January 13, LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* departed LNWR Crewe Works to head south to the firm's Margate storage facility (*Heritage Railway* issue 328), which is earmarked to open as the One:One Collection museum in the near future and is where the tender arrived first on February 25 before the front half of the locomotive followed the next day.

The opportunity was then taken to utilise the lorries involved to extract LNER A4 No. 4464 *Bittern* and return it to Crewe, where the first steps towards its return to steam will take place.

It was last operational in 2015 and following withdrawal was moved to Margate in June 2018, where it has remained out of public view.

In May 2023 it was announced that LSG had partnered with the Sir Nigel Gresley Locomotive Trust to form SNG Engineering, with the two separate entities jointly working together to overhaul No. 4464.

The 'Streak' was transferred to the Crewe workshops where the boiler will be removed, before the chassis moves to a private site in Yorkshire where it will be the focus of the SNGLT engineering team, which was based in York between 2015 and 2022 when No. 60007 returned to service. At the time of the announcement, it was hoped that *Bittern*'s overhaul would be completed in sufficient time to allow both of the remaining operating A4s to run together. Of the six surviving members of the class, two (Nos. 60008 and 60010) are overseas, while *Mallard* is a permanent fixture at the National Railway Museum in York.

The final example, No. 60009 *Union of South Africa*, is owned by John Cameron and now resides on his farm in Fife, having been withdrawn in 2021.

It too had been a regular main line performer, its last such outing being the March 7, 2020 'Yorkshireman' from Ealing Broadway to York.

'Tivvy Bumper' celebrates 90th birthday with museum talks

THE Tiverton Museum of Mid-Devon Life has been celebrating the 90th birthday of its long-term resident, GWR 0-4-2T No. 1442, known as the 'Tivvy Bumper,' which worked the lines that served the town.

A family-fun Railway Day held on January 25 featured a model railway, evacuee stories, butter-making, seaside photographs, and plenty of hands-on activities. It was followed by a week of hands-on fun, creative crafts and railway-themed festivities from February 15-22.

The museum's spring Talks & Walks programme includes a talk by local railway expert Amyas Crump celebrating the 'Tivvy Bumper' and exploring ideas for local railways that never came to fruition.

Built at Swindon in April, No. 1442 originally alternated between being based at Marlow and Slough before going to Oxford, with a brief spell at Reading, where it remained for just three months, after which it returned to Oxford where it was based for nearly nine years.

In 1962, No. 1442 was transferred to Westbury and then Exeter and Yeovil Town, spending its last years working between Tiverton and Tiverton Junction stations. In May 1965, it became one of the last two members of its class to be withdrawn, after which it was bought by Lord Amory in 1965 for static display at Tiverton.

The talk in the museum in Beck's Square will take place on Thursday, May 22 from 7pm to 8pm. Tickets cost £8 or £6.50 for museum members and can be booked at https://tiverton-museum-of-mid-devon-life.arttickets.org.uk/

GWR 0-4-2T No. 1442, the 'Tivvy Bumper,' inside the museum during its Railway Day January 25. TMMDL

Green light given for Waverley Route reopening consideration

A DECADE after the reopening of the Borders Railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, the green light has been given to looking into extending it to Carlisle.

Up to £5 million has been allocated by the Scottish and UK governments through the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to appoint a project manager for work to assess the case for relaying the line beyond Tweedbank.

UK Government Scotland Office Minister Kirsty McNeill said: "Growth is a priority mission for the UK Government and we've been clear that the £450 million Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal spanning southern Scotland and northern England is vital to achieving this. It's great news that the UK Department for Transport has confirmed up to £5 million towards feasibility work to explore the potential to extend the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle. We look forward to working with deal partners as the feasibility work progresses."

Rail Minister Peter Lord Hendy said: "We are working to improve rail connectivity for passengers and as part of the Government's Plan for Change are investing in transport infrastructure, driving growth, jobs and housing across our communities.

"I am pleased to commit to the progression of the Borders Railway extension, which would open up the route for more people to explore the region's picturesque landscapes and rich heritage, and I look forward to seeing how the proposal develops."

The 98¼-mile Waverley Route from Edinburgh to Carlisle reopened throughout 1862 and was controversially closed in 1963.

Passenger service on the Borders Railway began on September 6, 2015, followed by an official opening by Queen Elizabeth II three days later, as featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 207.

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SCAN ME WITH YOUR PHONE CAMERA!

From the Spa to the coast: Norfolk to become new home for 'lost' Hunslet

By Owen Hayward

HUNSLET Fitzwilliam class 0-6-0ST No. 1589 *Newstead* is set to call Weybourne on the North Norfolk Railway home, with the once 'lost' locomotive due to make its debut there this coming Easter after leaving Kent on March 5.

Saved from scrap in the 1970s but hidden away so well that it was presumed lost forever, *Newstead* was discovered in a shed in the grounds of a Hertfordshire Carmelite convent in 2016 following the death of its previous owner, Malcolm Saul.

Bought by Alex Alder in early 2017 and temporarily moved to the Nene Valley Railway, it arrived on the Spa Valley Railway in the autumn of that same year, where it has undergone an extensive restoration to bring it back into operational control, as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 330.

As the overhaul nears completion at Tunbridge Wells West, thoughts turned to the locomotive's operating future. While it was hoped to debut the locomotive at the Spa Valley, discussions with the leadership team there concluded that it would not see sufficient use to warrant a long-term operating future. SpVR general manager Jonnie Pay said: "Since the arrival of *Newstead* in 2017, other locomotives have come to Tunbridge Wells West under short, medium and long-term hire agreements.

"Furthermore, we have completed the purchase of LMS 'Jinty' 0-6-0T No. 47493, which is rapidly approaching the end of its overhaul.

"If the railway had entered into an operating agreement for the use of *Newstead*, due to events, other visiting locomotives, and those we already have operating, it would have resulted in minimal use of *Newstead* during 2025.

"After Mr Alder's large investment, it would not be fair for either party to try to squeeze in use and impact other plans or have no use at all.

"The work undertaken by the team led by Mr Alder in restoring *Newstead* is something they should be very proud of, and we wish them well in their future endeavours and in operating the locomotive.

"It is anticipated that it will visit Tunbridge Wells West at some point in the future."

Discussions with potential homes began in December, and on February 26 it was announced that the NNR would become the new home for *Newstead*, which was estimated to move there around the time this issue went on sale. Weybourne is also home to fellow Fitzwilliam No. 1982 *Ring Haw*, which is currently under overhaul in the railway's workshops. It is a happy coincidence that *Ring Haw* was on hire to the Spa Valley when *Newstead* arrived there, and that the scenario is now to be reversed.

NNR general manager Graham Hukins said: "We are delighted to be welcoming *Newstead* to the railway. Alex and his team have done an outstanding job in restoring it and we are looking forward to it being part of our fleet, especially in our 50th anniversary year, where it will help conjure up the spirit of the early years of preservation when the service was handled entirely by small tank engines."

Recalling the moment of *Newstead*'s discovery, Alex said: "I never expected to be driven down a Hertfordshire country lane, following a wild tip-off about a lost engine, nor have imagined taking tea and biscuits with the Mother Superior at a convent and hearing of 'Malcolm's engine.'

Labour of love

"I cannot describe that moment of anticipation, when trudging through the soggy leaves of the autumnal convent grounds, three of us were led through a gap in the corrugated iron of a small shed.

"I fully expected to see a rusty 5in gauge model but there, quite impossibly, beneath a thin layer of dust, was the unmistakable lines of a 16in Hunslet. Thanks to the late Malcolm Saul, it was well cared for and given an overhaul in the early 1990s. I gained a sense of debt toward Malcom for saving and preserving the engine so well, and a sense of duty that his good care should be continued.

"Restoring the engine has been a labour of love for the past eight years and I am thrilled it will be joining the running fleet at the North Norfolk Railway – it was childhood visits to that line which sparked my interest in steam and engineering."

Following its arrival in Norfolk, *Newstead* will undergo final completion jobs before its last boiler insurance test is carried out and testing begins. The NNR advised it hoped to see *Newstead* working trains at the April 18-21 Spring Into Steam easter weekend.

Left: When *Newstead*'s overhaul commenced in 2018, sister Fitzwilliam 0-6-0ST *Ring Haw* (left) was on loan to the Spa Valley Railway. The situation is soon to be reversed, with the former set to enter traffic at the NNR while its classmate undergoes its own overhaul. OWEN HAYWARD

The *Newstead* team pose with their locomotive as the Hunslet 'Fitzwilliam' prepares to depart Tunbridge Wells for Norfolk on March 5. OWEN HAYWARD

Spring and summer evening services planned on Volks Electric Railway

THE Volks Electric Railway Association has announced a series of late-running evening services, starting at 5pm and stopped at all stations on the Brighton seaside line.

On Saturday, May 17, the evening journey will commemorate the opening of the Shoreham to Brighton line as part of the Railway 200 celebrations.

Evening services will also run on Sundays, June 22 and 27.

On Saturday, September 20, illuminated trains will run after dusk, and other attractions will be staged to celebrate VERA's 30th anniversary.

The VER's running season starts on April 5, after which trains will then run every day until September.

As reported in issue 316, the VER carried off the Heritage Railway Association's Railway of the Year 2024 Award at the annual awards ceremony in Brighton.

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Museum trio awarded grants in £270m Government arts package

By Robin Jones

THREE museums with a heritage rail presence have been awarded Government grants as part of an Arts Everywhere Fund package of more than £270 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Hundreds of arts venues, museums, libraries and heritage buildings will receive a share, with the aim of supporting jobs and creating opportunities for young people to learn creative skills, while also helping to boost people's sense of pride in where they live.

Announced by Labour's Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy on February 20, the cash will be awarded to organisations in urgent need of financial support to keep them up and running, carry out vital infrastructure work, and improve long-term financial resilience.

At an inaugural lecture marking the 60th anniversary of the first-ever arts white paper by former Minister Jennie Lee, Lisa Nandy delivered a speech at the Royal Shakespeare Company, in Stratford-upon-Avon. She set out how Lee's vision of the 'arts for everyone, everywhere' will be made a reality as part of the Government's Plan for Change.

"Arts and culture help us understand the world we live in, they shape and define society, and are enjoyed by people in every part of our country. They are the building blocks of our world-leading creative industries and make a huge contribution towards boosting growth and breaking down barriers to opportunities for young people to learn the creative skills they need to succeed," she said.

"This funding will allow the arts to continue to flourish throughout Britain, creating good jobs and growth by fixing the foundations in our cultural venues, museums, libraries and heritage institutions."

As part of the package, Bressingham Steam and Gardens in Diss, Norfolk, has been awarded £429,719.

A Bressingham statement said: "The fund is to enable museums like us to deliver a better experience for visitors and staff, make access and environmental improvements, and to continue to protect treasured buildings and collections for future generations.

"This much-needed funding will enable us to put a new roof on our locomotive shed. This key building houses not only some of our own collection but also some of the National Railway Collection. It also houses our workshop, where our hardworking team of staff and volunteers perform the vital work needed to maintain and preserve these wonderful feats of engineering.

Peckett 0-4-0ST *Lee Moor No. 1* on static display inside the Wheal Martyn museum in St Austell. CHRIS ALLEN/ CREATIVE COMMONS

Hunslet Wren 0-4-0ST *Thomas Wicksteed* on the2ft gauge line at the London Museum of Water and Steam in Brentford. ROBIN JONES

Take a Sprint to the new Cynheidre café!

THE Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway will have a new café and electrical supply for its headquarters at Cynheidre, near Llanelli, ready for the start of the new season by mid-March.

Early last year, the railway was awarded grant funding towards further developing the railway. The grants comprised £40,000 from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund and £20,000 from Carmarthenshire County Council Targeted Finance fund.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant was used to help fund the development of a community hub at Cynheidre, including café facilities. The hub incorporated the recycled body shell of Class 153 single-car 'Sprinter' unit No. 1533764 provided by Transport for Wales and giving it a unique railway feel. The much-needed provision of a mains electricity supply for the site also formed part of this project.

The county council grant further supported the provision of electricity to the site and the development of the café for visitors and the local community, while also facilitating the creation of two job opportunities at the railway.

The café will be launched to the public at 12.15pm on April 19 during the railway's Easter event under the name The SuperSprinter Café, a nod to its life as a commuter train.

It will then be open to the public and community on selected dates throughout the rest of the year, with opening details posted on the café's dedicated Facebook page and the railway's social media outlets.

Mark Thomas, chairman of the 100% volunteer-run charity, said: "We are very pleased to have received these grants and are delighted to report that the project is nearing completion with the cafe professionally fitted out and electricity now on site and connected up."

➜ **See also Up and Running, page 98.**

Class 153 single-car 'Sprinter' unit No. 1533764 is now a café at Cynheidre. LMMR

Inside the new grant-funded café at Cynheidre. LMMR

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"The grant will be used to replace the original corrugated roof panels with modern composite roofing.

"This make the shed much warmer and brighter and create a much more welcoming experience for both our visitors and our volunteers, and a better environment for the engines, carriages and artefacts that we display in there, including, of course, the BR standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92203 *Black Prince* and the royal carriages.

"Work will begin in November 2025, at the end of our main visitor season, and will continue over the winter so that we can avoid any disruption for our visitors.

"We estimate that the works will finish in February 2026, in time for the start of our main visitor season. Ipswich-based S&G Roofing is appointed as principal contractor."

General manager Phil Rooke added: "Ultimately, this wonderful news allows us to better fulfil our mission to preserve and maintain working steam engines for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, and we can't wait to be able to welcome you to this much improved space in 2026."

The largest grant awarded under the current package was £2,626,277 to London Museum of Water and Steam to restore its Great Engine House, making the building watertight, improve environmental conditions, remove harmful past repairs, conserve the engines, and safely eliminate asbestos-containing materials.

Based in a Georgian water pumping station in Brentford, the museum cares for the world's largest collection of Cornish steam pumping engines, which pumped clean water into the homes of millions of Londoners between 1838 and 1944 – helping to transform it into the city it is today, and showcasing 200 years of engineering innovation. It is an anchor point on the European Route of Industrial Heritage.

The museum has a 400-yard 2ft gauge railway which in 2009 saw the introduction of a new-build Hunslet Wren class 0-4-0ST, named after Thomas Wicksteed, who, as engineer to the East London Waterworks Company, was responsible for introducing the Cornish pumping engine. The line is open for passenger trips at weekends and at special events.

While not an original feature of the waterworks at Kew Bridge, the railway was inspired by similar facilities provided at major waterworks in the UK, notably the Metropolitan Water Board Railway which ran between Hampton and the Kempton Park waterworks.

Thirdly, Wheal Martyn Clay Works in St Austell, the UK's only china clay mining museum and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, has been awarded £707,200.

The museum has a section displaying examples of transport used in the clay industry, including 1899-built Peckett 0-4-0ST *Lee Moor No. 1*, one of two locomotives supplied to Devon's Lee Moor Tramway, which was built to the 'Dartmoor Gauge' of 4ft 6in.

Its sister locomotive, *Lee Moor No. 2*, is exhibited in the South Devon Railway's museum at Buckfastleigh station, along with the sole-surviving wagon.

The Government grant will be used to repair the asbestos roof of a pre-1907 extension to the Pan Kiln & Linhay building.

On Easter Sunday and Monday, April 20/21, Bressingham Steam Museum & Gardens will be holding a 150th birthday celebration for resident LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 662 *Martello*, which will be in full steam, allowing visitors a ride in the brake van. BRESSINGHAM

NRM masterplan £15m grant gets green light despite fears

By Robin Jones

FOLLOWING a period of review, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has confirmed the £15 million investment to the National Railway Museum's transformative masterplan and Central Hall project.

In recent weeks, fears were expressed that the grant might fall victim to current Government cutbacks.

However, it will safeguard the museum's plans for visitor growth, the future expansion of its estate, and preservation of its collections, inspiring the next generation with the past, present and future of the railways – in a year in which it celebrates its 50th birthday.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner met NRM interim director Craig Bentley on February 13, alongside David Skaith, the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, and the leader of the York City Council, Claire Douglas, to congratulate the team.

The funding announcement follows a review by the Government of a commitment made in spring 2024 by the previous Conservative administration, building on a generous earlier investment of £18.6 million in 2019 under the Cultural Investment Fund from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Through the NRM masterplan, about £100 million is being invested in capital projects that will extend and improve both the York museum and its sister site Locomotion in Shildon, County Durham.

The NRM is the cultural heart of York Central, a 45-hectare city-wide regeneration scheme turning underused railway land into a distinctive new city quarter with residential neighbourhoods, civic spaces, and high-quality commercial real estate in one of the UK's most historic and desirable cities.

Mr Bentley said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the Deputy Prime Minister to the NRM to demonstrate how this £15 million investment will transform this much-loved site.

"This investment is pivotal to our plans for growth and to develop the museum as a place which is globally relevant, inspiring hundreds of thousands more visitors every year and fulfilling our role as the cultural gateway to York Central."

Sir Ian Blatchford, chief executive and director of the Science Museum Group, said: "This confirmation of the £15 million investment in our ambitious plans for the NRM represents a strong vote of confidence in the transformative work underway right across the Science Museum Group. We are delighted with the Government's continued strong support for national museums and the wider cultural sector.

"Museums benefit society in many ways, inspiring audiences with engaging stories, contributing to cohesive communities and showcasing creativity that helps drive tourism."

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner visits the National Railway Museum, where she was joined by the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire David Skaith. She was shown around the museum and the planned new site by museum director Craig Bentley and other local stakeholders. SIMON WALKER/ DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE PICTURE BY SIMON WALKER / DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Pannier back on the Bristol harbourside 29 years later

Words and pictures by Martin Creese

ONE visiting engine that has slipped under the radar in the early part of 2025 is that of the South Devon Railway's Collett 1366 class pannier tank No. 1369 to the Bristol Harbour Railway.

It was delivered on its way home from its appearance at the Battlefield Railway's Winter Warmer Gala in January (as reported last issue), as part of an agreement that sees Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1940 of 1937 *Henbury* pay a short visit to Buckfastleigh.

It was the second time that No. 1369 has visited the harbour line, the first being 29 years ago in 1996, when it carried BR black livery. Given the class's association with the line to Weymouth Harbour, No. 1367 being the first allocated there in 1935, being back in a dockside environment should almost feel home to sister No. 1369, although it spent the majority of its working life from construction in 1934 to April 1960 allocated to Swindon and used around the wagon works and saw mills.

A move to Weymouth in 1960 saw it working passenger and goods workings along the tramway from Weymouth station to the quay for Channel Islands boat traffic, albeit this was a comparatively short stay, No. 139 being reallocated to Wadebridge in August 1962 for china clay train workings on the Wenford Bridge line, replacing the Beattie well tanks.

Happy birthday

I had the pleasure of running a photographic charter at Bristol on February 24 with No. 1369, which given it entered traffic in February 1934, became a rather nice way to mark the locomotive's 91st birthday.

The Bristol Harbour Railway is one of preservation's unsung little gems, retaining rails along the quayside, four magnificent Stothert and Pitt cranes dating from 1951, along with a Fairbairn steam crane a little further down, and the magnificent warehouse which now houses M Shed, previously known as the Bristol Industrial Museum. A few dockside buildings are also retained, used as cafés and small businesses.

Adding to the maritime ambience, *MV Balmoral*, which was built in 1949 for the Red Funnel Line service from Southampton to Cowes, is currently alongside, as well as tugs *Mayflower* and *John King*, plus fire ship *Pyranaut*.

Since No. 1369's last visit in 1969, much gentrification has taken place around the area, including many new apartment blocks, restaurants and modern development. As such, the industrial and railway footprint has understandably shrunk, but what remains still has that unique railway and harbourside feel.

The harbour railway continues to operate trains on selected weekends throughout the year between M Shed and a platform down towards the *SS Great Britain*. There is also the branch along Cumberland Road which sees the railway sandwiched between the aforementioned road and the River Avon, the section of which is also known as the New Cut.

For a time, the railway was severed when part of the retaining wall collapsed into the river. The wall was repaired and following reinstatement of the track should allow this section round to a former tobacco warehouse to be used again. Sadly, the line which once crossed over the bridge and went to Ashton Junction with the Portishead branch was converted into a busway some years ago. Also lost is the extension from the east end of the quayside which, via a tunnel, went through to Bristol Temple Meads station.

On a high

The harbourside is now a very popular area for Bristol residents and visitors, so it was no surprise that the appearance of No. 1369 attracted much interest – especially as the weather was kind.

As passenger services are normally propelled towards the *Great Britain,* it was also unusual to see a locomotive chimney-first.

The charter was also an opportunity to use the collection of wagons, and the sound of buffers clanging as we shunted around was rather evocative, bringing history to life. We were able to cordon off the harbourside area with the cranes, allowing clear images, and thanks to the volunteers from M Shed, small groups were lifted up onto one of the cranes to view the harbour from height and the sight of No. 1369 steaming underneath. It should also be noted that three of the four cranes are working.

The museum collection British Road Services Bristol lorry also made an appearance, further adding to the quayside ambience.

No. 1369 is expected to return to the South Devon Railway in the middle of March and hopefully it is not another 29 years before it graces the Bristol quayside again.

Birthday boy: At 91 years old, GWR 0-6-0PT No. 1369 on Bristol Harbour Railway.

No. 1369 heads its freight rake along the harbourside in a view taken from crane No. 31.

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No. 1369 and its rake catch the glint of the setting sun on the quayside.

The freight charter passes the 1878 steam crane.

No. 1369 passes beneath the harbour cranes.

No. 1369 and its short freight working emerges from Cumberland Road bridge.

Fresh new colour choice for Bo'ness Austerity

LIVERIES are always hot topic of debate, and the latest repaint to emerge at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway certainly caught the eye – Hunslet Austerity No. 3818 has adopted a rather unusual paint job that has not been carried in nearly 40 years.

Built in 1954 for the National Coal Board and becoming Fife Area No. 19, it worked at the region's Michael Colliery until a disastrous underground fire on September 9, 1967, which resulted in nine fatalities and the closure of the colliery. It was transferred to Wellesley Washery at Methil until that closed in 1971, and it transferred to Comrie Colliery, where it was based until withdrawal. In 1977, partway through that time, it was sent to the NCB's Cowdenbeath workshops and became the last Austerity to be overhauled there. It was during this overhaul that it adopted a rather bold livery: the cab and bufferbeams were painted yellow and the tanks, smokebox, wheels and frames were all painted blue, which had become the NCB's corporate identity, returning to Comrie in 1978. It was kept mainly as a standby locomotive, with Class 08 shunters being drafted in.

The colliery closed in 1986, while No. 19 was retired in May 1985 and ownership was transferred to the Scottish Railway Preservation Society, which took it to Bo'ness.

Since then, the unusual livery was believed consigned to the history books, but to the surprise of many, the locomotive was repainted during the recent winter months and was unveiled to the world on February 14.

Museum of Scottish Railways trustee Kevin McCallum said: "No.19 has been a stalwart of the operating fleet at Bo'ness over many years and colleagues in the SRPS Steam Locomotive Department thought it would be good to repaint the locomotive in the last NCB livery that it carried. This was supported by the Museum of Scottish Railways at Bo'ness, which would eventually like to display it adjacent to a Victorian industrial locomotive in the museum to illustrate the contrast between ancient and modern in industrial steam locomotive design.

A bold choice: A livery not seen since it left Comrie Colliery in the 1980s, Austerity No. 19 has been repainted into corporate NCB colours at Bo'ness. SRPS

"No.19 is nearing the end of its 10-year boiler certificate, which also influenced the choice of livery as it was in a temporary black livery for a number of special events.

"A small group of volunteers did an excellent job in transforming the locomotive from black to its new livery."

Early steam trio centrepiece of new Hopetown exhibition

By Robin Jones

A MUST-SEE unique exhibition of early locomotives is to be staged at the quadruple-award-winning Hopetown Darlington attraction in the spring.

The original *Locomotion No. 1*, which made the landmark first run over the Stockton & Darlington Railway on September 27, 1825, is to return to the venue for the Railway Pioneers exhibition celebrating the 'railway rockstars of the past' as part of the 200th anniversary celebrations.

Designed by George Stephenson and built at his son Robert Stephenson's works in Newcastle, *Locomotion No. 1* was preserved for public display in 1857 because of its immense historical importance. It was on static display at one of the platforms at Darlington Bank Top station between 1892 and 1975, and at the Head of Steam museum (since evolved into Hopetown Darlington at a cost of £335 million), between 1975 and 2021. Part of the National Collection and owned by the National Railway Museum, some local controversy was stirred when it was then moved to the NRM's Locomotion outpost in Shildon, with an agreement that it could return to Darlington – where it is depicted on the town's coat of arms – for extended visits.

The working replica of Richard Trevithick's 1804 Penydarren locomotive at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea. NWM

Bicentenary plans

As previously reported, the working replica of *Locomotion No. 1* – built in 1975 for the Stockton & Darlington 150th anniversary cavalcade, and which was moved from its home since then at Beamish Museum to Head of Steam in April 2021, replacing the original, and now owned by Darlington Borough Council – will head a replica train comprising passenger coach *Experiment* and three chaldron wagons all built to main line standards from Shildon via Darlington to Stockton-on-Tees on September 26, 27 and 28 as the climax to the bicentenary celebrations.

In the Railway Pioneers exhibition, it will be displayed alongside replicas of two even earlier locomotives, the first being the working replica of Cornish mining engineer Richard Trevithick's 1804 locomotive from the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea.

On February 21, 1804, the original made the world's first-ever public steam-hauled railway journey over the nine miles of newly-laid tramroad from the ironworks at Penydarren to the Merthyr-Cardiff canal at Abercynon. It was to be several years before steam locomotion became commercially viable.

The second will be the Beamish-based replica of the locomotive which became known as *Steam Elephant*, designed by John Buddle and William Chapman for the Wallsend Waggonway and colliery at Wallsend on the north bank of the River Tyne in 1815, and which worked there until the mid-1820s.

Beamish commissioned the replica to haul passenger trains on its standard gauge Pockerley Waggonway. Completed by Alan Keef Ltd at Ross-on-Wye, the replica first ran at Beamish in 2002.

'Pivotal role'

The exhibition, a key part of the S&DR200 festival, looks at the inspiration of steam travel and the people behind the inventions.

S&DR200 director Niccy Hallifax said: "Darlington, and particularly Hopetown, play a pivotal role in our fantastic year of celebrations. I am delighted that these three engines, which played such an important part in the story of S&DR, are being brought together in this way.

"The exhibition offers something for everyone, and I hope the community will come together with rail enthusiasts from around the country to celebrate Darlington's amazing heritage."

Free tickets for the exhibition are available now at www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/RailwayPioneers and should be booked in advance.

Later in the year, a new exhibition will be launched at Hopetown. Named STEAM to the Future, it will run between Friday, July 11 and Sunday, October 5 and follows the story of the early railways while looking to the future of rail travel, including the use of green technologies.

Visitors are also set to enjoy a hands-on art installation by Studio Swine, inspired by steam as a source of power, and will be invited to create a train for the 22nd century using virtual reality.

As reported last issue, Hopetown Darlington carried off two awards at the Heritage Railway Association's Annual Awards presented at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead on February 8.

For the transformation and expansion of Head of Steam, the venue carried off the Railway 200 Special Award created especially at the discretion of the judging panel and the board of the HRA to mark a particular project, scheme or activity that stands out and celebrates 200 years of the modern railway, and also the HRA Interpretation Award, sponsored by *Heritage Railway* magazine.

The awards followed hard on the heels of Hopetown landing the North East Culture Award for Best Museum of Cultural Venue 2024 and the Visitor Economy Award at the County Durham Together Awards 2024, as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 327.

Archive collection arrives back in Hopetown – and is ready for public study

HOPETOWN Darlington has celebrated the relaunch of The Stores following the return of the remainder of its 30,000-item railway heritage collection.

Historic nameplates and footplates have been exquisitely displayed on the walls and wire racking around the stores to showcase the town's proud engineering past.

Also celebrated on February 7 was the launch of the study and archive centre within The Stores. Students, researchers and rail enthusiasts can book appointments to view historic railway archive documents, photographic collections, records (including the Ken Hoole collection) and more with Hopetown's collections team.

The Stores are located in the historic Grade II-listed Carriage Works, constructed in 1853 to build carriages for the Stockton & Darlington Railway and soon-to-be North Eastern Railway.

Right: More than 30 invited guests and general visitors were welcomed to the relaunch of The Stores where the Hopetown collections team gave free tours of the venue and a deep dive into historic railway archives and some ephemera. DBC

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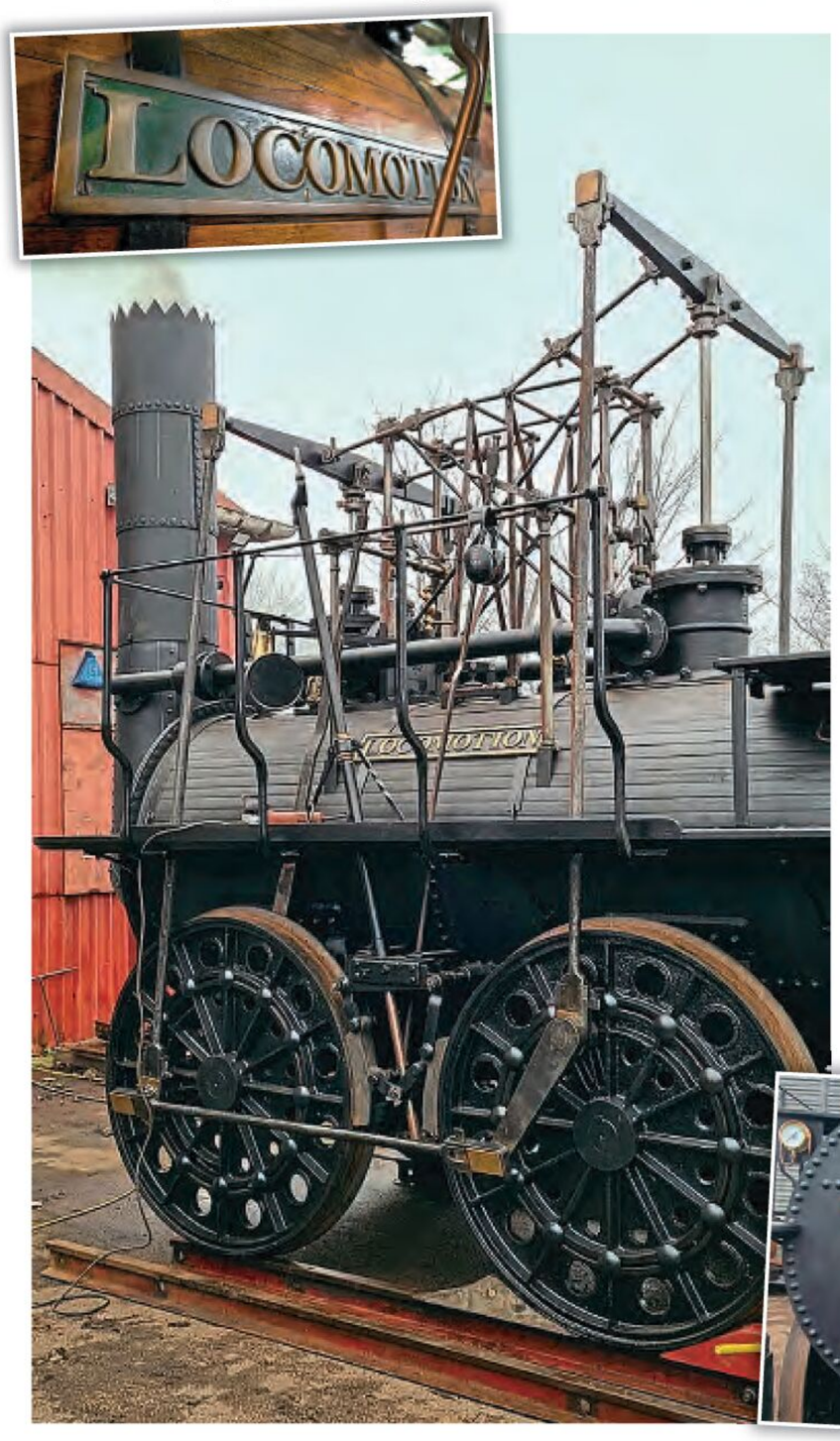
Above: The replica *Steam Elephant* at Beamish Museum. BEAMISH



Inset left: One side of the original *Locomotion No. 1*, which was first named *Active*. NRM

Left and inset below: All set to take the Stockton & Darlington 200th anniversary by storm. The replica *Locomotion No. 1* undergoes a test steaming at Hopetown Darlington on February 11. DB C

Did you visit S&DR150?

HOPETOWN Darlington wants to hear stories from people who visited the Stockton & Darlington 150th anniversary celebrations and cavalcade in 1975 and family stories from the 100th anniversary in 1925.

Anyone with recollections or a tale to tell is invited to email hopetown@darlington.gov.uk or speak to one of the attraction's welcome team members when they visit.

Rail history takes to the skies for SDR200 launch spectacular

By Robin Jones

A SPECTACULAR open-air light and drone show with up to 100 live performers will bring two centuries of railway history to life to mark the start of the nine-month Stockton & Darlington 200 international festival on Saturday, March 29.

All Change will be held at the 11Arches venue at Flatts Farm, Bishop Auckland, where Kynren: An Epic Tale of England, an open-air summer spectacular, is staged each year.

The SDR200 event will speed through 200 years of railway history and major historical moments, from the Industrial Revolution and two world wars to the present day, celebrating the transformative power of rail travel on the landscape and our everyday lives.

Inspired by conversations with local historians, the spectacle will bring history to life with large-scale set pieces, projection mapping, original music and drones.

The show will feature up to 100 performers from the local community, made up of dedicated trained volunteers.

All Change has created by award-winning touring theatre company Imitating The Dog. Its piece called Arrivals & Departures formed part of the opening events for Hull's year as City of Culture, and its movement directors, Rocky Norton and Katie Pearson, both contributed to the grand spectacles of all four ceremonies at the Summer Olympics in London 2012.

Light up the night

The event will feature a fleet of 400 drones from renowned company SKYMAGIC, promising a breathtaking visual experience set against the night sky. As pioneers behind the stunning drone and light displays at iconic events like the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Coachella and London's New Year's celebrations, SKYMAGIC will choreograph an aerial ensemble that weaves into the performance below. The 25-minute show, which will take place for one night only, is suitable for all ages.

Festival director Niccy Hallifax said: "It must have been magical 200 years ago to witness the first journey on the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

"With All Change, we aim to recapture that sense of wonder, bringing people together from all corners of the region and further afield for an awe-inspiring event.

"I hope we can create an unforgettable memory for people of all ages, offering them an exciting glimpse of the region's

S&DR200 All Change festival image. IMITATING THE DOG/SKYMAGIC

fascinating heritage while sparking further creativity and ideas over the years that follow. The artists we have brought together for this one-off show really are the best in their fields."

The theatre company's director, Simon Wainwright, said: "We've been so inspired by the incredible story of *Locomotion No. 1* and the changes it brought about, from that first short journey to the massive impact it had around the world. Our performance for the opening event explores how train travel opened up the possibilities for ordinary people to travel and to witness world events.

Journey through history

"All Change will take audiences on a whistlestop tour through 200 years of history, which will be told through a combination of our trademark storytelling techniques of digital projection, live performance and a newly composed soundscape. We are thrilled to be working with Rocky and Katie P, the team at 11Arches and SKYMAGIC to bring all of this together."

SKYMAGIC co-founder Patrick O'Mahony said: "SKYMAGIC is delighted to bring our world-famous drone light show to S&DR200. As a global company with an office in the north, we are always proud to support and work with cultural celebrations that champion achievements close to home. It will be a pleasure collaborating with incredible local talent."

Northern Rail will be running an extended service on the day of the event: visit www.northernrailway.co.uk for tickets. The 11Arches site is a 10-minute walk from the centre of Bishop Auckland, and there will be shuttle buses running from Bishop Auckland marketplace and station.

Tickets cost £5 per person and park-and-ride tickets (£5 per car) are available to purchase at www.sdr200.co.uk/all-change-opening-event

S&DR200 is being delivered by Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Other major funders include Arts Council England, Tees Valley Combined Authority, the National Heritage Lottery Fund, with LNER as a sponsor. The latest programme listings can be found www.sdr200.co.uk

Parts of world's first locomotive workshop facing demolition

By Robin Jones

WHILE the UK is celebrating Railway 200, plans have been drawn up to demolish part of the workshops of steam locomotive pioneers George and Robert Stephenson in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

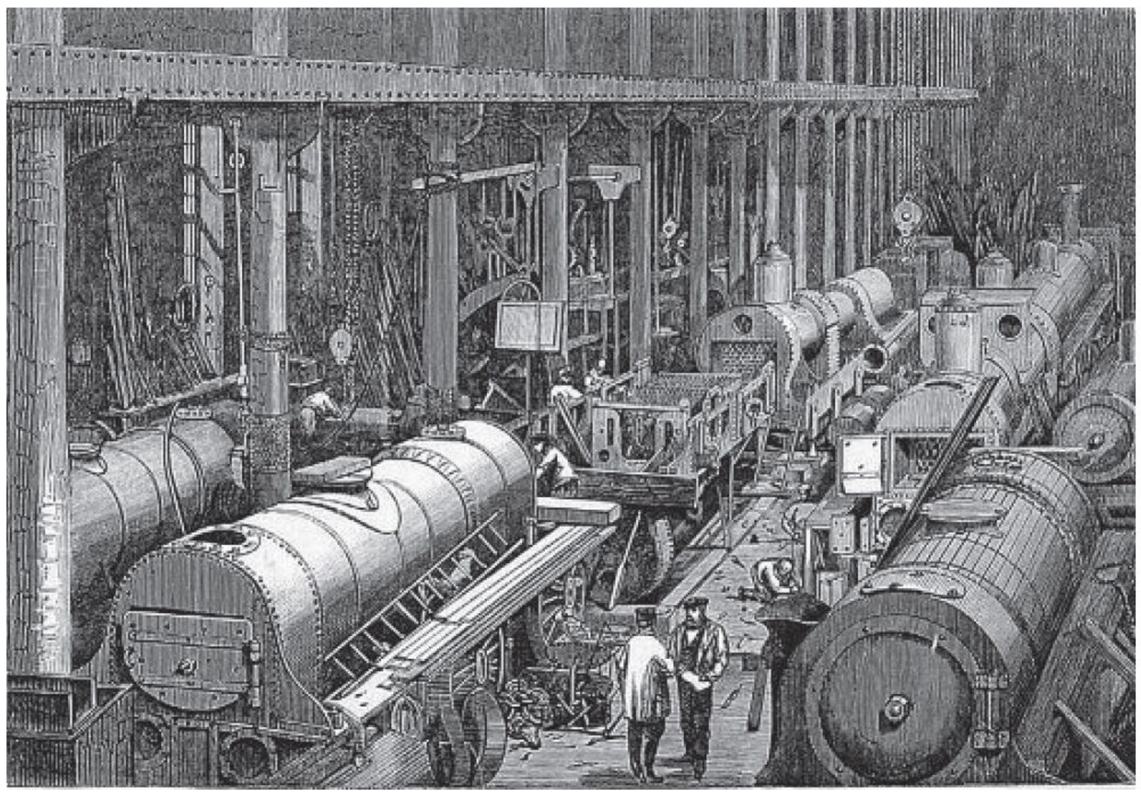
Three of the national amenity societies, the Victorian Society, the Georgian Group, and Historic Buildings & Places, which are all statutory commentators as part of the planning process, are objecting to a proposal to remove part of the globe-changing workshops – in the year of the 200th anniversary of the landmark run of George Stephenson's *Locomotion No.1*.

The former Machine Shop and Smiths Shop buildings are part of the Stephenson works in South Street, Forth Banks, in the eastern part of the site now known as the Stephenson Quarter.

The site was acquired by Clouston Group in 2004 and subsequently sold to Newcastle City Council. One significant building on the site has already been developed, but other buildings are proposed for conversion to housing and office.

The planning application for listed building consent for alterations, extension or demolition submitted by Founders Place LLP is for the Machine Shop and Smiths Shop which are Grade II and curtilage listed respectively. The former industrial buildings and the now converted Pattern Works form the historic Robert Stephenson & Co Locomotive Works, established in 1823 as the first manufacturing company of its sort in the world, and which helped power the Industrial Revolution. It was only as recently as 2023 that Newcastle celebrated the 200th anniversary of the opening of these buildings. The

Above: Robert Stephenson pictured in 1856.



Right: An 1845 print showing locomotives being built inside the Robert Stephenson & Company works in Newcastle.

Machine Shop fabric is shown as 'uncertain date' on the planning application, potentially c.1820s-1930s, and the cast-iron columns are likely to be c.1837-8. Following talks involving the Georgian Group on February 20, the historic fabric will remain while further investigations are undertaken. The unlisted Smiths Shop in Hannover Street is almost entirely Victorian.

'On hold'

A Victorian Society statement said: "The proposed scheme has the potential to cause irreversible harm to the valuable planform, and fixtures and fittings of the building, as a survival of an early locomotive works.

"The amenity societies need to know what phase the internal walls, columns and other features of the machine shop date to before they could ever consider these buildings demolition.

"The demolition proposal must be put on hold until asbestos has been removed from both the buildings and a more conclusive assessment of their significance undertaken."

A view of Smith Shop looking east towards the rear yard, submitted as part of the planning application. NCC

The society's conservation adviser, Tom Ollivier, said: 'The Victorian Society is very concerned by the proposed demolition of parts of the Stephenson's Works in Newcastle.

"Birthplace to the world's first commercial steam locomotives and directed by two of Britain's most recognised engineers, George and Robert Stephenson, this site is of global importance. Without this site, the modern world as we know it simply would not exist.

"Any redevelopment proposal must be informed, holistic, and devised with a long-term view. That being so, the demolition of any of the site's buildings in the absence of a clear plan for what will replace them is not acceptable.'

Tom Whitfield of The Georgian Group said: "The building is highly significant in railway and industrial history. The proposed works would almost totally destroy the last remaining vestiges of the building's historic layout, severely eroding the ability to understand how the building functioned, and the remarkable things that happened therein. We continue, however, to be optimistic that the developers will work with the local planning authority, the National Amenity Societies and other stakeholders to secure a sympathetic and sustainable future for this internationally-significant building.'

Ross Anthony, caseworker for Historic Buildings & Places, said: "These buildings, including the Grade II-listed former Machine Shop and the Smiths Shop, and are integral to early railway engineering history. The proposal would result in the loss of much of the historic fabric, including the roof, box girders and cast iron columns, with only partial sections of the original walls remaining.

"While we support schemes that bring historic buildings back into use, removing such significant elements without a clear future plan is unjustifiable. No demolition should take place until a sustainable future for these nationally significant buildings has been secured."

No objection

Heritage England has raised no formal objection, however. A statement to the city council said: "Part of the Stephenson's Works site has been the focus of successful heritage regeneration, but the Machine Shop and coppersmiths building are in a degraded, vacant condition. The current proposal is aimed to facilitate redevelopment of this part of the works, through creating building platforms around the most significant historic fabric. This means reducing the structures to consolidated walls.

"The loss of original form of the structure, and ability to read the works as a building, would cause a degree of moderate harm to its significance. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out any harm to a heritage asset requires justification, while paragraph 217 asks that partial loss of a listed building should not occur until reasonable efforts have been made to secure redevelopment.

"On balance, we consider that after decades of decline, this application facilitates a real opportunity to secure the most significant part of this building and would be an important step to finding a new use for the site."

Robert Stephenson & Co was the world's first company specifically established to manufacture locomotives and was founded as part of the construction of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

The Pattern Shop on the site, behind Newcastle Central station, had been vacant since 2008 and fell into a state of disrepair, but has now been developed as office accommodation.

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Into the darkness of the night with late trains at Darley Dale

By Owen Hayward

As darkness descends on the Derbyshire Dales on February 15, No. 750 *Waleswood* heads away from Northwood with the first train of Peak Rail's Night Shift gala at the start of its Railway 200 celebrations. ROBERT FALCONER

RAILWAYS have more or less always been a 24-hour affair, with the darker hours catering for the likes of sleeper services and overnight freight. While the main line railway of today still caters for this with modern traction, the evocative days of steam working in the dead of night is almost a distant memory and something many seldom get the chance to experience.

Kicking off its celebrations for Railway 200, Peak Rail took visitors back to such a time with the Night Shift gala on February 15, which saw steam and diesel locomotives working a slightly different service, commencing in the early evening and concluding just shy of 10pm.

With the chill of winter causing steam to hang in the air, stations became illuminated by their lamps and the lights of carriages on passing trains as the light faded. With mist also lingering, the gentle glow of locomotive headlamps growing ever closer until their train emerged into view evoked scenes long since lost to modern high-intensity lamps, while signalboxes and crossings were lit up to add to the feel of the 1960s BR era alongside the sight of passenger and goods trains passing by at Darley Dale.

Motive power for the evening was provided by No. 750 *Waleswood* and 0-6-0T No. 1884 *Cathryn* for steam and Class 44 D8 *Penyghent* for diesel.

The steam pair are both products of Hudswell Clarke's workshops, No. 750 being built in 1906 for Skinner & Holford Limited's Waleswood colliery, near Rotherham, from which it takes its name.

Cathryn was built in 1955 to a design of locomotives supplied to the Port of London Authority, bought by the National Coal Board, and employed at Newmarket Colliery, near Wakefield.

Dwarfing the two industrials, *Penyghent* was built at Derby works in 1959 as one of a class of just 10 'Peaks,' the nickname deriving from their working of expresses from St Pancras to Manchester via Matlock in the Peak District. Originally delivered to Camden, it was immediately loaned to Derby and remained in the East Midlands for much of its BR life.

Preservation saw it move to Scotland and the Strathspey Railway in 1981. Six years later it was offered for sale and purchased by the North Notts Locomotive Group, which brought it back to the region.

The one-night-only mini gala saw the three locomotives rotate round duties, alternating between a rake of BR Mk.1 carriages and a mixed goods rake. Rides aboard a brake van on the latter were available for a supplement, offering a unique vantage of travel from the perspective of a freight guard through the darkness. The lighting of the stove within the main cabin meant that the chill of the night was kept at bay for the duration of the round trip between Rowsley South and Matlock, where the heritage services rub shoulders with main line services run by East Midlands Railway.

***Cathryn* awaits the signal to depart Darley Dale as a well-loaded brake van glides by on the tail-end of a passing goods train.** NATHAN SPENCE

It was not just the trains on offer – live music was performed, and a selection of local ales and craft beers were available to purchase from an on-board bar.

"This was a completely new event that we had never tried before and we would like to thank everybody who attended," said Jack Thompson, Peak Rail's events and marketing manager.

"We really enjoyed putting the event on, and we were blown away by the amount of people who visited.

"The response from those visitors has been phenomenal, and we really appreciate all the kind words and feedback we have had.

"This is certainly an event we will be repeating and would welcome any further comments or feedback to enable us to improve next year."

Joint gala hat-trick

This April, Peak Rail will join up with its neighbour from across the Dales for the third consecutive Twin Peaks diesel gala, which sees it put out its internal combustion fleet at the same time as that of

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The driver of D8 *Penyghent* converses with a fellow volunteer during Peak Rail's Night Shift event. NATHAN SPENCE

***Waleswood* emerges from the darkness into a pool of light courtesy of the station lamps on February 15.** NATHAN SPENCE

Class 44 D8 sits at Darley Dale with the goods train on February 15. IAN CASTLEDINE

the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway at Wirksworth. Taking place on April 11/12, the two lines will see visiting locomotives brought in to supplement their resident locomotives.

For those wishing to sample both lines on the same day, a free connecting bus service will ferry ticketholders between Matlock and Wirksworth stations.

"The Twin Peaks diesel gala is now in its third year, and the benefits of hosting it with another railway are numerous," Jack explained. "Working together with the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway is mutually beneficial as it allows us to pool our resources, as well as providing a unique experience for our visitors, encompassing two railways and a heritage bus. It also allows us to have more buying power, particularly for advertising as we can advertise more in magazines. Having two websites and Facebook pages to advertise on also helps with visitor engagement.

"Working together with another heritage railway is also beneficial for our volunteers as it allows them to meet others with that shared interest, and it has strengthened our relationship with our suppliers and visitors."

Event fares have been held at 2024 prices, with a discount for advance bookings made online.

West Somerset supporter to run London Marathon to help restore Standard tank overhaul project

By Robin Jones

The West Somerset Railway Association's Joe Rogers, who will run the London Marathon. WSRA

WEST Somerset Railway Association supporter Joe Rogers is to run the 2025 TCS London Marathon to help raise funds for the restoration of BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80064.

Since 2018, Joe has been an active employee and then volunteer for the WSR. Six years ago, he became the first recorded person to have run the length of the railway, visiting all of its 10 stations.

No. 80064 was built at Brighton in June 1953 and initially allocated to Watford in the LMR, before transferring to Dover Marine in the Southern Region in December 1959. It then transferred to Ashford depot in February 1960 and Tonbridge in May 1961, before it was transferred to Exmouth Junction in July 1962, following the electrification of the Kent Coast line.

It was allocated to Bristol Barrow Road in June 1965, before being withdrawn from service in September 1965. Sold to Woodham Brothers' Barry scrapyard, it arrived there in October 1965 and stayed until 1973.

Go west (again)

Bought by the 80064 Locomotive Fund, No. 80064 was moved to Buckfastleigh on the Dart Valley Railway (now the South Devon Railway) in 1973 and steamed again in 1981. In 1984, No. 80064 was moved to the Bluebell Railway, where it worked until its boiler certificate expired in 1991.

In December 2023, the locomotive was donated by its owning group to the WSRA and relocated to Williton, where it is undergoing a heavy overhaul, with the main issue being the need for copper welding in the firebox. A WSRA statement said: "The association was very grateful to have been gifted the locomotive and is determined to restore it to full running condition as soon as possible."

A token of thanks

Joe said: "The railway and its association have given me so much in purpose, passion, and a chance to work with its wonderful people.

"It has meant an awful lot to me and has defined my career and my interests.

"Contributions to No. 80064's restoration are much appreciated by those who work tirelessly to keep the heritage railway movement thriving, those who live locally and rely on the economical benefits it brings to the area, and by those like me, who have benefitted from the enjoyment that both the WSR and Somerset as a county offer to those passionate for heritage and railways."

He aims to raise at least £2000 by running the 26.2-mile marathon, which starts in Greenwich Park and ends near Buckingham Palace, on April 27.

➜ To sponsor Joe on his epic fundraising run for the restoration, head online to https://2025tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/joseph-rogers-wsra

BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80064, currently dismantled at Williton on the West Somerset Railway, is pictured in storage at Sheffield Park on the Bluebell Railway on August 17, 2010. TONY HISGETT/CREATIVE COMMONS

New Portillo series marks Railway 200

Broadcaster, journalist and former Defence Secretary Michael Portillo is to present a special two-part series, 200 Years of The Railways, which will air on BBC Two later this year.

The one-hour episodes will see Michael travel by train to the northeast and northwest of England to investigate what the railways have achieved during the past 200 years since the world's first steam passenger train on the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

He will also explore what the railways' role could be in the future.

The special comes after two new series – Great Continental Railway Journeys and Great British Railway Journeys – also presented by Michael, returned to BBC Two from March 10.

He said: "I am proud of having made new series of Great Continental Railway Journeys and Great British Railway Journeys.

"As ever, my adventures are brought alive by the wonderful characters I encounter along the way.

"This year we shall also produce a special series to celebrate the 200 years of railways in Britain and the world.

"I thank our viewers warmly for their commitment to these programmes."

Great Continental Railway Journeys will see Michael embark on a new journey from Switzerland to Croatia and Bosnia, Norway and Denmark to Normandy and Brittany.

Great British Railway Journeys will see him explore scenic and intriguing settings from Epping Forest to the Black Country, the Lake District to the Weald.

Boiler for new BR Standard 3MT complete at Bridgnorth

By Robin Jones

A LANDMARK in the project to build a new BR Standard 3MT 2-6-2T has been passed with the mechanical completion of the boiler.

The boiler build for No. 82045 has taken several years under the leadership of the Severn Valley Railway boiler shop at Bridgnorth, and it is now on its way towards a hydraulic test.

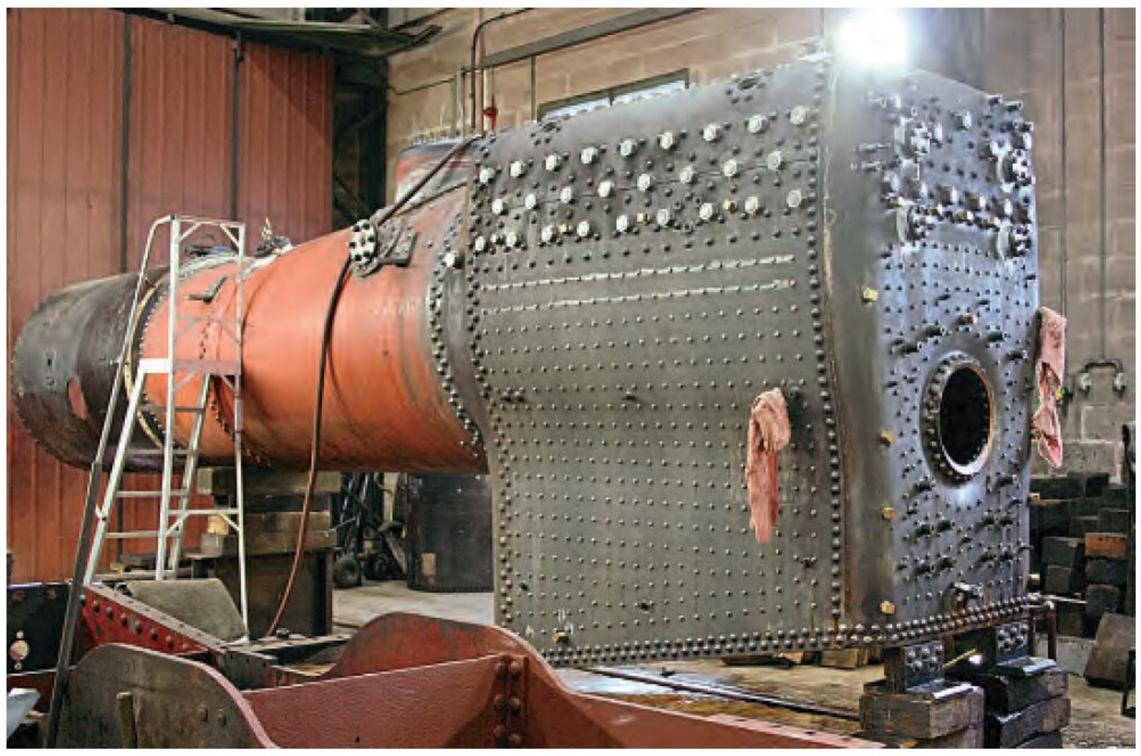
A spokesman for The 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust said: "The boiler for our locomotive is now mechanically complete.

"This is a significant milestone for the project and the culmination of much skillful construction and careful project management. It has been delivered both to cost and time targets and is a credit to those involved.

"Water was placed in the boiler for the first time on Friday, February 7 and the test cycle now starts in order to prove the integrity of the boiler and ultimately certificate this important asset.

"This is a significant milestone in UK heritage terms, being the first new BR Standard locomotive boiler to be built for more than 60 years. Our thanks go to the SVR for its professional approach and to the many people who have made personal contributions either by sponsorship of the boiler or their membership contributions to the 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust."

The BR Standard 3MT 2-6-2T was a hybrid design by Robert Riddles, the chassis being closely based on and sharing several components with the LMS Ivatt Class 4MT, while having a boiler derived from GWR No. 2 boiler as fitted to the Large Prairies and 5600 class 0-6-2Ts. It is also historically appropriate for the SVR as several examples of the class worked over the route in the 1950s and 1960s.



The completed boiler for the 3MT in the boiler shop at Bridgnorth. 82045 TRUST

None of the 45 Standard 3MTs survived, although three lasted until 1968. The idea of building a new one was conceived by South Devon Railway fireman John Besley in 1988, and the project took roots at the SVR in 2003. As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 87, the 82045 Locomotive Fund held its inaugural meeting at Kidderminster Railway Museum on August 5, 2006. It was reconstituted as a company limited by guarantee in April 2009 and gained charitable status in January the following year, accompanied by a change of name.

Project engineer Tony Massau, also a professional engineer and SVR engineman, had considered for many years that Standard 3 tanks would be an ideal engine for average-sized heritage lines because of their economical size, and it has been conjected that No. 82045 could become the first of a batch.

At Bridgnorth, the frames, cab, driving wheels, smokebox and cylinders have been assembled.

On April 17, 2015, the trust ran a special train, 'The Eardington Explorer,' between Bridgnorth and Hampton Loade, calling specially at the then-disused Eardington station, to raise funds for the manufacture of the boiler.

➜ To find out more about the trust and to become a member or to donate to the project, head online and visit http://www.82045.org.uk/ 82045_how-to-help.html

Ashover coach turned club hut to celebrate its line's centenary in Derbyshire

A COACH which spent more than half its life as a bowling club's headquarters will take centre stage at a special event at the Midland Railway – Butterley to mark the 100th anniversary of the official opening and first public passenger services of Derbyshire's Ashover Light Railway.

The 2ft railway was built in the early 1920s by the Clay Cross Co Ltd, which was controlled by the Jackson family who also owned the Overton Estate, near Ashover. The original aim was to provide a mineral line conveying mainly limestone and fluorspar from quarries on the Overton Estate to the works at Clay Cross.

To build the line, the Clay Cross Company was legally obliged to obtain a Light Railway Order, which in turn obliged it to provide a public transport service.

The Jackson family bought six second-hand Baldwin steam locomotives and about 70 wagons which had first seen service with the British Armed Forces during the latter part of the First World War.

Four new coach bodies were built by the Gloucester Carriage and Wagon Co in 1924 and delivered in January 1925, mounted on second-hand bogies retrieved from First World War goods wagons.

The ALR officially opened for passenger traffic on April 7, 1925, but these services were withdrawn just over 11 years later in September 1936 due to competition from road transport, although the coaches were used for the Ashover Show in August 1937. Coaches Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were then used as store sheds and a canteen, and then in 1953 all three became stands at the Clay Cross Works Sports Ground. In 1960, they were shuffled around the sports field, one falling apart and being scrapped in the process. The following year, the remaining pair were rescued by the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, then located at Humberston, and can now be found in a much-altered original condition at the line's Skegness Water Leisure Park current home.

Coach No. 4 was stored in the Clay Cross Works Carriage Shed until 1953 when its body was removed and used for more than half a century until 2007 as the Clay Cross Works Bowling Club HQ.

On October 7 that year it was finally removed from site for restoration by the Midland Railway Trust through its affiliate, the Golden Valley Light Railway Association.

It was the culmination of negotiations which began in 1986 when a narrow gauge railway project, the Golden Valley Light Railway, at the Midland Railway – Butterley was first launched.

The coach was placed on temporary accommodation bogies and shunted in to the newly-created running shed. Its restoration to an ex-works condition took GVLRA volunteers seven years. The coach was formally relaunched into passenger-carrying duties in 2014.

The GVLR will celebrate its centenary on Sunday, April 6,

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Polish TKh 0-6-0T No. 5374 of 1959 outshopped in its vibrant livery, with logos yet to be added when unveiled at the end of February. LOBPG

The Lord Oliver Brown Locomotive Project Group. As this issue closed for press, the locomotive was undergoing the final touches of its repaint into a unique pink and green livery. Inset: Oliver Brown, who has had a locomotive named in his memory. BOTH: LOBPG

Polish Tkh restored in tribute to young cancer victim

By Robin Jones

A POLISH tank engine on the Plym Valley Railway has been restored in memory of an 11-year-old boy who died from a rare form of cancer and will be used raise money for hospice where he died.

Oliver Brown, of Plymstock, had Myelodysplastic Syndrome, a rare type of blood cancer which affects only four in one million children worldwide, and received treatment for it for three years.

He died on November 2, 2019, at Children's Hospice South West's Little Harbour in St Austell.

A team of enthusiasts and friends of Oliver's parents, Mike and Nicky, have spent the last five years restoring former Huta Ostrowiec Steelworks TKh 0-6-0T No. 5374 of 1959 *Vanguard*, which was previously based on the Northampton & Lamport Railway.

The Tkh, which steamed again last September, has been painted in a striking pink and green colour scheme – Oliver's favourite colours – and renamed *Lord Oliver Brown*.

The locomotive is owned by Marc Bellin, and its new livery was designed by his Network Rail colleague Richard Gibson, a friend of the Brown family and one of the team working on the restoration project.

Its livery incorporates the Children's Hospice South West logo, as well as suggestions from Oliver's now 14-year-old brother Benjamin.

Hospice fundraiser

Its inaugural journey on March 9 after this issue closed for press, on what would have been Oliver's 17th birthday, will see his friends and family board the train for the trip up the heritage line to Plymbridge, steaming in public for the first time in 17 years.

It will make five journeys throughout the day for which members of the public can buy tickets, and every penny will be donated to Children's Hospice South West.

The locomotive will then run as part of Plym Valley's timetable.

Dad Mike said: "This train can only make you smile. It's brought so many people together and made new friendships and memories, which is amazing as it's just what Oliver did through his life – made friends and created memories for others."

Oliver was diagnosed with the syndrome at Bristol Children's Hospital towards the end of 2016. He had developed it as a result of a complicated disorder relating to his GATA2 gene that also led to him being born deaf. He then spent the following three years facing intense invasive treatments, more than 15 operations, time in isolation, and two five-and-a-half-month stints in the hospital. In May 2019 the family was told there was nothing more doctors could do, and that he would only have weeks to live. The Browns decided to have as much fun as possible while he was well enough, to give him amazing experiences, and to provide Benjamin with memories of his brother that would last a lifetime. Oliver lived for a further five months.

Mum Nicky added: "I am incredibly proud that our beautiful son has inspired this wonderful locomotive and will continue to spread smiles and happiness, while also supporting Children's Hospice South West, which has done so much for Oliver and us as a family since 2017."

'Enormous privilege'

Sarah Stott, head of fundraising at Little Harbour Children's Hospice, said: "We are really excited for the launch of the *Lord Oliver Brown* train. Having something that will not only honour Oliver's memory, but which will also be able to be enjoyed by other children and families while raising money for CHSW, will be really special."

Marc said: "When the chance came to work with the hospice, it was an absolute no-brainer, and it's been an enormous privilege to be working with Oliver's family in his memory."

➜ **Anyone wishing to donate to Children's Hospice South West is invited to visit www.chsw.org.uk**

Left: Ashover Light Railway coach No. 4 back in pristine original condition. MRB

Right: Coach No. 4 served a local bowling club for 54 years. MRB

with No. 4 being accompanied by resident Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT No. 7529 of 1914 with departures from the Butterley Park station at 11.50am, 12.30pm, 1.15pm, 2pm, 2.45pm and 3.30pm. Trains will depart from Newlands Inn Station (Golden Valley) at 12.05pm; 12.45pm, 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 3pm and 3.45pm. Admission to the event is also by standard gauge train from Butterley station at the Midland Railway – Butterley.

A display of Ashover Light Railway photographs and artefacts will be mounted in the Butterley Park Station building courtesy of Robert Gratton and Stuart Band, joint editors of The Ashover Light Railway (Wild Swan Publications, 1989). Both have agreed to be present.

At the official opening of the ALR in April 1925, the train was greeted at Ashover Butts by the Ashover Brass Band. When coach No. 4 was launched back into passenger-carrying service by the GVLR in 2014, the Ashover Brass Band was again in attendance. In keeping with this tradition, members of the band will be present once more to celebrate the occasion.

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR

SR Schools 4-4-0 No. 926 skirts the River Esk at Larpool as it heads from Whitby to Pickering. The North Yorkshire Moors Railway has opened up booking discounts for groups of 20 or more travelling on its services in 2025, with reserved seating and the option for refreshment add-ons. For full details, email grouptravel@nymr.co.uk or call 01751 477700. JOHN HUNT/NYMR

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Tanfield launch 300th anniversary celebrations as *Twizzell* returns

By Robin Jones and Dave Wilson

THE Tanfield Railway – which claims to be the oldest operating railway in the world – kick-started its 300th anniversary celebration by welcoming back unique 1891-built Robert Stephenson & Co 0-6-0T No. 3 *Twizzell* as the star of a spectacular event.

Tanfield 300: The Journey Begins – held on Sunday, February 23 and which saw 300 complimentary tickets snapped up within 24 hours of release – marked the first in a year-long programme celebrating the rich history of the railway, which dates back to 1725, a century before the globe-changing trip by *Locomotion No. 1* over the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

Last run six years ago, *Twizzell* made its first public appearance following overhaul – a key aim for the railway as part of the Tanfield 300 celebrations.

Works No. 2730 *Twizzell* was supplied new to James Joicey & Co's Beamish Railway, which linked the three Beamish collieries, Beamish Air, Beamish Second and Beamish Mary, along with East Stanley Colliery and a connection to the North Eastern Railway at Beamish Junction.

James Joicey, who was born at Tanfield in 1846 was, at one time, reputedly the largest coal owner in the world. He was elevated to the peerage in 1906, becoming Baron Joicey of Chester–le- Street; locally, his nickname was 'Old King Coal.'

Weighing 41 tons, *Twizell* has two inside 17in x 24in cylinders and 4ft diameter driving wheels, the centre ones, unusually for an 0-6-0, being flangeless.

One of five engines employed to work over the Beamish Railway system, following the creation of the National Coal Board in 1947, *Twizell* became part of the NCB's fleet and saw use at Handen Hold Colliery. Following a period out of use and in store, it worked at Morrison Busty Colliery before eventually becoming part of the vast collection of artefacts being acquired by what today is the Beamish Open Air Museum.

Back in steam

Following that acquisition in 1972, *Twizell* was stored at Marley Hill shed on the nascent Tanfield Railway, remaining there until 1977 when it returned to Beamish Museum, where restoration work began.

In 1995, *Twizell* went back to Marley Hill, but it was not until 15 years later in 2010 that the locomotive was back in steam and working on the Tanfield Railway – where it is now on long-term loan.

Withdrawn for a 10-year overhaul in 2019, *Twizell* underwent major boiler repairs at Israel Newton's High Peaks workshop in Matlock. Work was also carried out by Tanfield volunteers at Marley Hill shed on the motion, bearings, axle boxes, and boiler fittings such as the gauge frames.

After the boiler was reunited with the overhauled frames and motion frames, *Twizell* was given a full repaint including lining out, all undertaken by Tanfield Railway volunteer Sarah Jarman. Following a successful steam test in late 2024, *Twizell* was able to take part in the Railway 200 Whistle-Off on January 1 this year, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 328, and made its loaded test run on February 5 before hauling a special service for the Heritage Railway Association over the full line on February 8, the morning before to the HRA's Annual Awards 2025 ceremony in Gateshead, as covered in this magazine's last issue.

Twizell is currently the only operational Newcastle-built Robert Stephenson & Co locomotive in Britain.

At the event on February 23, the railway's demonstration freight train was hauled by 1960-built Fowler 0-6-0DH Ribblesdale Cement Ltd No. 6, built by John Fowler of Leeds in 1960, which recently returned from restoration and was highly commended at the recent HRA Awards.

Children who attended the event were presented with a commemorative ticket, flag and badge to mark the start of Tanfield 300.

More to come

A key highlight of the day was the grand unveiling of the full programme for Tanfield 300. The year will be packed with special events, including an Easter Eggstravaganza (April 18-21), the Great North Festival of Railways (May 3-5, 10-12, 17-19, 24-26), the Legends of Industry Gala (June 20-22), Tanfield 300: Official Birthday (July 19/20), Heritage Open Days (September 14, 18 and 21), Diesel Pioneers Gala (September 20-21) and the Gan' Canny Gala – Season Finale (October 18/19). Full details of the anniversary programme can be found at tanfield-railway.co.uk

The railway was also planning to hold a special event featuring *Twizell*, possibly in May, to celebrate its return to active service.

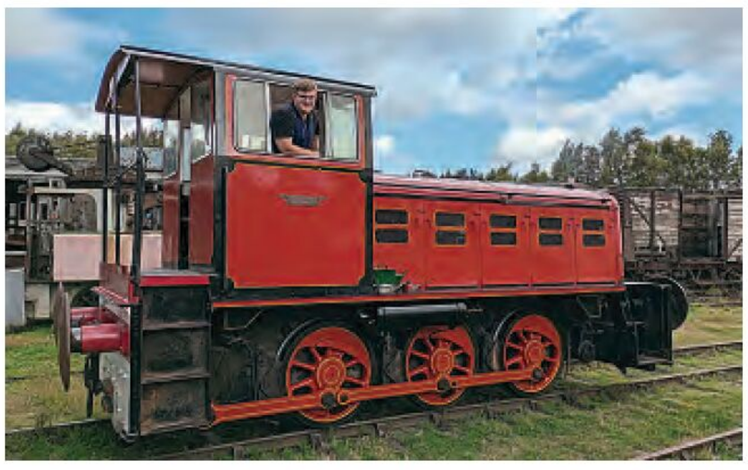
Tanfield general manager David Watchman said: "We are thrilled to have launched Tanfield Railway's 300th anniversary year with such a well-received event. The enthusiasm

Volunteer Sarah Jarman is at work repainting *Twizell* in the carriage shed at Marley Hill. The grey object in the foreground to the right is the freshly primed dome cover. DAVE WILSON

On its loaded test run, *Twizell* pulls away from Marley Hill station bound for Sunniside – to be followed by a whole line run. DAVE WILSON

Inside Marley Hill shed, volunteer David Allinson is in the process of re-lining the bottom of *Twizell*'s smokebox with firebricks. DAVE WILSON

Guests at the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2025 presentation dinner in Gateshead on February 8 are given a tour of Marley Hill shed beforehand. TR



Fowler 0-6-0DH of 1960 *Ribblesdale Cement No.6* at Tanfield on February 26 with volunteer Ben Wilson driving. TR

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and support from visitors have been incredible, and we look forward to delivering an exciting programme throughout the year to celebrate this momentous milestone."

The Tanfield Railway, operating between Sunniside in Gateshead and East Tanfield, was originally built as a waggonway to transport coal from the North East's rich coalfields to the River Tyne. Using wooden rails and horse-drawn waggons, it was a pioneering development in railway history, laying the groundwork for future advancements in rail transport.

It is now a three-mile volunteer-run heritage line that operates steam and diesel-hauled trains, offering visitors a journey through centuries of railway history. As well as preserving an important collection of North East locomotives and rolling stock, the railway is home to the historic 1854-built Marley Hill engine shed and the renowned Causey Arch, the world's oldest-surviving railway bridge.

Robert Stephenson & Co 0-6-0T No. 2730 of *1891 Twizell* departs Andrews House station on February 26, marking the start of the Tanfield 300 years of celebrations. TR

Unique Peckett is set for making summer debut at first preservation home

By Owen Hayward

DIMINUTIVE Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 2012 *Teddy* is on course to return to steam during Railway 200 as work on its 10-yearly overhaul enters its final stages at the Battlefield Line – where its preservation story began more than half a century ago.

Built in 1941 for the Ministry of Supply's Creekmoor Royal Ordnance Factory at Poole, it is the sole-surviving member of the locomotive builder's Yorktown class of saddle tank locomotives.

Teddy has not steamed at Shackerstone since the late 1970s. It arrived there in 1972 after being purchased by its then owner, the Rev ER 'Teddy' Boston, who restored it later that decade and kept it on the fledgling railway until removing it to his Cadeby Light Railway in 1982 for static display. After the Cadeby line closed in 2005, the Peckett was sold and fully restored once more, returning to steam in 2007 and earning the name *Teddy* after its former owner.

Incidentally, Boston was also a close friend of author and fellow cleric Wilbert Awdry, who immortalised him as the Fat Clergyman in his Thomas the Tank Engine stories, which celebrates the 80th anniversary of the publication of the first book this year.

Teddy has not run since being withdrawn for overhaul in 2017 and was subsequently listed for sale in 2020. Despite having spent much of its post-Cadeby preservation years on hire to numerous lines and museums, it had never returned to the Battlefield Line, but following the sale to its current owner in 2022, it arrived back at Shackerstone that June, 50 years after it was first seen there.

Overhaul commenced in 2023, with the bottom end being worked on in the railway's own workshops, while the boiler was contracted out to Heritage Engineers Ltd at Bitteswell.

The boiler work has included building up a wasted area at the bottom of the barrel which, owing to its small size, required the removal of the front tube plate to access the area. The tube plate itself has also been built up where needed and subsequently refitted and header studs replaced.

A clack pad that was previously bolted on has been riveted on, the longitudinal stay replaced, and the foundation ring riveted where necessary.

Other localised riveting has been carried out where the heads had wasted – a legacy of its 20-plus years standing outside at the now closed Cadeby Light Railway – while all of the boiler fittings have also been overhauled and tested. All that remains to do is fit the new tubes, then complete the hydraulic and steam test.

The overhaul has been supported by grants from the Veronica Awdry Charitable Trust and the Transport Trust, but the additional work required on the boiler has meant that a shortfall in funding of about £3000 remains to complete the project, which will see the locomotive returned to as close to its original 1941 condition as possible: original Peckett buffers of the correct type fitted, the cab enclosed at the rear as originally built, refitting of the original cab sanding equipment, rerouting pipework to its correct position, and repainting it back into its original Peckett mid-green livery.

Subject to the usual caveats, it is expected that *Teddy* will return to steam sometime during the summer, with it remaining based at Shackerstone.

➜ For further information or to help cover the cost of the outstanding work required, visit gofund.me/80224032

Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 2012 of 1941 *Teddy* heads a passenger train on the Great Central Railway's newly reopened Mountsorrel branch on October 25, 2015. ROBIN JONES

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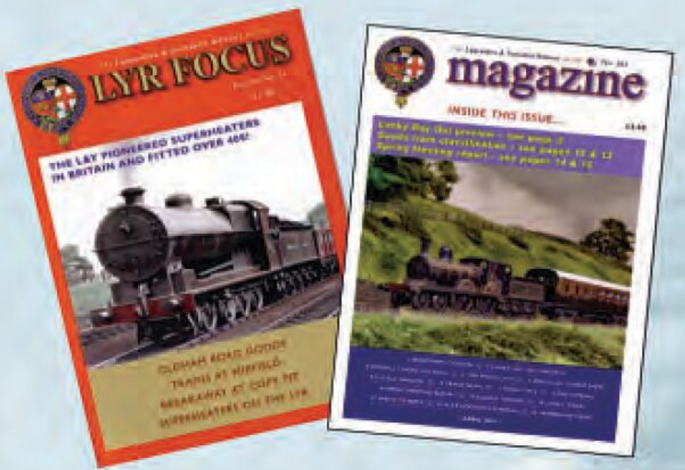

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Right: On February 15, a photographic charter was organised by Timeline Events, with Avonside 0-4-0ST 1340 *Trojan*, GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* and Prairie No. 4144 were in steam. *Pendennis Castle* is seen with the fire dropped at the end. FRANK DUMBLETON

Knight in shining armour: Appeal to return 4MT to service

By Owen Hayward

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway hopes its supporters will become knights in shining armour as it launches a £200,000 appeal to overhaul BR Standard No. 75029 *The Green Knight* at Grosmont.

Previously owned by railway artist David Shepherd, who bought it upon its withdrawal from BR in August 1967, the 4-6-0 has been a NYMR resident since 1998 when he sold it to fund the overhaul of his 9F No. 92203 *Black Prince*.

Overhaul of the 4MT was completed at Grosmont in 2012, and No. 75029 became a local legend that summer when it carried the Olympic Torch from Whitby. It was pulled from service in 2017 for repairs; however, the extensive work required to its firebox meant a full overhaul was required.

No. 75029 forms a crucial part of the railway's strategic plans, being one of just a few locomotives on the line that is able to work over the main line section to Whitby. To bring it back into service, the railway is seeking to raise £200,000, about half of the estimated repair bill. The overhaul will be led by Richard Pearson, who has most recently worked as engineering and works manager for The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust.

Problems discovered

While the boiler was hoped to be completed in-house, the time, space and specialist skills required mean it will be tendered to an external contractor. A new copper firebox will be required, with repairs to the existing one having proven unsuccessful. The result of this will be a firebox that is expected to last for another 60 years.

A railway spokesperson said: "Raising £200,000 will mark a crucial milestone in the restoration. This is just over half the amount we anticipate that the full boiler overhaul will cost. Hitting this milestone will enable the purchase of materials and the boiler to be sent away to an external contractor for works to start.

"It is difficult to predict how long this work will take, but we anticipate that the boiler overhaul may take up to four years from the point it leaves us. If we can raise these vital funds in 2025, this would see a possible return to steam in 2029, subject to any discoveries that may increase the works required.

"It is our intention to complete the remainder of the works in-house at the NYMR. Richard Pearson and a small team will lead the frame rebuild and the rewheel. Our apprentices and volunteers will have the opportunity to work on the engine. This is part of our commitment to ensuring that we have a future generation of heritage engineers able to keep our fleet operating for decades ahead and to keeping these vital skills within the North Yorkshire region."

Join the round table

Sponsorship packages are available with membership to The Round Table Club starting at just £30, which will bring quarterly news updates on progress. Donations of £2000 will see the donor invited to scribe their name onto the running boards of No. 75029, with just 10 opportunities available for this perk, while five people pledging £5000 each will be rewarded with footplate rides on board upon completion of the overhaul.

For full details, see www.nymr.co.uk/listing/category/the-green-knight

Bluebell electro-diesel makes debut on Thunderbird duty

AN unplanned debut for one of the most modern locomotives on the Bluebell Railway took place on March 2 when Class 73 E6040 was called upon to work service trains after rostered LBSCR A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* was failed partway through the day.

It came to a stop just north of Sharpthorne Tunnel, with injector issues cited as the cause.

The inability to get water into the boiler resulted in the locomotive's fire having to be thrown out and the service rescued by the resident Class 09 D4106, which had been working diesel footplate taster sessions at Horsted Keynes.

With repairs impossbile in time for the following morning, E6040 *The Bluebell Railway* was drafted in to substitute, which resulted in it unplanned solo debut on service trains. The electro-diesel had appeared during its namesake line's September 6-8, 2024, diesel gala on some service trains, always assisted by one of the visiting locomotives.

E6040 arrived on the railway in April 2023 and while a fast entry into service was anticipated, this was delayed due to the need for some mechanical and electrical repair work to make it fully operational as it had been largely used as a shunter at Eastleigh depot since 2017. One of the reasons for its arrival on the Sussex heritage line was for the purpose of Thunderbird duties, instances of which are still rare.

On March 2, E6040 departs Kingscote with the 3.15pm to Sheffield Park hauling the former Metropolitan Railway Chesham carriages. The ED was substituting for *Fenchurch* which had failed the previous afternoon. NICK GILLIAM

In addition to use as a standby and shunting locomotive, E6040 is also occasionally used on diesel driver experiences. Courses take place on selected dates throughout the year; for full details, see bluebell-railway.com/special/class-73-footplate-tasters/

Somerset & Dorset 7F celebrates centenary with LMS repaint

By Robin Jones

SOMERSET & Dorset Joint Railway 7F 2-8-0 No. 53809 celebrated its 100th birthday at the start of the North Norfolk Railway's 50th anniversary season on Saturday, February 15.

The event highlighted a double milestone as 2025 also marks 50 years since No. 53809 was saved from Barry scrapyard, where it spent 11 years since withdrawal from service in 1964.

The centenary was celebrated with owner John Moorhouse accompanied by Poppy Line general manager Graham Hukins and Chief Mechanical Engineer Keith Ashford ceremonially breaking a bottle of ale on the 7F's running plate.

No. 53809 has worked just over 996,000 miles in its lifetime – 934,136 between 1925 and 1964 when based at Bath Green Park to work S&DJR services and 61,972 (and counting) since returning to service in 1980.

It has been based at the NNR since 2018 and is slated for a number of its celebratory events this year, but will first undergo a partial repaint into LMS unlined black livery and will regain its LMS number, 13809. Graham said: "We are delighted that we can celebrate the engine's centenary by depicting an important period from early in her history when the S&DJR was under the control of the LMS and it was numbered 13809.

"The livery isn't well-represented on preserved locomotives so will provide additional interest in our 50th anniversary year."

No. 53809 is expected to be in action for Steam Into Spring during the Easter Bank Holiday Weekend of April 18-21 and the Springtime Celebrations on May 24-26. No. 13809 is scheduled to be one of three locomotives in steam at each of the events. The line's steam trains will also run on Sundays in March, with the main 2025 season commencing on April 5 with the railway open most days until November 2.

Further details can be found at www.nnrailway.co.uk. Advance booking brings a 15% discount on fares.

Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway 7F No. 53809 at Sheringham on February 15, carrying discs to mark its centenary. LEIGH CAUDWELL

John Moorhouse, owner of 7F No. 53809, ceremonially breaks a bottle of ale on the running plate on February 15. LEIGH CAUDWELL

Long road ahead as second 7F awaits overhaul in Hampshire

By Owen Hayward

WITH its classmate celebrating its centenary in steam, S&DJR 7F 2-8-0 No. 53808 will only watch passing services from its position in the yard at Ropley on the Mid-Hants Railway, where it sits awaiting overhaul. Thankfully, the start of its long road to steaming once more is in sight as the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust Ltd has announced its initial plans for this project.

Withdrawn from service in autumn 2023 after a year's extension to its boiler ticket, the 7F has been the unfortunate victim of a limbo state while its owning group reached a settlement with the West Somerset Railway regarding outstanding monies owed for its usage there between 2016 and 2020, prior to the locomotive being relocated to Hampshire. In December the matter was agreed, with a payment plan that would see an income stream totalling £210,000 over a five-year period.

While that will help pay for a substantial proportion of the required boiler work, a further £100,000 is estimated to be required.

Tender water tanks have been a prominent component requiring replacement, and this is expected to be no different for the overhaul of No. 53808. A full assessment is under way to determine the work required, with the current tank having suffered from leaking for several years.

The current tender came with the 7F when it left Barry scrapyard in 1970 and is different to that accompanying No. 53809 in Norfolk, the frames having come from an LMS 4-4-0 and being longer than the tank fitted to it, which created a step along the rear end. The replacement will be designed to the same specifications and thus retain this unique variation.

The locomotive's boiler has already been de-tubed and inspected to determine the work required on it, with discussions underway between the trust and MHR engineering staff to decide the next steps. This move will involve lifting the boiler out of the frames to enable further inspections to be carried out.

Initial inspections indicate that all wheels will require new tyres, axleboxes and hornguides, along with repairs to the main frames.

The start of the overhaul for No. 53808 is not only fitting in its centenary year but is also in conjunction with the Stockton & Darlington bicentenary. Trust chairman Roger Hardingham said: "We had a tremendous response to our appeal in 2020 following our notice to quit the Washford site on the WSR and we are hoping that the heritage movement will continue to support us with the speedy return to steam of No. 53808.

"We are fortunate in having funds to begin the overhaul process and with the regular payments coming in from our agreement with the WSR, it creates a healthy situation. However, we must top up these finances to ensure that any hidden costs discovered during the overhaul are covered.

"Our aim is to raise £100,000 in this appeal so we have sufficient funds to complete the overhaul in a timely manner."

The trust is seeking regular standing orders towards the project, with a suggested £10 per month, but welcomes whatever amount donors can make, including single donations. These can be paid by standing order or bank transfer to the account name Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust Ltd, sort code 40-47-28 and account number 91834924, quoting reference 53808. Alternatively donations can be made by text, sending 'Restoration' plus the amount being donated to 70450.

Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway 7F 2-8-0 No. 53808 heads a freight through Bishops Sutton on the Mid-Hants Railway on April 30, 2022. BRIAN KENNEDY

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Dennis Herbert in his element with his GWR 4-6-0 No. 6011 *King James*. TMW

King of the Road at Wythall Miniature Railway! GWR 4-6-0 No. 6011 *King James,* with builder Dennis Herbert on the right. TMW

‘Magnificent’ miniature GWR King to be sold for charity

By Robin Jones

AN acclaimed 7¼in gauge model of GWR 4-6-0 No. 6011 *King James* is to be sold to raise money for charity.

Retired railwayman Dennis Herbert, 90, a member of the Elmdon Model Engineering Society for 35 years, who built the model over nine years, has been diagnosed with stage 4B terminal cancer.

This led to him reaching out to Transport Museum Wythall, where the society runs its miniature railway, to support him with putting his affairs in order – in particular, the sale of his magnificent locomotive which has run on several occasions at the Wythall miniature railway.

“The attention to detail is astonishing, with every feature as near to scale as is possible in a coal fired, running locomotive,” said a Wythall spokesman.

The model is to be sold via a sealed bid auction. All proceeds will go to Alzheimer’s Research in a tribute to Dennis’s late wife Iris Herbert and two fellow society members who were also close friends, all having succumbed to this heartbreaking malady.

Born in Birmingham within the sight and sound of steam, Dennis started his railway career in 1948. He worked on most classes of GWR/WR locomotive then in existence, including many of the Kings on the Wolverhampton to Paddington service. His steam railway life culminated in firing several of the famous Stephenson Locomotive Society specials from Tyseley that commemorated the last-of-line GWR steeds such as the 4-6-0 Star, County classes, and his beloved King.

A self-taught and prolific model engineer with not only many engines to his credit, he also built clocks, including the manufacture of the tooling required to produce their components, and has also written two books, A Job For Life And The Mettle For Metal: Reminiscences Of A Model Engineer, all royalties from which have been donated to Alzheimer’s Research.

Dennis wrote a short anecdote about his beloved locomotive: “My engine is somewhat unique in as much as I inadvertently purchased the castings from a deceased model engineer’s workshop after they had lain untouched for eight years. I was totally unaware that the purchased materials had originally belonged to the designer Trevor Shortland. Trevor had made all the patterns for the engine and tender chassis and had them cast faultlessly, locally in small foundries in South Birmingham.

“Some two years of working into the project, I met a gentleman at the club site and enquired if he might be interested in joining us. In conversation he added that he had produced the scaled drawings for ‘Reeves’ 7¼in gauge *King George V* so I made it known that I had started working on my project after buying the castings from a workshop in Bromsgrove. The startled reply came that he had in fact sold all his previous work to that very man. Here was my locomotive’s creator.

“Trevor Shortland and I became great friends, visiting my home and becoming my mentor, many times pointing out when I had put a rivet in the wrong place! Wanting my engine to be a double-chimney version (as I had worked them), Trevor made the patterns and cast them for me – a wonderful job.”

More details about the locomotive and the sale can be found at www.facebook.com/share/p/18x43WBxf4?/mibextid=wwXlfr

All bids should be made by email to wythallminiaturerailway@gmail.com by 11.59pm on March 28.

“Dennis’s generosity never fails to astound us,” said the society statement.

Help build a new £500k showpiece station at Wirksworth

THE Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Association has issued a nationwide appeal for donations towards the completion of its new £500,000 traditional Wirksworth station building.

Five years ago the volunteer-led registered charity completed the first phase of a major development of public areas, with a new museum containing an extensive collection of railwayana and a shop with one of the largest selections of second-hand railway and other transport books and related items in the East Midlands.

A parallel phase saw the addition of toilets and an information room which will be incorporated into the overall final building. Late last year, the association embarked on its ambitious plan to complete the second and third phases of the new station building to meet increasing visitor numbers. When complete, the new facility will offer an extended museum and shop, a new ticket office and a café.

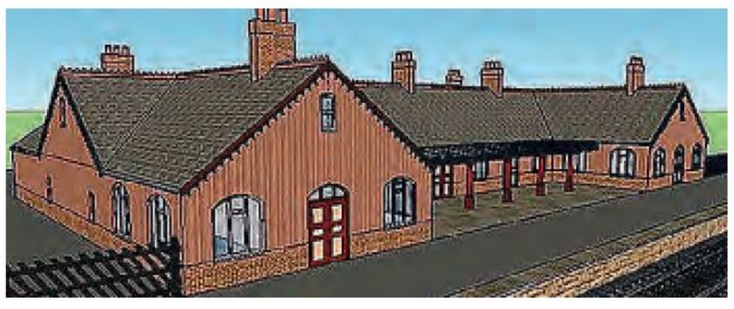
The association has to date committed £120,000 to erect the new ground floor structures. The next phase is to add the upper floor structures and roof to make the building waterproof at a cost of about £160, 000.

The final phase is to kit all the new areas out with appropriate fixtures and fittings.

As association statement said: “With an expected overall spend of £500,000, the project can reach its aim only with support from members of the public, the heritage railway fraternity, and from interested sponsors and companies.

“No donation is too small – or too large! The EVRA is currently discussing ways of recognising donations permanently in the completed building.”

Opportunities to support the project by general donations including Gift Aid can be found at www.e-v-r-a.com or by contacting Mike Craft at mikepat.craft@e-v-r.com, who will discuss other opportunities such as sponsorship directly.



Above: An artist’s impression of the new station building. EVRA

Left: The ground floor of the new Wirksworth station building takes shape. EVRA

Unrestored coaches in mass move to new Washford restoration base

By Robin Jones

THE West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust has moved all nine of its unrestored carriages from locations on the WSR to their new home at Washford, where it is hoped to attract more volunteers with improved facilities.

Washford, the former home of the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust, has a two-track covered shed, two workshops and sufficient siding space to store all of the heritage carriages together.

WSRHT chairman Mike Thompson said: "It has been a long time coming, but we finally have all of our unrestored carriages in one place, along with covered facilities and tools to help get these carriages restored to their former glory. We can even contemplate restoring more than one carriage at the same time, if we can find enough volunteers.

"There are nine carriages in various states of disrepair that have been parked on the WSR for many years, and we finally have an opportunity to get them restored and ready to run on the WSR."

Right: Collett carriage No. 5856 being lifted from its position in Williton yard, ready for the short move to be loaded on to track in the north yard prior to the move to Washford. WSRHT

West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust Carriages being shunted into Washford sidings on January 28. WSRHT

Moved with caution

The move from the carriages' previous locations at Dunster and Williton was completed as part of a special operation during the closed season. Carried out with great precision by the WSR operations team because of the poor state of the carriages, there was always a risk that some bodywork might partially collapse during the moves, so extensive mitigations were part of a full risk assessment beforehand.

All stations along the route were closed for personnel access and a camera was fitted to monitor the underframe during the journey. Three different speed limits were assessed depending on the state of the carriages, ranging between 5mph, 10mph and 15mph.

Each carriage was moved individually with a shunter positioned at each end, with most moves taking between two to three hours to complete. All moves were successfully completed without incident.

The focus now shifts to finally restoring these vintage carriages, all of which were built between 1908 and 1935. The status of all WSRHT carriages is: Victorian sleeping carriage No. 9038 of 1896 (restored); Collett Brake Corridor Composite No. 6705 of 1938 (restored); Churchward Toplight Corridor Thirds Nos. 2578 of 1914, 3631 of 1908, 3639 of 1908, 3665 of 1909 (all unrestored); Collett Corridor Thirds No. 4546 of 1925, 5856 of 1935 (unrestored), Churchward Toplight Brake Tri-Composite No. 7538 of 1907 (unrestored), Churchward Toplight Corridor Composite No. 7740 of 1911 (unrestored) and Collett Brake Corridor Third No. 5131 of 1928 (parts only).

John Waters, the board trustee responsible for the heritage carriage restoration programme, said: "This presents a new opportunity to finally get these wonderful carriages restored. All aspects of the restoration of carriage bodywork and internal fittings are undertaken by the team, with only heavy engineering tasks on the chassis and bogies being sub-contracted to other organisations.

"Consequently, we are looking for people to add to our team covering many skills including joinery, surface preparation, painting, upholstery, glazing, plumbing, and small-scale metal working.

"We are also able to train people on using any equipment via courses using our approved training provider."

The volunteers have spent most of 2024 upgrading the tools and facilities in the two workshops to help provide a professional restoration environment.

The restoration team is also hoping to partially restore one of the outdoor carriages in the short term to act as a small visitor centre to help provide more information about the group's activities.

➜ If anyone is interested in joining the restoration team, email john.waters@wsrht.co.uk or info@wsrht.co.uk or visit Washford on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

Severn Valley stages children's poetry contest as part of 60th anniversary

CELEBRATING its 60th anniversary, the Severn Valley Railway has teamed up with Bewdley Festival's Step into Stories event to launch a new children's poetry competition, with family travel tickets on offer as prizes.

The competition, open to children aged four to 16, invites them to enter a poem inspired by their experiences of visiting the railway and seeing steam trains.

"This is a chance to get creative," said the SVR's visitor engagement manager, Lewis Maddox. "A trip on the SVR provides the perfect inspiration, with so many sights, sounds, smells, and exciting things happening all around. We are looking forward to receiving some amazing entries.

"We have split the competition into three age categories and are looking for poems of up to 20 lines."

The winner of each category will receive a large family 'freedom of the line' ticket and two tickets to the Step into Stories evening concert on Saturday, April 12. Up to two runners-up will also receive a prize.

The winning poems will be judged again to determine the best of the best. The winner will receive the Betti Moretti prize, awarded during the Step into Stories evening concert.

Entries must be received by March 24; details of how to enter are at svr.co.uk

During Bewdley Festival week, the SVR is running a one-off special 'Steam into Stories' service, with best-selling children's author Sam Sedgman reading from his books on board a steam train. Tickets for this event which takes place on the morning of April 12, are bookable through https://boxoffice.bewdleyfestival.org.uk/

Meanwhile, dozens of local craftspeople will be offering their wares at the SVR's Spring Gift Fayre at The Engine House in Highley on March 15/16. The Engine House will be open with free entry from 10.45am to 4.30pm each day, with last entry at 4pm. Parking at the Engine House is very limited, so the best way to get there is by train, the line being currently open between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade only.

Nestled among the display locomotives inside The Engine House are gifts galore to choose from! SVR

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A country station at night welcomes BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 heading a rake of BR carmine-and-cream Mk.1s. MARTIN CREESE

No. 76059 revels in the unique atmosphere of yesteryear alongside the Hampton Loade signalbox. MARTIN CREESE

Severn Valley photographic event went ahead despite landslip

THE evening of Saturday, February 15 saw the latest Severn Valley Railway promoted evening photographic event. Originally to have featured GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714, the recent landslip saw BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 moved from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster by road instead, and it became the star of the evening.

Previous evening shoots promoted by the SVR have taken place at Kidderminster, Bewdley and Arley, but this one took place at Hampton Loade – the first evening shoot there since September 2012, which featured visiting LNWR Coal Tank No. 1054.

The event was arranged by the SVR and run by Martin Creese and Matt Fielding. No. 75069 was facing north allowed the station and signalbox to become a photogenic backdrop, and Sam Lench, of Hampton Loade station staff, kindly provided the human interest.

Station lights were supplemented with a little floodlighting to accentuate the lighting on the engine. The conclusion saw No. 75069 carrying the 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard. BR Standard 4s were regular motive power on the Cambrian lines in the later days of BR, but No. 75069, as a Southern Region-allocated one, did not makes its first appearance on the Cambrian lines until 1987 and the inaugural season of Cardigan Bay trains. It is 40 years since No. 75069 returned to steam following its rescue from Barry scrapyard, and September 2026 will mark 60 years since withdrawal from Eastleigh.

Future photographic evenings are being arranged; details will be posted on www.svr.co.uk

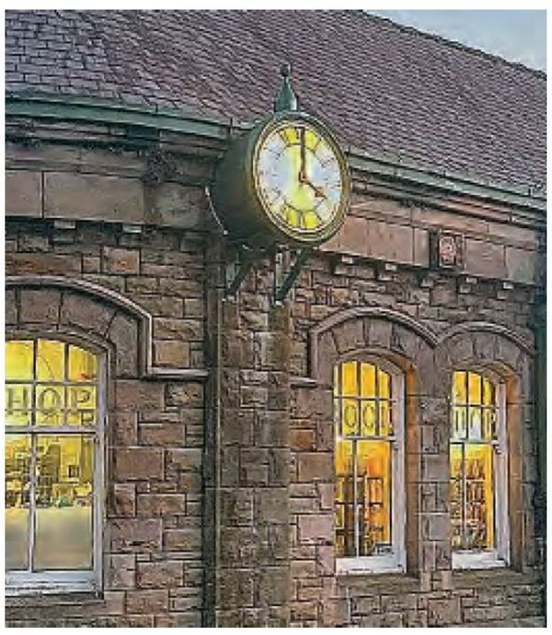
Alnwick station's historic clock goes back in time

By Hugh Dougherty

ALNWICK station's 138-year-old clock has gone back in time – thanks to repairs carried out on the historic timepiece which has been a feature of the station since it was opened by the North Eastern Railway in 1887.

One of a series of identical clocks supplied to stations on the Alnwick-Cornhill-on-Tweed branch, the clock had been in a state of poor repair, and Northumberland Estates, the owner of the Grade II-listed building, and leaseholder Barter Books, which now occupies the station and trainshed, were keen to have the clock returned to its original condition.

The station clock before restoration, with no glass and some vegetation starting to attack it. HUGH DOUGHERTY



Lit up in the twilight and fully restored to its rightful place as part of the station's heritage, the clock adds to the atmosphere. BARTER BOOKS

Northumberland Estates had the clock – made by famous timepiece maker, William Potts of Leeds, who supplied clocks to many stations in the Victorian era – sent to the Cumbria Clock Company. The original casing was replicated in stainless steel and the mechanism, which was repaired by Barter Books in 2019, was overhauled. The broken glass was replaced by Perspex, and LED lighting was fitted to replicate the original gas light effect. The clock is now lit for the first time since the station closed to trains in 1968.

A Northumberland Estates spokesman said: "This project represents a significant investment in preserving both the station's architecture and Alnwick's railway heritage. The clock is a defining feature of the station building. Bringing it back to life is a source of pride and we hope that it will be enjoyed by residents and visitors for many years to come."

Alnwick station would have seen trains return after the line to Alnmouth was closed in 1968 if the original plans of the Aln Valley Railway Society had come to fruition following publication in 1997 of its plan to reopen the line from Alnmouth, on the East Coast Main Line.

However, the presence of the A1 motorway, which would have required a bridge over it, and the building of a Lidl supermarket on the trackbed immediately after Alnwick station, saw the plans abandoned. By 2013, the Aln Valley Railway, established by the Aln Valley Railway Trust, which had merged with the original society, opened its line, running on the original branch's trackbed from the new Alnwick Lionheart station towards Alnmouth, with the aim of reopening the line to the ECML station, where there is room for a bay platform. The line currently terminates at Greenrigg Halt, halfway to Alnmouth.

Heritage group's hunt for long-lost railway collection

EXCLUSIVE

By Geoff Courtney

A HUNT has been launched by the chairman of one of the country's leading railway heritage groups for a collection of original notebooks and images taken in the interwar years by a respected but enigmatic photographer who died 57 years ago.

Nick Booker, chairman of the Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group, is hoping to track down the collection of London-born Frederick Le Manquais, which includes some images taken of the Welsh Highland Railway prior to its closure in 1937.

Le Manquais, the son of a Beyer Peacock draughtsman and a designer who was an associate member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, was born in 1910 and at an early age became fascinated by railways, particularly track layouts and signalling systems, an interest he was able to pursue at Clapham Junction, near his home. It was at this time he started compiling his notebooks of layouts and signalling, and this was to continue throughout his life.

After graduating with a degree in physics in 1932 and gaining a diploma in electrical communications, he joined Murphy Radio in Welwyn Garden City and remained with the company until his death in 1968 at the age of 58.

A significant landmark in his life was in 1928, when he accompanied two elderly great-aunts to Switzerland, when he started photographing steam and electric locomotives while continuing to make notes.

Complex journeys

In the following decade he photographed locomotives and infrastructure of the Big Four, the Welsh Highland, and also other minor railways, while visits to Ireland that were included in his notes involved complex journeys achieved on public transport, as he did not learn to drive until 1958.

It is estimated that during these prewar years he took 1500 images.

In 1939 he married Violet Bayles, and the couple set up home in Welwyn Garden City, while Freddie, as he was known, worked on military radio and radar equipment at Murphy's and was a member of the Home Guard. The couple had two daughters, Beryl born in 1944, and Carolyn, who was born in 1947 and died last year.

Le Manquais continued his photography and notebooks postwar, including upgrading to 35mm film in both black-and-white and colour, and his last film was taken the year he died, of No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* on a special train near Digswell in Hertfordshire.

Nick's interest in unearthing the collection of original notebooks and negatives of photographs is because the heritage group of which he is chairman has in its archives copies of a handful of Le Manquais's WHR photographs, but he would like to track down any other images the photographer took of the line and any notes he may have made at the same time.

Sold to author

To this end he has discovered that the notebooks and image negatives were sold to railway author Thomas Middlemass after the photographer's death, which led to the publication in 1989 of Railway Reflections that featured the 1930s photographs.

Nick, who confesses that the was unaware of the work of Le Manquais before coming across the group's copies of his images, said that Thomas's book had filled in much of Le Manquais's background, which he found most interesting.

However, Middlemass died in 2004 at the age of 86, and his nephew has told Nick that all his railway material was disposed of by his widow Josephine, much of it to railway enthusiasts in the Theydon Bois, Essex, area where they lived.

Such is Nick's resolve to unearth the collection, which he agrees may now have been split up, that he has traced not only Middlemass's nephew, but Le Manquais's daughter Beryl and her son Ian, but to no avail.

"Forgive the pun, but I have hit the buffers," said Nick.

Baldwin 1917-built 4-6-0PT No. 590 waits at the Welsh Highland Railway station of Beddgelert in a photograph taken on August 11, 1934, by Frederick Le Manquais, whose original collection WHR Heritage Group chairman Nick Booker is trying to track down. On the right, Hunslet 2-6-2T *Russell* is arriving with a train from Dinas. FC LE MANQUAIS/WHRHG COLLECTION

Break time: The footplate crew of 2-6-2T *Russell* takes a break at Beddgelert on the Welsh Highland Railway on August 11, 1934. The photograph, by Frederick Le Manquais, was possibly taken minutes after another image that is also reproduced with this article. Some 91 years later, *Russell* is the only surviving original WHR locomotive. FC LE MANQUAIS/WHRHG COLLECTON

Nick Booker, chairman of the WHR Heritage Group, in the company of *Prince* at Tryfan Junction on August 12, 2018. The 0-4-0TT was a regular on the WHR in the 1920s and 1930s. NICK BOOKER

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Fresh appeal for restoration funds launched as Standard 4MT boiler problems are discovered

By Robin Jones

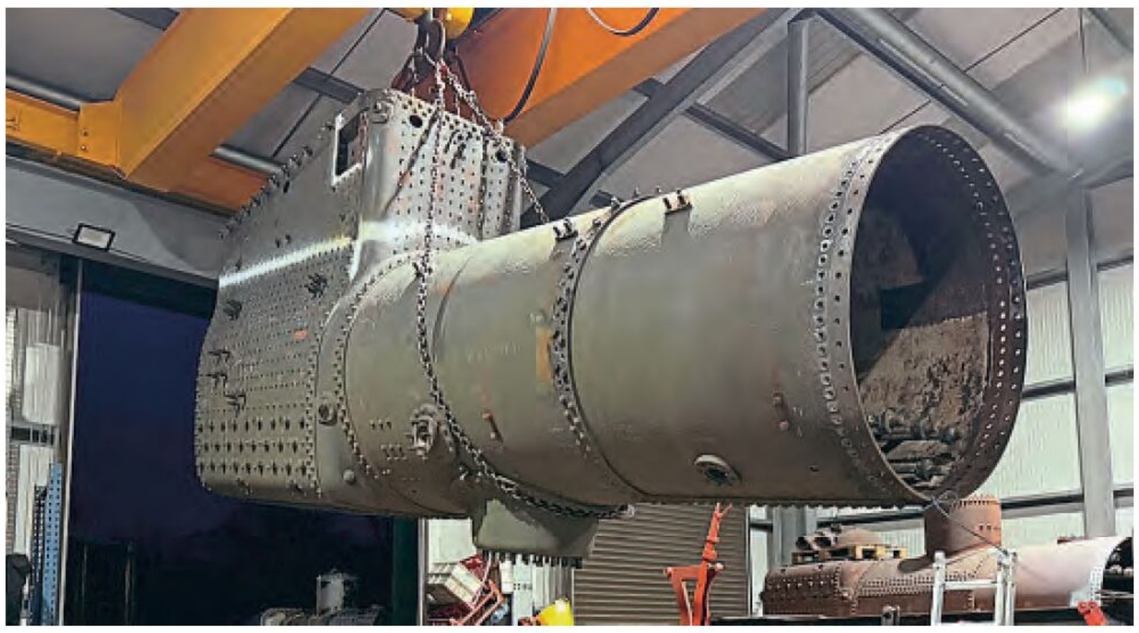
THE rapidly progressing restoration of ex-Barry scrapyard BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76077 for eventual use on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has suffered a setback with the discovery of unexpected problems with the boiler – leading to a renewed appeal for donations.

At the Devon workshops of Leaky Finders Ltd, the boiler has undergone a full Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) examination which has revealed that the steel from which the boiler was manufactured has laminations which are of concern, particularly where areas need to be welded, such as carrying out patch repairs.

The planned work at Leak Finders started with removal of the front tube plate, which is to be replaced. The front parallel ring of the barrel is also to be replaced and the boiler has been inverted to complete removal of the ring, while most of the foundation ring rivets have also been removed. Part of the corroded firebox throat plate has also been cut out.

Andrew Meredith, engineering director of No. 76077's owner, Toddington Standard Steam Locomtives, said: "In January our chairman, Chris Irving, and I visited Leaky Finders along with the NDT specialists and the boiler inspector to agree a way forward. While the lamination issues are not in themselves a showstopper, it does mean that the work to return the boiler to working order will be much more extensive than we, or indeed Rory Edwards at Leaky Finders, originally thought."

When a steel ingot is rolled several times to form the required size and thickness of metal plate, impurities such as small deposits of slag can end up as linear pockets within the steel, known as laminations. Andrew said: "While these laminations may not in themselves be a major issue – and, after all, the boiler has performed perfectly well though its BR career – they become a significant problem when patches need to be welded in to replace corroded material. Welding near a lamination can result in cracks forming, thus weakening the metal.



The boiler of No. 76077 inverted and ready to be lowered to the ground. The white line indicates the steel likely to need to be removed. The tube plate has already been removed. RORY EDWARDS

Bigger job

"Our boiler was completed at Darlington in 1952 at a time when steel quality was sometimes poor. Of course, the technology to identify these laminations was not available then. The discovery means that we will have to remove much more of the firebox steelwork than planned. In the process, it also means that 400-plus perfectly serviceable copper stays will have to be sacrificed."

The NDT process also identified that many of the original Monel metal stays within the upper part of the firebox are broken or flawed and will have to be replaced, while a few rows of crowns stays have also been found to need replacing due to excessive wastage of their heads in the firebox.

Mr Irving said: "Of course, this wasn't the happy new year we were expecting, and it will significantly increase the cost of the boiler overhaul. It is also likely to push back our aspirational date for seeing the locomotive steam again.

"On the positive side, however, this additional work will build in additional longevity to the boiler and reduce the amount of work that we might otherwise need to do following the engine's first 10 years in service.

"We are deeply grateful to all of our shareholders. We certainly wouldn't be at this stage in our frankly very rapid progress without the huge engagement and financial support that has been forthcoming from so many people, many of whom have joined our volunteer working parties too.

"We owe them all the commitment to deliver a locomotive in working order as soon as we possibly can and that very much remains the focus of our team."

Fundraising drive

Built at Horwich in 1956, No. 76077 received boiler No. 1052, one of the first batch of 10 Standard No. 7 boilers for the class, at Eastleigh in February 1964.

Withdrawn in December 1967 and rescued in 1987, it was not until 2018 that restoration got fully underway, with the chassis now at Locomotive Maintenance Services in Loughborough.

TSLL will now boost its fundraising drive and will welcome additional shareholders; details can be found at www.standard76077.com or telephone 07775 566 555 or email info@standard76077.com

Historic nameplates come home to Donegal

By Hugh Dougherty

THE nameplates of three County Donegal Railways locomotives have come home to their native county thanks to the generosity of Lord O'Neill, who has donated them to Donegal Railway Heritage Museum.

Two are from 2-6-4Ts No. 4 *Meenglas* and No. 19 *Finn*, both built by Nasmyth Wilson in 1907 and 1908 respectively, with the third plate coming from 4-6-4T No. 11 *Erne*, from the same builder in 1904.

Erne and *Meenglas* survived in service to the closure of the railway in 1959, while *Finn*, was scrapped in 1940 as a source of spares for the rest of the Class 5 locomotives. Its frames were used as the basis for the refurbished Killybegs railcar turntable, being sold, with the turntable, to the Isle of Man Railway after closure for use with railcars 19 and 20, also bought by the IOMR. The turntable was never used by the IOMR and the railcars had to run back-to-back.

As *Finn*, formerly No. 19 *Letterkenny*, never carried the donated nameplate in service, it is likely that it is the original from 4-6-0T No. 7, built by Neilson in Glasgow in 1893, as one of a class of six for the Killybegs and Glenties extensions of the then Donegal Railway Company. The locomotive, which carried the *Finn* name originally, was withdrawn in 1931 as steam began to be replaced by pioneering petrol and diesel railcars on the CDR.

Meenglas is the only survivor of the trio, being displayed outside Derry's Foyle Valley Railway Museum, while Erne survived closure, only to be cut up in Letterkenny station yard in 1969. All three were purchased by American dentist Dr Ralph Cox after the closure of the line with the intention of setting up a narrow gauge railway in New Jersey, but the scheme never got off the ground because of high shipping costs involved, and the stock remained at Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Strabane. Museum director Jim Mc Bride said:

The three nameplates pictured are now on display at Donegal Railway Heritage Museum. DRHC

"We are very grateful to Lord O'Neill for his generosity in donating these valuable and historic nameplates to the museum, where they will be displayed along with our existing collection. That includes the plate from 2-6-4T No. 5 *Drumboe*, which is on display with us."

Owencarrow Viaduct disaster centenary marked in Donegal

By Hugh Dougherty

A LARGE contingent of local people, councillors, local history and railway heritage representatives gathered at the site of the Owencarrow Viaduct disaster on January 30, exactly 100 years to the day that a Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway train was blown off the structure by a fierce gale, leading to the death of four passengers and serious injuries to others.

Thanks to the Owencarrow Commemoration Viaduct Committee and Cresslough Community Association, which worked together to organise the event, a path has been cleared on the original trackbed to the exact site of the accident, allowing visitors to inspect the spot at first-hand. Cresslough parish priest Father John Joe Duffy led prayers for the victims of the tragedy. Father Lorcan Sharkey, whose late uncle, then an 11-year-old boy, drove the only available motor car in the village to ferry the injured away from the site, also attended.

Committee chairman Michael Doyle said: "It was very important to us as a community to mark the centenary of a tragic event whose effects were felt here for many years after.

"My own great grandfather Neil Duggan was killed when he was thrown out of the carriage that was overturned on the viaduct by the gale. He had been in Letterkenny to buy some farm equipment and would normally have got off the train at Barnes Halt, which was sited before the viaduct. Because of the wind, he decided to stay on to Creeslough, get off there, and walk home with the wind at his back. The decision cost him his life, and very many local people have family connections to the disaster too."

A centenary memorial plaque has been sited beside an existing memorial, unveiled by the community in 2021, and a temporary exhibition, including pictures and a scale model of the viaduct, was mounted in the community hub, the intention being to provide a permanent information centre at a building close to the memorial and access path to the viaduct.

The Owencarrow disaster was the worst accident to befall the narrow gauge Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway, and a subsequent Board of Trade enquiry led to ballasting Burtonport line carriages with concrete weights and the provision of a wind gauge at Dunfanaghy Road station, all trains to and from Burtonport being suspended when 80mph gusts were recorded.

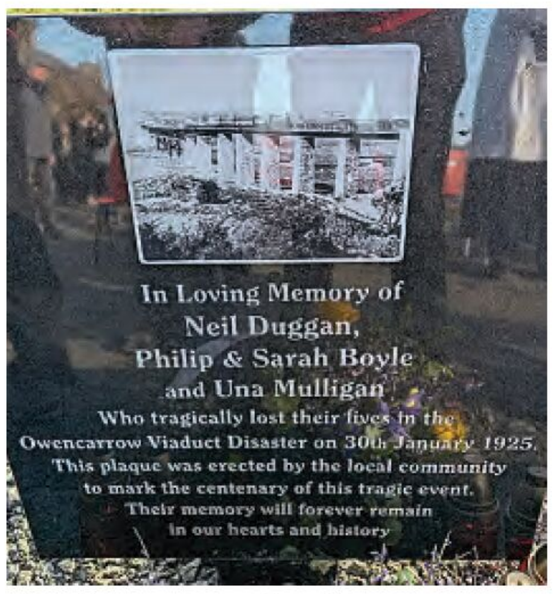
Opened in 1903, the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway, the major engineering feature of which was the Owencarrow viaduct, was closed between Burtonport and Gweedore in 1940, and between Gweedore and Letterkenny in 1947, with rails being lifted in 1949.

The viaduct was dismantled shortly after, leaving the piers and a short section of stone viaduct where the accident took place. It has only recently been recognised as a significant part of Donegal's railway heritage.

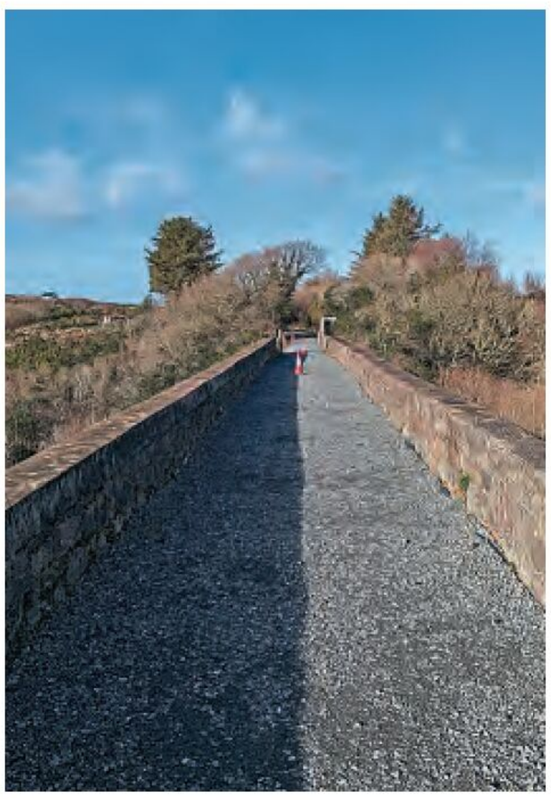
The train on the night was headed by 4-6-2T No. 14, pulling two coaches, a guard's van and a covered wagon, and the subsequent enquiry exonerated the crew. Driver Bob McGuinnes, fireman Johnny Hannigan and guard Neil Boyle were praised for their actions in tending to the injured and raising the alarm. The Lough Swilly dispatched a rescue train to the viaduct immediately after the alarm was raised and no fault was attached to the railway in being a cause of the accident or being found wanting in its actions immediately after.

Left: A drone view shows the centenary gathering at the viewing platform and the trackbed leading to the disaster site, with the viaduct piers beyond. DRHM

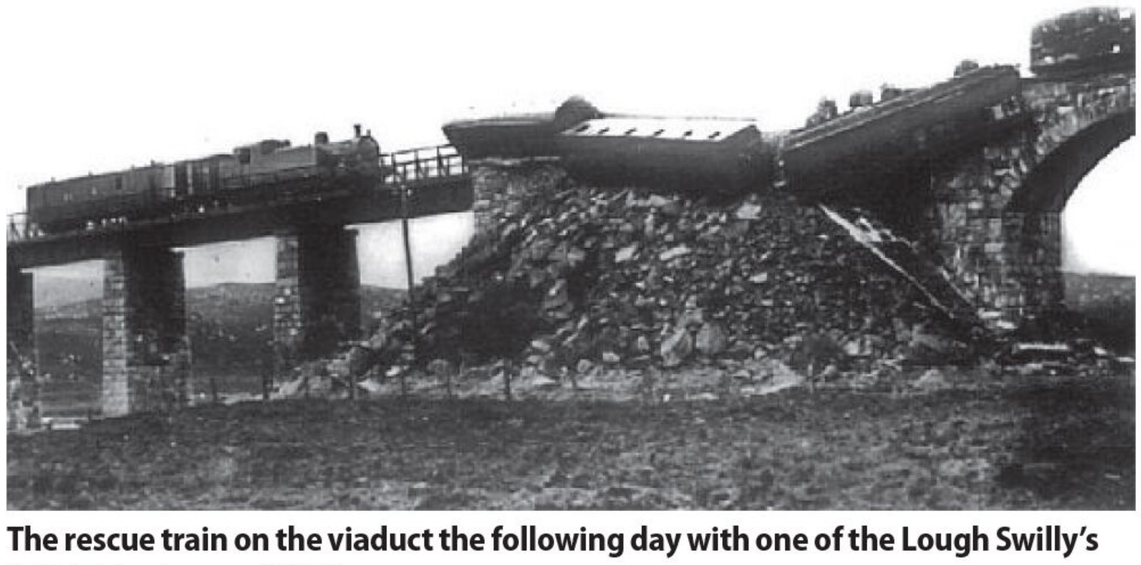
Below: The newly-laid path on the track bed over the stone part of the viaduct where the train was blown off the bridge. DRHM



The plaque erected to the victims to mark the centenary. The picture shows one of the railway's two 4-8-0s at the head of a train crossing the Owencarrow. DRHM



Built in 1910 by Hawthorn, Leslie & Co for the Burtonport line, 4-6-2T No. 14 hauled the ill-fated train on January 30, 1925. It was withdrawn in 1943. DRHM



The rescue train on the viaduct the following day with one of the Lough Swilly's 4-8-4Ts in charge. DRHM

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Bo'ness teak carriage rake nears entry into service

By Owen Hayward

WHILE BR Mk. 1 carriages are the backbone of many heritage lines' passenger trains, those fortunate enough to house some of older vintage often report that such carriages regularly prove popular with visitors when in service. One of the most visually striking types are LNER teak-liveried vehicles, with lengthy rakes to be found on the Severn Valley and North Yorkshire Moors railways – with the Scottish Railway Preservation Society, which is based at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway, set to welcome three teak vehicles into service during 2025 and a further one to follow.

With the overhauls of their bogies now authorised for work at external contractors, two Gresley and one Thomas-designed vehicles are now in the latter stages of restorations which have spanned multiple decades.

The two Gresley-era vehicles comprise corridor third (TK) No. 10021 and restaurant buffet (RB) No. 644; both were built at York, with the former completed in 1924 and the latter following several years later, being outshopped there in 1937. During restoration of the TK, inscriptions of 'J Set 4' were uncovered, meaning the carriage would have been used as part of the named express working 'The Flying Scotsman' in at least the same year it entered service.

Restoration of the bodywork for the TK was completed in 2023, but entry into service was delayed while it awaited the overhaul of its running gear. Conversely, the RB has previously been in traffic on the BKR, having had a restoration completed in 2013 that saw it run for several years until it too needed work to its bogies. Both vehicles are due to enter operational service later this year.

Built in 1946, Thompson-designed tourist third open (TTO) No. 13803 is an anomaly within the rake being of steel-panelled construction with a scumbled teak paint effect, unlike the other two vehicles which are finished in varnished teak wood. With its own body and interior restoration also completed, the bogies for this carriage were returned to Bo'ness in early January, and it is planned that it will be released into traffic in the spring.

Thompson TTO No. 13803 will be the first of the SRPS's three restored teak carriages to enter service this year, although the steel-panelled carriage's appearance is actually the result of 'scumbling,' whereby the teak grain effect is cleverly painted on rather than being natural. SRPS

The SRPS also owns a third Gresley carriage; brake corridor third (BTK) No. 62515 was built in 1924 at Stratford (although its frames were manufactured at York) as part of a batch of vehicles specifically to work the Liverpool Street to Harwich boat trains. From 1926 it was transferred to general East Coast Main Line stock, with its arrival in Scotland estimated to be some time in the 1930s. When withdrawn in 1964 it was converted for Departmental use, being assigned to the Grangemouth depot breakdown train as a running van. Conversion saw fixings such as the Pullman gangways and buckeye couplings removed.

It was bought by the SRPS in 1981, initially being stored at Falkirk depot before later being moved to Bo'ness, where restoration commenced in 2024, with the aim being to provide a brake vehicle for the eventual four-strong teak vehicle train.

A SRPS statement said: "For several decades SRPS carriage and wagon volunteers have beavered away restoring a teak train which could demonstrate rail travel from the golden era of rail in the 1920s through to the postwar decline in the 1940s. With multiple bogie overhauls now authorised at a contractor, a full return to service for three vehicles is expected this year – testament to the years of work invested by our volunteers, many of whom are sadly no longer with us.

"If you can donate to our teak project to help us preserve these stunning coaches, please visit cafdonate.cafonline.org/21140. In the meantime, look out for regular updates as we work through this project; we are looking forward to announcing our first running dates with the restored vehicles."

The long-term plan will be to return BTK No. 62515 into operational condition, undoing the Departmental conversion it received in 1964 and providing the railway's other teak vehicles with a dedicated brake carriage. SRPS

Left: With bogie overhauls now taking place with contractors, buffet car No. 644 will soon be ready to serve on-board refreshments when it re-enters service later this year at Bo'ness. SRPS

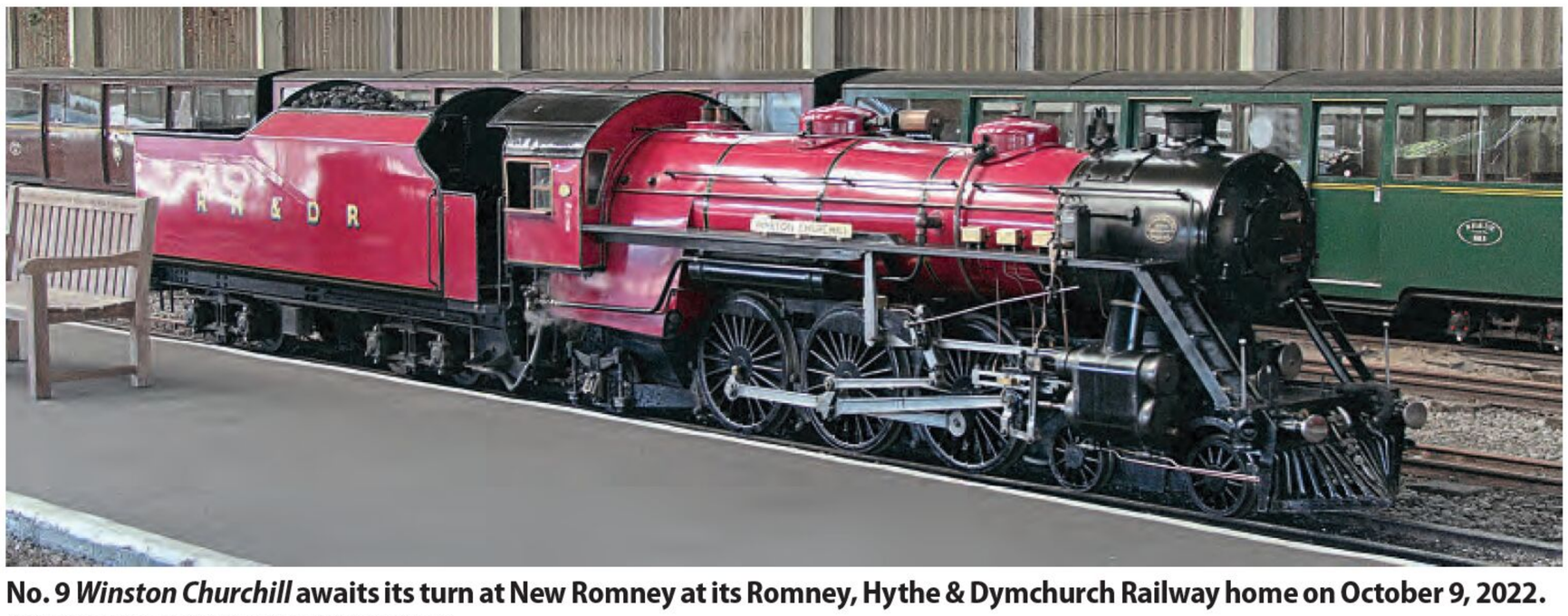
Romney pair to return for Bure Valley 35th anniversary gala

THE Bure Valley Railway's 35th anniversary gala on June 7/8 will see the return of two Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway locomotives which hauled the 15in gauge Norfolk line's first train.

Davey Paxman 4-8-2 No. 6 *Samson* of 1926 and Yorkshire Engine Company 4-6-2 No. 2294 of 1931 *Winston Churchill* took charge of the inaugural service on July 10, 1990, and stayed for the rest of that season. Both have returned individually, but never together.

Built on the standard gauge trackbed of the East Norfolk Railway's (later GER) extension from Wroxham to Aylsham, which was constructed in 1880 and closed to passengers to September 15, 1952, and to freight on January 6, 1982, the heritage line opened under the management of RKF Leisure, which had purchased the trackbed. When the RKF's parent company, RKF Group Plc, went into receivership in January 1991, Broadland District Council acquired the line from the receivers as it feared that property developers might seize the opportunity to take control of the land. Agreement was reached with Ffestiniog Railway director Mike Hart to set up a new company, Bure Valley Railway (1991) Ltd, to lease and operate the line, and a long-distance footpath opened alongside it in 1991.

An intensive timetable will run during the weekend, with all available locomotives in use. For full details, see https://burevalley.vticket.co.uk



No. 9 *Winston Churchill* awaits its turn at New Romney at its Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway home on October 9, 2022. ROAD-HOG123/CREATIVE COMMONS

No.6 *Samson* at Irton Road helping out on the Ravenglass Eskdale Railway on June 18, 2013, due to a locomotive shortage. PETER G TRIMMING/CREATIVE COMMONS

‘Seats on top!’ on refurbished Summerlee Coronation tram

By Hugh Dougherty

“SEATS on top!” used to be the cry of Glasgow tram conductors when the lower deck was full, and it’s also the catchphrase of the 1245 group supremo Charlie McAloney, who is proud of the work that he and his team of volunteers have done in reseating their Glasgow Coronation No. 1245, tram’s upper deck at Coatbridge’s Summerlee Industrial Museum.

“All the seats have now been r-upholstered and fitted,” said Charlie. “They look teriffic, and when you swing them over the seat squab angle changes with the direction of travel to add extra comfort for passengers. The Glasgow Corporation Transport designers really knew what they were doing in 1939, when the tram was built at Coplawhill Car Works in Glasgow.

“We’ve also completed the superb Art Deco Alhambrinal ceiling as well as the 1930s-style lights, so the top deck is ready to go.”

Downstairs, seats are also being completed, the compressor is ready for fitting, and restored light covers are in place, while work is about to start on the air brake system as the tram, currently being repainted externally, moves towards completion. “We are not putting a date on it,” said Charlie, “but we have the funds to finish the job and it’s a matter now of assembling the components, such as controllers and the control unit, all of which have been tested.”

However, Coronation No. 1245 may have to wait in the depot after restoration is complete if the museum is not successful in attracting a responsible person to satisfy Office of Rail and Road stipulations before trams run again at the Coatbridge site. The fleet has been confined to depot for the last two years after a safety-critical incident and the retrial of the museum’s qualified technician.

“We’ve advertised the post twice already” said Lu McNair, collections and museums manager with North Lanarkshire Council, which operates Summerlee. “One person accepted the job, then didn’t join us, so we are advertising again. The post is that of tram and historical vehicle technician, and although we’re looking for someone with a certain level of engineering qualifications, direct tram experience may not be essential as we are providing an attractive salary of between £29,150 and £31,737 with a comprehensive training package covering the tramway aspect.”

Lu accepts that such a person is proving challenging to attract, and admits that it may be six months from the time of a successful appointment before trams can run again at the museum. “We are trying our hardest to attract the right person and are very keen to run trams again, but the hard fact is that until we successfully appoint that member of staff, we are barred from operating the tramway. We are facing a not dissimilar situation to other museums and heritage railways as the pool of people with traditional engineering skills is an increasingly limited one.”

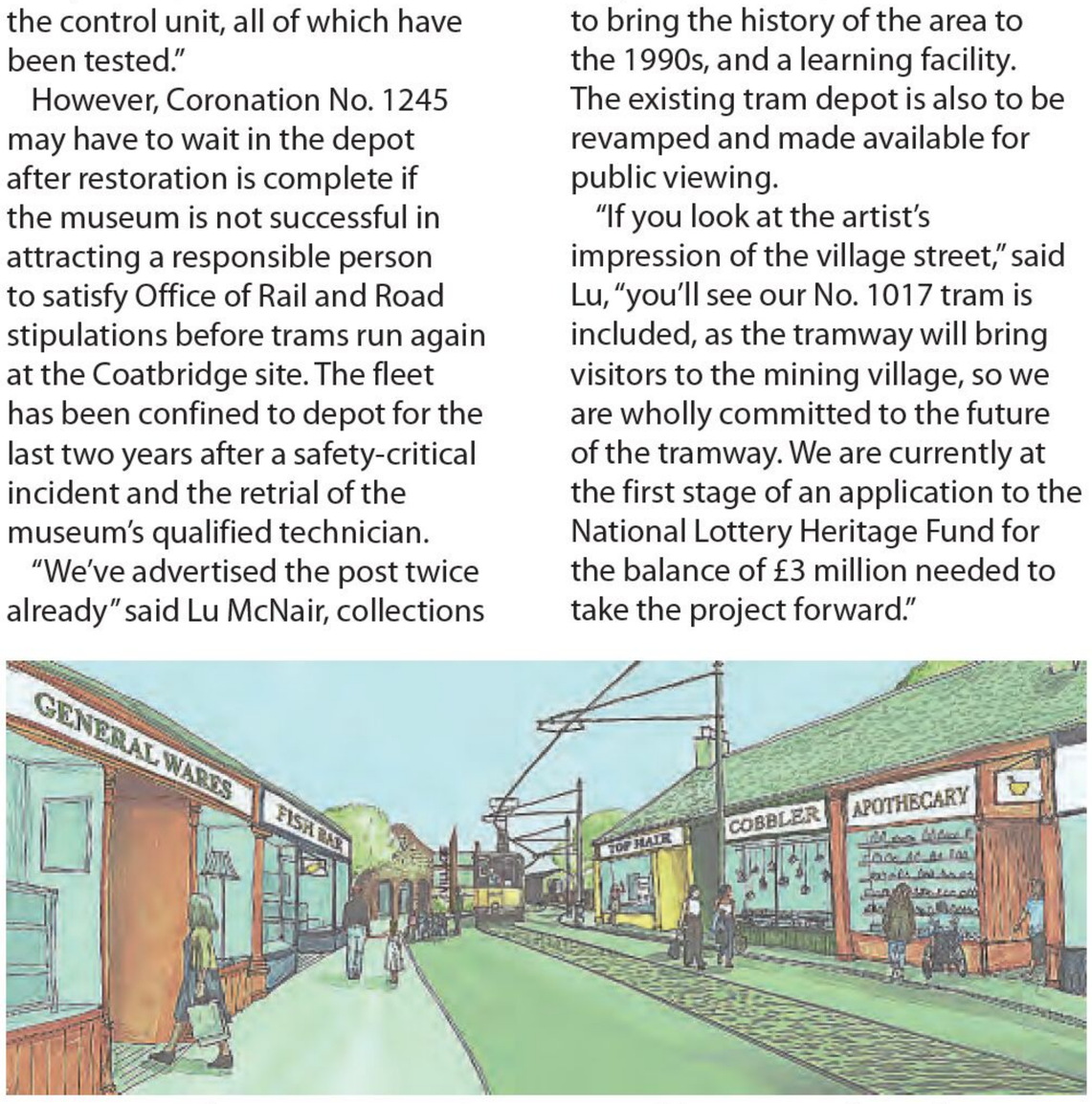
As proof positive that trams have a key role to play at the industrial museum, Lu points to a planned £6.4 million investment over the next four years in the museum’s 23-acre site. Developments include a mining village, with a miner’s welfare club, shops of the 1950s, 1960s and later to bring the history of the area to the 1990s, and a learning facility. The existing tram depot is also to be revamped and made available for public viewing.

“If you look at the artist’s impression of the village street,” said Lu, “you’ll see our No. 1017 tram is included, as the tramway will bring visitors to the mining village, so we are wholly committed to the future of the tramway. We are currently at the first stage of an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the balance of £3 million needed to take the project forward.”

‘Seats on top!’: Charlie McAloney takes a breather on the newly-fitted top deck seats on Coronation tram No. 1245. HUGH DOUGHERTY

No. 1245’s exterior is receiving its final paint job. HUGH DOUGHERTY

The Art Deco lower deck is also well on the way to completion. HUGH DOUGHERTY



Tram No. 1017 features in an artist’s impression of the mining village. The trams will return, vows museum boss Lu McNair. NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

The museum’s ex-Glasgow single-decker No.1017 in action before services were suspended at the site of the new mining village. HUGH DOUGHERTY

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Tulyar running-in sees Deltic Great Central-bound

THE Deltic Preservation Society now has a trio of operational locomotives as the long-running overhaul of D9015 *Tulyar* draws to a close at Barrow Hill, the Class 55 having made its first moves under its own power since 1997.

One of 22 ordered by BR and built at Newton-le-Willows by the English Electric Company, D9015 was purchased by the DPS in 1986 having spent a few years in private ownership after withdrawal and based at the Midland Railway – Butterley.

Following the March 1997 Three Deltics event at the East Lancashire, *Tulyar* returned to Butterley where on April 13 that same year it was shut down for the final time prior to its overhaul commencing.

In 2003, following the opening of the DPS's dedicated facility, it was transported by road to Barrow Hill for work to continue. Its overhaul has seen all components removed, reducing the body to just a shell, with a comprehensive refurbishment undertaken to ensure its reliability once complete.

Tulyar was sidelined for a time while efforts focused on maintaining Nos. 55009 *Alycidon* and 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier,* but in 2022 a concerted effort was launched to complete D9015, which culminated in a successful start-up on August 3, 2024.

Since then DPS electricians have spent months checking continuity and testing the miles of wiring and eradicating faults. After confirming the six traction motors were operating in the same direction, volunteer liaison officer Mike Hallam-Rudd, who switched off the Deltic in 1997, moved *Tulyar* under its own power on February 15 and drove it into the DPS depot to applause by the gathered volunteers.

***Tulyar* will soon be heading to Loughborough for test runs following its successful first movements since 1997 being made at Barrow Hill.** NIGEL JULIAN/DPS

He used the same driver's key for the occasion with which he had switched off the locomotive nearly 30 years earlier.

Tulyar will undergo further testing at Barrow Hill on its demonstration line before it is moved to the Great Central Railway for mileage accumulation running to be carried out ahead of a full return to service.

As reported on page 11, it is also booked to appear at The Greatest Gathering at Alstom's Derby plant on August 1/2.

'Charitable Vac' brings in the crowds (and pounds) for cancer charity

A PRIVATE charter run at the Great Central Railway on February 22 saw an astonishing turnout by diesel enthusiasts and charitable patrons who descended on Leicestershire to support Prostate Cancer UK.

'The Charitable Vac' was the result of a group of enthusiasts whose average age is just 21, combining with the GCR's can-do attitude along with the desire by both parties to support a worthy cause.

Six enthusiasts – Matthew Beard, Ben Taylor, Jack Summerfield, Peter Gregory, Jake Taylor and Charlie Dent – sought to hire a train and support two causes.

The GCR was chosen as the venue following discussions and Class 50 No. 50017 *Royal Oak* requested as the motive power, the class being nicknamed 'Hoovers.'

"About 200 passengers turned up for 'The Charitable Vac,' the fares from all of which, when combined with some further donations, helped to raise a total of £6070.25" said Matthew.

"Twenty-five per cent of money made will be going back to the railway. The remaining 75% will be given to Prostate Cancer UK.

"This decision was made as Jake Taylor's dad, Paul Taylor, a well-known and respected railwayman, sadly lost his battle with prostate cancer a few years ago. This personal connection made it a no-brainer, and the charity was duly elected.

"The day ran without a fault, and the team wishes to thank the GCR for ensuring that this was the case. The organisers also wish to thank three other groups, the first being Hanson & Hall Rail Services Ltd for their donation to the day, which was greatly received. The second and third groups were those that either turned up on the day or those that made separate donations.

"The team are immensely grateful to everyone who supported the event and look forward to welcoming them back on future charters."

Left: Organisers of 'The Charitable Vac' with No. 50017 *Royal Oak* at Rothley station. LISA TAYLOR

Right: Class 50 No. 50017 *Royal Oak* joined in the Great Central Railway's March 1/2 Spring Steam Weekend with a very rare appearance on a rake of the line's 'Windcutter' mineral wagons. KENNETH SIMS/GCR

Police seeking former Avon Valley employee in fraud investigation

POLICE have issued an appeal for help to locate a former Avon Valley Railway employee in connection with an investigation into fraud.

Humberside Police have issued a statement saying that 41-year-old Nathan Hudson is sought in connected with allegations of scam holidays, and not paying wages between 2015 and 2018.

Case officer PC Adrian Wallace said: "The victims of these fraud cases are from across the country, but Nathan Hudson has previously lived in Cottingham, East Riding of Yorkshire, and may have since travelled to the area of Wiltshire. It is also believed he uses the alias Matthew Smith.

"Officers continue extensive enquiries and country-wide searches, which have so far been unsuccessful, and so we are re-appealing for help to locate him."

The volunteer-run Avon Valley Railway Heritage Trust has complained after financial anomalies totalling a loss of around £50,000 were identified after "Matthew Smith", described as "a previously well-presented and respected employee" resigned. The trust has now launched a Bounce Back Appeal to strengthen the railway's finances at www.avrht.org/bounceback

➜ Police are asking anyone with information about Nathan Hudson to contact the police using the non-emergency number 101 and quoting crime reference number: 24*149140, report information anonymously via the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ALRIGHT ON THE WIGHT:
SEASON STARTS WITH A QUAD OF CELEBRATIONS

As it opened its doors for the start of the 2025 operating season, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway took part in Railway 200 celebrations with a four-day gala that welcomed back one old friend and marked the long service of another. **Owen Hayward** crossed the Solent to discover what was taking place.

***Calbourne* glides effortlessly past Ashey Grounds shortly after departing Ashey station.**

Railway preservation on the Isle of Wight has a rather different tale compared to that on mainland Britain; while the majority of lines had swathes of BR Mk. 1 coaching stock readily available to help start them off, such stock never made it over to the island, meaning it has developed something of a unique charm for its services that exclusively rely on pre-Grouping era vehicles. The sight of an authentic locomotive working services with matching stock is perhaps one of the main selling points for the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. Yet, while three such locomotives are based at its Havenstreet sheds, that torch has been carried by only one for just over 12 months.

Joyfully, that all changed as the IOWSR's 2025 operating season got underway, with anyone arriving on February 20 being greeted by the welcome sight of LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 8 *Freshwater* making steam as it prepared to work its first public trains since 2019. To celebrate its return, a four-day gala was held which formed part of Railway 200 celebrations on the line, with two other anniversary celebrations also occurring at the same time.

Terrier travels

Built at Brighton in 1877, *Freshwater* entered service as No. 46 *Newington* and was allocated to Battersea depot in South London. In 1903 it was purchased by the London & South Western Railway, along with classmate No. 68 *Clapham*, and put to work on the Lyme Regis branch which was completed that July. The branch was notorious for being steeply graded with tight bends, and few engines were suited to working such a challenging route – particularly one that had been so lightly laid. Prior to the line's completion, *Newington* was utilised over the Guildford to Bournemouth route, which included the line through Alton, part of which is now preserved as the Mid-Hants Railway.

Displaced by LSWR O2 0-4-4Ts in 1906, the 'Terrier' worked on numerous parts of the LSWR network before arriving on the Isle of Wight in 1913. Its transfer there came about after it was hired by the Freshwater, Yarmouth & Newport Railway, which paid 15 shillings per day for it with an option to purchase, an offer which was taken up in 1917 for the sum of £900 (about £43,600 today). It became the company's No. 2 locomotive, working alongside a Manning Wardle Q class.

Bankrupt at the 1923 Grouping, the FY&NR was amalgamated into Southern Railways and the 'Terrier' became No. W8, gaining the name *Freshwater* after the village on the western coast of the island.

Eight examples of the class worked on the island, though not all at the same time. The first withdrawn was No. W9 in 1926, which was scrapped with firebox and boiler faults. Wight 'Terriers' had received extended coal bunkers to improve fuel capacity and this saw survivors moved back to mainland Britain by BR for use elsewhere, such as the Hayling Island branch, and *Freshwater* was the penultimate one to leave for there. In 1958 it also became the last locomotive to be overhauled at Brighton Works before it closed.

It survived in service on the Hayling branch until 1963 when it was closed and the locomotive withdrawn. It came close to be sold to the Hayling Terrier Fund, which sought to acquire one of the class for preservation on Hayling Island, but the funds could not be raised, so it was sold to Charles Ashby, of the Sadley Railcar Company, based at Droxford, on the Meon Valley line near Alton – close to where it had once worked.

A subsequent sale in 1966 saw it become a glorified pub sign, being plinthed outside Brickwoods Brewery's Hayling Billy pub back on Hayling Island. There it stayed for more than a decade until it was donated to the Isle of Wight Steam Railway in 1979.

Found to be in better condition than the other 'Terrier'the railway owned (No. W11

W8 *Freshwater* mainly worked between Havenstreet and Wootton, but shortly after noon each day was scheduled for one round trip to Smallbrook Junction. On February 22 it approaches Deacons Lane bridge with the return portion of this outing. NICK GILLIAM

Right, said Fred: BR Hunslet 05 D2554, christened *Nuclear Fred* by island railway staff in the BR era, departs Havenstreet with a short freight set. Being vacuum-braked only, it rarely appears on public workings.

Fresh out the box: Terrier W11 *Freshwater* catches the sun as it brings the Ventnor West push-pull carriages towards Wootton on February 22.

Newport), restoration efforts commenced in earnest which saw it steam once more in 1981. Keen to show its commitment to steam operations into the 21st century, a new boiler for the locomotive was ordered from Israel Newtons of Bradford.

Its return to operational condition has come following an overhaul that commenced in 2020, with it last having been operational in 2019. It looked to be a close run-thing as the gala dates appeared, and workshop staff pulled out all the stops to complete the 'Terrier' in time to run as advertised. Having started the year as a boiler in the frames, the water tanks were fitted on January 16. Within five days, surfaces had been rubbed down and a start made on repainting the lined olive green livery, while pipework was connected and cab fittings installed.

February 12 saw an almost-finished *Freshwater* emerge from the works for its final boiler test, which was passed, and gave way for a small number of trips along the line both light engine and coupled to three bogie coaches. Afterwards, it returned to the workshops for final lettering and lining out to be applied – all of which has been done by hand.

Though its debut day was overcast, *Freshwater*'s shining external finish and mechanical performance were praised by many as it shuttled between Havenstreet and Wootton each day, paired with the Ventnor West push-pull carriages.

Centenary (and a half)

The return of the 'Terrier' to service was not the only cause for celebration, for 2025 also marks 100 years since ex-LSWR O2 0-4-4T No. 24 *Calbourne* arrived on the island.

Built in 1891 as No. 209 at Nine Elms Works and after spending time allocated to Fratton and Exeter, examples of the class were shipped to the island as part of an SR modernisation effort of its railways there, ultimately

Another diesel making a rare appearance during the four-day gala was resident Class 03 D2059, seen approaching Wootton on February 21.

***Calbourne* emerges from the trees as it departs from Ashey station for Havenstreet.**

W S

Freshwater tackles the 1-in-68 gradient with ease as it departs Havenstreet with the Ventnor West stock.

D2554 *Nuclear Fred* creeps onto the long curve at Woodhouse Farm with the short goods set. Offering a rare opportunity to ride behind the locomotive, places were limited to 15 people aboard the brake vans behind it.

Smoke and steam swirl as *Calbourne* bursts out from beneath Long Arch bridge on February 21.

displacing the Terriers just as they had on the Lyme Regis branch. The class also benefitted from extended coal bunkers, and 23 in total were employed on the island. They survived in service until the end of steam on the island, on December 31, 1966.

Following this, *Calbourne* (now No. W24) and classmate *Chale* (No. W31) were retained by BR to work engineers' trains during electrification of the line between Ryde and Shanklin. Upon its completion in March 1967, they too were withdrawn, with W24 being the first locomotive acquired by the embryonic steam railway.

With *Chale* scrapped, *Calbourne* became the sole survivor of its class. It played a pivotal role in the early days of the preservationists on the island; originally stored in the depot at Ryde, it was moved by road to join the preserved carriages at Newport in 1969, where restoration work commenced to make it operational once more. Though negotiations were well advanced to see the line through Havenstreet become the base of a heritage line, notice was served on January 18, 1971, to quit Newport station – with the deadline being just one week later! Following a frantic week of planning, preparation, and emergency repairs of the overgrown tracks to the quiet country station, on January 24 *Calbourne* hauled the IOWSR's collection from storage in Newport to Havenstreet, undertaking several trips between the two to retrieve everything.

Havenstreet was once part of the Ryde & Newport Railway which opened on December 20, 1875, thus the gala event celebrated the 150th anniversary of that early railway company. As Ryde overtook Cowes as the port of entry to the island, with 300,000 visitors annually travelling between Ryde and Newport, the necessity of connecting the two by rail was revived in 1872 following abandoned proposals by other earlier companies. The line branched off from the Isle of Wight Railway's line between Ryde and Shanklin at Smallbrook Junction (where the heritage line terminates today) but actually ran on an independent track alongside the rival firm's.

The station at Newport was also the result of a joint agreement between the R&NR and the Cowes & Newport Railway. While collaborative working was intended, with a joint committee established in 1876 to oversee operational matters, financial difficulties of each inevitably led to disputes. One area of contention was the division of contributions towards the viaduct required to access the site of the station at Newport. Eventually,

With the old station building, now a private residence, behind the hedges, No. W11 *Freshwater* departs Ashey during its daily outing to Smallbrook Junction on February 22.

Above: Pictured in the carriage works on February 20, the Ryde Pier tramcar and replica trailer were due to be in service at the event. Delays to completing the trailer mean it will now be launched later in the year.

Right: The foundations for the new goods shed at Wootton tease what is soon to come as *Calbourne* runs round its train.

these two lines along with the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway amalgamated to become the Isle of Wight Central Railway, which was authorised on July 19, 1887.

Rare outings

Galas for the IOWSR are a tricky affair as they rely on encouraging plenty of people over the Solent. The return of *Freshwater* was certainly one lure, as was the opportunity to travel behind *Calbourne,* which spent the majority of 2024 out of service while its wheelsets were away for new tyres to be fitted. Being marketed as a steam railway, diesel traction tends to be confined to the yard at Havenstreet or to engineering trains. For this weekend, mileage was available behind two of the rarer members of the fleet.

BR Class 03 D2059 was built at Doncaster in 1959 and was first allocated to Gateshead depot, remaining based there until transferring to Barrow-in-Furness in 1966. Originally fitted with vacuum braking only, it was fitted with dual braking in 1968; withdrawal came in July 1987, following which it was brought to the IOWSR in November 1988 for use as a standby locomotive. Seldom called on for such duties, its appearance on passenger workings is exceedingly rare and so was rostered on the Friday and Sunday of the gala to work two trips to Wootton with a sole five-compartment bogie brake third.

Conversely, Class 05 D2554 (built by Hunslet in 1956) is vacuum-braked only and tends to be found on display in the Train Story museum building. One of the first batch of its class, it was built with a lower cab height that made it well-suited to the restricted loading gauges of the island's railways. Having spent time allocated to BR's Eastern and Southern regions, it arrived at Ryde in 1966 and assisted in the electrification of what became today's Island Line route, being retained for use on maintenance trains thereafter. It was christened *Nuclear Fred* by railway staff, and the name has stuck with it since. It arrived on the IOWSR on August 23, 1984. On the first and third days of the event, it too worked trips from Havenstreet to Wootton, but instead of carriages, passengers could travel aboard two brake vans on a short, unfitted freight set.

LSWR O2 W24 coasts towards Ashey station, having just crested the summit of the climb from Smallbrook Junction. TOM KING

As well as the trains, visitors also enjoyed a selection of craft ales in accompanying Dark Ales Festival. A total of 24 choices, plus four different ciders, were to be found situated in the recently-opened Barn Café and bar, which has been decorated with original signage from the island's railways, including the large station sign once found above the entrance to Ventnor.

Chief executive Marc Huws said: "We were very pleased with the popularity of the Winter Gala and Dark Ales Festival, which represented a toe in the water for an earlier start to the season. Like many heritage railways, we are facing cost rises well beyond the level of inflation, especially in respect of employment costs, and looking to stretch the operating season is one logical response.

"The event combined our island engines-based gala, including little-seen diesel traction, popular brake van rides, an additional ale event in our popular new barn cafe and bar, half-term opening, and even a second-hand book sale to clear our stocks ahead of the main season. The combination worked well and we are keen to fix the event in our calendar for future years and grow the content."

Second 'Terrier'?

Those looking to see *Newport* return to service will have to wait a while as it's currently in a queue. In the workshops at present is Ivatt 2-6-2T No. 41298, which is intended to be completed before classmate No. 41313 bows out in 2027.

Elsewhere, the restoration of LBSCR E1 No. 110 *Burgundy* (which will be adopting the guise of W2 *Yarmouth*) continues, with the new boiler ordered from Israel Newtons due for delivery in the near future. Work will then concentrate on completing the mechanical work and reassembling this unique survivor. No completion date is set, but it is not expected that Newport will enter the works until after the E1 is in service.

Later this year is also likely to see the launch of the Ryde Pier tramcar trailer replica. This was due to appear during this gala weekend; however, its completion was delayed following the need to complete the Terrier, along with the complex wiring involved to link the trailer with the motor vehicle. The two vehicles were available for viewing in the carriage works, with the trailer partway through final painting. HR

ONCE IN A LIFETIME:

FLYING SCOTSMAN DELIVERS THE GOODS FOR ONE DAY ONLY!

The sell-out visit of *Flying Scotsman* to the Nene Valley Railway at the end of February was an all-round success, with two historic moments taking place on one day during the A3's stay, further enhancing the line's profile. **Owen Hayward** signed up to be a part of the occasion and witness history being made.

"The date is February 28, 1962, and the scene is an A3 racing up the East Coast Main Line towards Scotland with its express goods service which will be divided and distributed onwards following arrival there. The powers that be have drafted in *Flying Scotsman* for this duty in place of another locomotive which had originally been earmarked for the job but been failed at short notice."

That was the story Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group leader Tim Hobman was spinning when photographers arrived on a gloriously sunny morning 60 years later for what was an exceedingly rare photographic charter day with the famous Gresley Pacific.

I was but a babe in arms when it was last seen on goods wagons on a heritage line, so when it was announced that a day's photography with *Flying Scotsman* themed on a 'Scotch Goods' working had been secured, featuring it on the express freight rake on that very same line 31 years later, it only made sense that I booked a place.

This was not the only significant moment that the day brought, however, for the charter itself was also the first photographic charter with the locomotive for many considerable years and starred the locomotive running under its own identity. Past charters have seen *Flying Scotsman* assume several aliases, with the previous visit to Wansford having seen it running under the guise of classmates Nos. 60039 *Sandwich* and 60106 *Flying Fox*. The latter entered service in 1923 and was first shedded at King's Cross, accumulating eight different depots during its life prior to withdrawal on Boxing Day in 1964. Conversely, the former, allocated to Gateshead when new and spending much of its life largely flitting between King's Cross and Grantham depots, entered service much later in 1934 but was withdrawn in March 1963.

Recreating the past

Some have questioned if No. 60103 itself ever worked freight traffic in its pre-preservation life, and there is some photographic evidence to confirm that indeed it did. By contrast, the charter of February 28 may well have been the first time it has been photographed on freight in its own identity since entering preservation.

The NVR has gained a reputation for securing high-profile locomotives for short visits, with new-build Peppercorn A1 No. 60163 *Tornado* having visited in the past (and was, coincidentally, tucked away in the sheds at Wansford on the day of the charter), along with streamlined A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* and BR(M) Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas* to name but a few recent ones. Keen to capitalise on opportunities where practical, Tim has organised several photographic events featuring some of these and the express freight set that the wagon group has restored. With more than 70 ex-BR wagons of 1950s/1960s vintage on the line, volunteers have been gradually expanding the rake of restored examples to continue the work that was started on the rake in 2011 and led by Paul Foxwell.

Limited manpower, combined with the need to prioritise the passenger-carrying vehicles, had led to the freight vehicles being sidelined and decaying, save for an amount of 'bare minimum' work to keep a few serviceable. The formation of the dedicated wagon group has allowed the railway's paid workshop staff to continue with the carriage fleet and taken the

A sole angler seems unaware of history being made as *Flying Scotsman* crosses the River Nene as it approaches Wandsford with the goods rake on February 28, the train reflected in the rippling waters below. ROBERT FALCONER

Gresley's famous A3 may be better known for working express services, but it did also work goods trains in the BR era, pictured near Markham on an unknown date but estimated to be shortly before withdrawal in 1963. P J HUGHES/COLOUR RAIL

Left: Emerging from the tunnel but hidden from the view of the nearby farm cottage, No. 60103 approaches Yarwell during the daytime session of the 'Scotch Goods' charter. OWEN HAYWARD

Below: A run-round of its stock at Peterborough at the start of the charter gave the impression of No. 60103 passing a freight train in the opposite direction of travel. OWEN HAYWARD

Longueville Junction was chosen as a location for its double-track appearance, with the right-hand side serving the Fletton branch that connects to the ECML. A track ganger walking the line provides the excuse for *Flying Scotsman* seemingly running wrong road here. NATHAN SPENCE

onus of maintaining the wagons away, with the group being self-financed. It is for this reason that events such as these charters run, bringing in valuable funds to the group's coffers while doubling up as a marketing tool for the railway overall.

Sadly, Paul died in 2016 at the age of just 32, and Tim took over the helm to continue his friend's vision, with the wagon group's activities carried out in tribute to their departed founder. As well as expanding the number of vehicles restored, the rake has also seen the vacuum braking reinstated throughout in the last few years, with some vehicles being disposed of, while additional wagons have been acquired to tell different parts of the story. As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 328, the group has its sights set on transforming the goods yard at Overton into what will essentially becoming a 'living museum' and further make use of its vehicles outside of these photographic days.

Glorious day

The success of any photographic charter can often come down to the weather, and many events in the heritage railway world have been washed out by rain. Mother Nature was kind for this one: split into two sessions, the first half of the day was blessed by gorgeous sunlight with clear skies, with just one bank of cloud blocking it out for a few short minutes. Despite the brightness, the temperature stayed cool throughout, allowing for the locomotive's exhaust to hang cleanly in the air, which resulted in some excellent scenes.

A total of five locations along the 7 ½-mile line were visited. The entire route was taken out under a possession, with photographers being transported to each site aboard Class 143 Pacer DMU No. 143602 (bought by the NVR from Transport for Wales and entering services at Wansford in 2023) with the A3 following to meet the gallery, apart from the first shot at Peterborough, where *Flying Scotsman* ran to first so as to run round the wagons and be in position ready to greet the photographers upon their arrival.

As daylight gave way to night, an evening session took place at Wansford station, with volunteers donning period attire to set the scene, while a Land Rover and Morris Minor van in appropriate BR colours were positioned alongside. In addition to *Flying Scotsman* being posed about the station, with wagons on the adjacent line creating the illusion of passing trains, scenes of newspaper and parcels unloading were also staged to give a human interest element to proceedings.

This session was supported by award-winning photographer Jack Boskett, who provided and set up the lighting required and repositioned it as scenes necessitated as the night wore on.

Blue skies grace *Flying Scotsman's* first appearance on a goods train in 31 years as the A3 storms down Castor straight. OWEN HAYWARD

The locomotive crew enjoy a momentary pause on-shed during the locomotive's disposal at the end of February 28. OWEN HAYWARD

Members of the Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group pose with *Flying Scotsman*, which briefly wore the 'Foxwell Freighter' headboard in tribute to the group's founder who sadly died in 2016. OWEN HAYWARD

A pair of British Railways road vehicles are held up at the level crossing as *Flying Scotsman* approaches as dusk falls, with posed wagons staging a passing service on the adjacent track. OWEN HAYWARD

***Flying Scotsman* was not the only famous locomotive to be found at Wansford, with A1 No. 60163 *Tornado* also on site having undergone test runs following winter repairs – see Main Line News, pages 56/57.** PAUL ROE/NVR

Initially trepidatious about organising the event, the success of the day quickly put Tim at ease. "When I first found out we were going to get *Flying Scotsman*, I was asked if I would be interested in organising one of my charters with it. Given the high costs involved, I actually turned it down to begin with," he said. "Thankfully, after going away and thinking about it, I reconsidered – and I am so glad that I did.

"I am exceedingly grateful for the support from those in the group who helped prepare for the day and to those who parted with their hard-earned cash to enable this to actually happen. When the events were announced, some people accused us of trying to maximise profits from the visit of the A3, but that was definitely not the case and the event just about broke even. Unless it had looked to make a truly substantial loss, the charter would probably still have gone ahead, even if just to say we did it and come away with the photographs of *Flying Scotsman* at the head of our freight collection.

"I don't imagine the late Paul Foxwell would ever have dreamed we'd have been able to pull this off and I am so exceedingly pleased it was as successful as it was.

"I am by no means professional photographer myself, but I recognise the appeal of unique events like this so strive to offer something that works for both regular charter attendees and newcomers to the scene. We went in with a plan of the day but based on feedback at each location, we adjusted as required to ensure that people went away with shots they were happy with. One example was at Longueville Junction where we had initially planned to back the train down the Fletton branch to give the impression of a double-track main line. Given the position of the sun, it was requested that it stayed on the main line, so that while it appeared to be running wrong road, the light was right for photographs."

Ever to be repeated?

Flying Scotsman is often referred to as 'the people's engine,' and while it amusingly divides opinion among enthusiasts, in my view it was a joy to see that a rare opportunity to witness it doing something different to its normal duties had been created. The focus of *Flying Scotsman*'s modern operation would appear to focus on enabling as many people as possible the opportunity to travel behind it, so it may well be that the A3 may not grace a goods train again for another many years – if indeed ever – making this 'Scotch Goods' event truly a once-in-a-lifetime occasion for some of us younger enthusiasts who were not about the last time it happened.

Less than a fortnight after the session with the Gresley machine, a similar event was scheduled to take place with BR Standard 7 No. 70000 *Britannia*, which will be paying a brief visit to the line to work services on the weekend of March 15/16. Tim's Rule Britannia charter with this locomotive was scheduled to take place on March 12, but with only a daytime session planned. Full coverage of that visit will be included in the next issue of *Heritage Railway*.

Next up for *Scotsman*

After *Flying Scotsman* completes it sell-out passenger trips on the NVR on March 9, it will return to the National Railway Museum for Easter where it will be on display on April 5-20 within the *Flying Scotsman Story* exhibition as a highlight of the venue's 50th anniversary celebrations.

From May 12 to June 2, it will visit Didcot Railway Centre with rides available on selected dates (see advert, page 25). The A3 will be reunited with repatriated GWR 4-6-0 No. 4073 *Pendennis Castle*, both engines having once been owned by Sir William McAlpine and sharing a rich history of rivalry and international adventure, having been displayed side by side at the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley in 1925 with the later an example of the most modern GWR express locomotive. The pair also met again in Western Australia in 1989.

Flying Scotsman will spend the summer at the Locomotion museum in Shildon from July 26 to August 25, with a mix of display and steam ride days on selected days during a six-week summer festival.

In 2024, nearly 320,000 people viewed, climbed aboard, or took a ride on *Flying Scotsman* during its stays at the NRM and Locomotion, and more trips are now in the planning stage, with details set to be released later.

An NRM statement said that *Flying Scotsman*'s engagements in 2025 will be targeted at heritage railway lines to allow access to a broad range of family audiences

Freshly bloomed snowdrops line the river banks at Wansford as *Flying Scotsman* passes by. OWEN HAYWARD

throughout the Railway 200 year. The NRM and Locomotion are key partners in this national celebration.

Following a competitive tender process, Northern Steam Operations Limited was, as previously reported, appointed as *Flying Scotsman*'s custodian after signing a contract to manage and maintain the locomotive until 2032.

NSOL chairman Stuart Whitte said: "We are very much looking forward to delivering the maximum public exposure to this iconic locomotive during an historic year for the railways." HR

Scotsman's birthplace may be lost

By Robin Jones

On February 7, rail maintenance firm Wabtec announced that its operation at Doncaster Works, where *Flying Scotsman* was built in 1923, is to close.

Wabtec (the Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corporation), which is based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, employs about 300 people at its factory in Hexthorpe.

A spokesman said that the decision was made following a "comprehensive review of the product lines and cost challenges" at the depot.

Work at the Doncaster site would continue "well into 2026" to deliver its commitments to customers, and several options were being considered, including moving to another UK location or relocating to a nearby site. Consultations with staff over the proposed closure have begun. Speculation that the historic site could be given over to housing development is rife.

Doncaster Works, known as The Plant, employed about 4600 engineers at its peak before the Second World War, building and maintaining motive power and rolling stock. It turned out more than 200 locomotives.

A van driver awaits the arrival of a train for the transfer of goods while *Flying Scotsman* passes on the adjacent line. EDWARD DYER

No. 60163 departs Peterborough at the start of the 'Scotch Goods' photographic charter on February 28, when it appeared on a goods train for the first time since 1994. OWEN HAYWARD

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LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* drifts into Wansford station during the evening of the photographic charter on February 28. Careful positioning of the locomotive on one line and wagons with the lit tail lamps of a brake van on the other gives the impression of trains passing in the night, while a Morris van waits to have its contents transferred to the incoming goods working. NATHAN SPENCE

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Tornado ready for main line runs after Nene testing successes

By Robin Jones

PEPPERCORN A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* was scheduled to leave the Nene Valley Railway on March 7 following successful loaded test runs at the conclusion of its long-running overhaul and repairs. On February 26, *Tornado* completed five round trips from Wansford to Peterborough, four of them hauling seven BR Mk.1 coaches, in the presence of Network Rail inspectors.

No. 60163 was said to be in fine form and a few days later on March 3, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust announced that it had received its Total Operations Processing System registration and could planning start a series of main line test runs, the first being light engine with support coach from Peterborough to Carnforth on March 7. As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 328, *Tornado* is booked to take part in the East Lancashire Railway's Legends of Steam on March 14-16, where it will join fellow visitor LMS 'Black Five' No. 44871 and two home-based Bulleid light Pacifics, No. 34092 *City of Wells* and the recently-arrived No. 34081 *92 Squadron* from the Nene Valley Railway.

Tornado was withdrawn at the Great Central Railway in January 2022 for its 10-yearly overhaul, undertaken

Britannia on East Coast metals

STEAM Dreams is running a trip hauled by BR Standard Class 7 No. 70000 *Britannia* between London and York on Wednesday, July 23.

Starting from King's Cross, the train is scheduled to take the East Coast Main Line to pick up additional passengers at Potters Bar, Welwyn Garden City, Huntingdon and Peterborough. Heading north, the train will pass through Grantham, Newark and Doncaster, before finally arriving at York in the early afternoon.

Customers will have three and a half hours to explore the city before the return journey.

Tickets are available in Pullman Dining and First Class non-dining for this tour. For more details and to book, visit steamdreams.co.uk

The 'Grangemouth Growler' for rare tracks

By Tim Hobman

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society has advertised a railtour featuring some lesser-visited locations by rail on Saturday, April 19, under the title of 'The Grangemouth Growler.'

The tour is planned to start from Bo'ness, hauled by Class 37 No. 37403 and a GB Railfreight Class 66. Following a reversal at Manuel, the route is via Bo'ness Junction to pick up more passengers at Linlithgow, before taking the Linlithgow Up Passenger Loop for another passenger pick-up at Edinburgh. Heading to Tweedbank, a reverse move is then expected which will see the train move via the Edinburgh Suburban to Haymarket, then another reversal to Slateford, Mossend Down Reception No. 4, Whifflet South Junction, Sunnyside Junction, Shettleston Up and Down Goods Loop, City Union, Paisely Down Goods Loop, Paisely Gilmour Street, Elderslie Up Passenger Loop, Brownhill Down Passenger Loop, Newton-on-Ayr and Killoch Network Rail boundary.

Goods lines

Having reversed once again, the train is scheduled to take the Brassie Up Goods Loop to Byrehill Junction, then on to Dubbs Junction, Stevenston Down Goods Loop and Largs for a reversal to Glengarnock, and finally Glasgow Central.

The planned route home from Glasgow is expected to be via Gourock for a reversal, then City Union, Springburn and Milngavie for another reverse move. After Milngavie, the next destination is planned to be Gartshore Up Passenger Loop and then up to Grangemouth Network Rail Boundary. Reversing again, the train is scheduled to take the Larbert Down Passenger Loop, before a further reversal at Stirling, then via the Polmont Up North Passing Loop to set down passengers at Edinburgh. Heading via the Edinburgh Suburban and Newbridge Down Passenger Loop, the tour will then conclude by setting down passengers at Linlithgow, before a reversal at Grangemouth, Bo'ness Junction and again at Manuel, before the journey's end at Bo'ness.

Standard Class is sold out, but First Class remained available for this tour at www.srpsrailtours.co.uk

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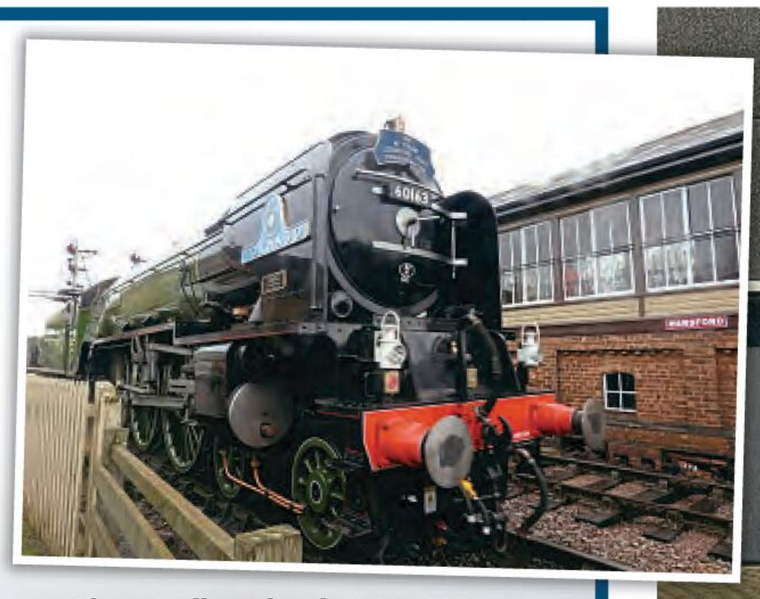
at nearby Locomotive Maintenance Services in Loughborough. As highlighted in issue 324, as part of its mileage accumulation, *Tornado* underwent 60mph test-running last summer on the GCR. However, outstanding jobs led to the cancellation of its planned main line itinerary for the rest of the year, and last October it moved to the NVR where it ran passenger services and took part in driver experience courses.

At Wansford shed, it came into the company of visiting A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* (picture, page 52). While *Scotsman* is regarded by many as the defining locomotive icon of the 20th century, *Tornado* has also been labelled as its counterpart in the 21st.

In the early hours of April 12, 2017, during secret early-morning test runs on the East Coast Main Line, *Tornado* reached 100mph, the first locomotive in the UK to do so since 1967, as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 228.

Tornado make history again as the first steam locomotiill now ve fitted with European Train Control System equipment, part of the East Coast Digital Programme with digital signalling installed on the southern section of the East Coast Main Line.



Above: All set for the next Nene Valley test run, *Tornado* at the head of its train at Wansford station. ROBIN JONES

New-build Peppercorn A1 Pacific No.60163 *Tornado* hauls one of four loaded test runs out of Wasnford station and across the River Nene on February 26. ROBIN JONES

The statue of Robert Stephenson outside Euston station. MATT BUCK/CREATIVE COMMONS

Listed Robert Stephenson statue back in Durham!

THE Grade II-listed bronze statue of engineer Robert Stephenson – whose firm built *Locomotion No. 1* for the Stockton & Darlington Railway – is to be moved from Euston station to the Locomotion museum in Shildon.

The move, which will see it located in County Durham for 10 years, has been made necessary by the remodelling of Euston for High Speed 2, and was approved by Durham County Council on February 24.

The 8ft 8in tall statue, created in 1867 by Baron Carlo Marochetti, will rest on a combined bronze and concrete plinth.

The council has stipulated that it must be installed by February 24, 2028, and adhere strictly to approved plans, including specific details about the location and fencing.

Surviving element

A memorial committee of the Institute of Civil Engineers commissioned the statue after Stephenson's death on October 12, 1859, at the age of 56.

Erected in 1871, it is one of few surviving elements of the original Euston station after it was redeveloped in the 1960s and was listed in 1974. The statue was first temporarily moved from its original location when work on HS2 at Euston began.

At Locomotion, the statue will be used to highlight Stephenson's involvement with the S&DR and his contributions to railways in the North East, including the High Level Bridge in Newcastle and the Royal Border Bridge located at Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Quintuple Kentish destinations for UK Railtours

By Tim Hobman

UK Railtours has announced a tour which will give customers the choice of five different attractions on Saturday, June 7, under the title of 'The Kent Coaster.'

Departing from East Midlands Parkway behind a Class 47, the route south is planned to be via the Midland Main Line, picking up additional passengers at Leicester, Kettering and Bedford.

The train is then expected to head toward Bletchley for more passengers and then pick up the West Coast Main Line for the final passenger pick-up at Watford Junction. From here, the train is planned to continue south to Acton, where the 47 will be exchanged for a pair of Class 33s.

Crossing the River Thames and passing through the suburbs of South London and out into Kent, the first destination is Folkestone West. Here passengers have the option to alight and take road coaches the short distance to the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. Visitors will have more than four hours at the railway, sufficient for a round trip.

The next stop on the tour is planned to be Dover Priory station, where passengers can alight and be transported to Dover Castle. There will be about four hours here to look around the fortress.

Those who decide to remain on the train will be transported to Margate, Whitstable or Faversham, with the option to alight at one of these locations. There will be about three hours to explore before the return trip via the same route, setting down passengers on the way back to East Midlands Parkway.

Tickets are available in First Class dining and non-dining and Standard Class on this tour, with a discount for junior travellers in Standard Class and a supplement for off-train options at the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, and Dover Castle.

For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

East West DEMU tour selling fast

By Tim Hobman

HASTINGS Diesels' second railtour of the season will run on Saturday April 5 under the title of 'The East West DEMU.'

For the first time, the train will be formed of nine coaches and comprise two DEMUs coupled together as six- and three-car sets. This arrangement follows the return to traffic of motor coach No. 60000 *Hastings* and also trailer cars Nos. 60501 and 60116.

These three coaches will join the existing six already in regular use, but passengers in these coaches will not be able to access the rest of the train as there is no gangway through the motor coach.

The tour is planned to start out from Hastings and then head north, picking up passengers at St Leonards Warrior Square, West St Leonards, Crowhurst, Battle, Etchingham, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Redhill.

Following a reversal at Redhill, the train is expected to make the final passenger pick-ups at Guildford and Reading.

Taking the Great Western Main Line, the first stop of the tour is Didcot Parkway, where passengers will have four hours to explore the area.

Those who stay on the train are scheduled to take the Cherwell Valley Line to Oxford, where once again passengers will have the option to alight for just over three hours in the city. The train is then planned to divert onto the Oxford-Bicester Line for the next stop of Bicester Village. Passengers may choose to alight here or remain on board to experience the route of the former Varsity Line to Milton Keynes via Winslow. This route is expected to reopen fully later this year as part of the East West Rail project.

After a very brief stop at Milton Keynes, the tour is planned to retrace the route back to Bicester Village for a layover of just over an hour and to pick up any passengers who chose to alight here.

Retracing the earlier route to Oxford and Didcot Parkway, picking up passengers at both, the home leg of the tour is expected to be as the outward journey, setting down passengers at their joining stations.

Tickets are available in First Class and Standard Class.

The tour is proving popular already, and as this issue of *Heritage Railway* closed for press, most seats had already sold. To check availability, visit www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk

Something new for the RTC with May's 'Buxton Spa Express'

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company has announced a new tour from London to the Peak District on Saturday, May 17 under the title of 'The Buxton Spa Express'.

Starting from Ealing Broadway diesel-hauled, the train is scheduled to skirt North London to join the Midland Main Line.

The next passenger pick-up points are planned to be St Albans, Luton, Bedford, Kettering and Leicester, before continuing north to Loughborough. Here, there is expected to be a deviation at Trant Junction onto the Erewash Valley Line, passing through Chesterfield en route to Barrow Hill.

At Barrow Hill, a brief stop is planned to exchange diesel traction for an as-yet-unconfirmed steam locomotive.

Upon leaving Barrow Hill, the train is expected to continue to Sheffield and pick up the Hope Valley Line at Dore and Totley. Leaving the Main Line at Chinley East Junction, the train is then scheduled to take the Peak Forest Line past Tunstead Quarry and Ashwood Dale, to arrive at the final destination of Buxton in the early afternoon.

Customers will have just over an hour for a brief look at the market town while the locomotive is serviced. The return journey is initially scheduled to take a different route, with the train heading via Chapel-En-Le-Firth, Hazel Grove and Stockport, before a water stop at Denton.

After taking on water, the planned route is via Woodley and Romiley to pick up the outward route at Chinley to head back to Dore and Totley, and then the Midland Main Line south.

At Humberstone Road in Leicester, the plan is to detach the steam locomotive and complete the journey back to London with diesel traction, setting down passengers at their joining stations to the final destination of Ealing Broadway.

Tickets are available in Premier Dining, First Class and Standard Class, with a discount for junior travellers and family bookings on this tour.

For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Bulleid Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* crosses the Grade II-listed 48-span Whalley Arches in fading sunlight, heading south with the Carlisle to Preston leg of the Railway Touring Company's 'Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' from Euston on February 22. The landmark viaduct over the River Calder was built between 1846 and 1850 and is the longest and largest railway viaduct in Lancashire. ROBERT FALCONER

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Abseiling to give a facelift to the 185-year-old Stockport Viaduct. NR

Historic Stockport Viaduct given facelift by abseilers

IN THE early hours of Sunday, February 23, seven railway workers abseiled down the side of the Grade II-listed Stockport Viaduct as part of a £1.1 million revamp.

Built in 1840, the structure carries 398 trains daily between the West Coast Main Line and Manchester Piccadilly. In 2024, Network Rail embarked on a project to remove overgrowing vegetation, clean away graffiti, and carry out extensive repairs to the viaduct's 11 million bricks. Now, all of the viaduct's 26 spans have received the VIP treatment. Overnight, the team used rope access equipment to go over the top of the viaduct's piers and carry out important work to restore the historic structure.

'Fantastic job'

Network Rail works delivery manager Michael Lally said: "The team have done a fantastic job this week carrying out important repairs to the viaduct arches that cross the M60 in Stockport. This is the final stage of the project.

The revamped Awe Viaduct on the West Highland Line. NR

"The overall appearance of the viaduct is much improved, but it also reduces the risk of damage caused by overgrown vegetation and graffiti." A total of 20 railway employees worked overnight on the structure during the project's completion.

Meanwhile, Network has completed a £3.5 million project to refurbish the historic Awe Viaduct, near Taynuilt, on the Oban branch of the West Highland Line.

The three-span wrought-iron viaduct, completed in 1879, carries the railway to Oban over the River Awe, south of Taynuilt. Work began in the summer last year that saw engineers replace the existing timber deck which supports the track.

The old paint was removed to allow repairs to the structure to be carried out.

Once repairs were completed, the viaduct was repainted.

Project manager Owen Ferry said: "This significant investment not only improves the structure's look, but it will also help extend its life. Work on this scale will not be required for at least 25 years.

"We know the viaduct sits in a much-loved part of the world and we thank our neighbours and visitors for their understanding while we completed this crucial project."

A pair of 20s booked for tour to Llandudno's Victorian Festival

INTERCITY Tours is offering the chance to ride behind a pair of Class 20s on Sunday, May 4, under the title of 'Yr Wyl Fictoriadd (The Victorian Festival).'

Starting from Birmingham International, the tour is planned to pick up additional passengers at Tame Bridge Parkway, Wolverhampton, Stafford and Crewe.

From Crewe, the train is scheduled to take the North Wales Main Line towards Chester and then on to the destination of Llandudno. Passengers will then have three hours to explore the Victorian Festival, which is held in the town every May Bank Holiday Weekend. After leaving Llandudno, passengers will return to their joining stations as the train retraces the route of the outward journey.

Tickets are available in First Class non-dining and Standard class for this tour. To book, visit inter-city.co.uk

Summer steaming for *Nunney Castle*?

THE overhaul of WR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* is rapidly progressing, with its first provisional railtour outing already being advertised for the start of the astrological summer.

Built in 1934, *Nunney Castle* has seen duties including wartime evacuations during the Second World War, and even hauled the Royal Train in 1957 from Paddington to Gloucester. Withdrawn in December 1963, it became the last steam locomotive to be delivered to Barry scrapyard by rail the following year and entered preservation in May 1976 as the last of its class to leave there. Since restoration was completed in 1990, it has been a somewhat regular performer on main line charters though has not been seen in service since 2015.

Overhaul has been taking place at LNWR Crewe works, which revealed on February 11 that the boiler had been returned to the frames. Workshop focus is now on the reassembly, with the Castle being advertised to haul the Taunton-Kingswear leg of Steam Dreams' June 21 excursions to the Paignton & Dartmouth Railway. The journey will see *Nunney Castle* skirt the coastline at Dawlish, a route it has regularly traversed on trips during past boiler tickets.

The return of No. 5029, which is owned by Locomotive Services Ltd, will mean that a trio of Castle class locomotives will be in service, with Nos. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* and 7049 *Clun Castle,* owned by Vintage Trains and both in regular main line use, leaving just No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* as the outlier and confined to heritage line use and based at Didcot Railway Centre.

The boiler for *Nunney Castle* back in the frames, with the locomotive looking set for a June debut. LSL

Book an evening talk to learn about 'The Duke'

THE story of one of the heritage sector's greatest achievements – the restoration to working order of unique BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* – is now available to be told far and wide in a special two-hour presentation.

The BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust is offering to stage the presentation, which consists of videos, photographs and a talk, to interested groups of enthusiasts for £250 per session. Afterwards, there will be time for questions and answers.

The talk details how the locomotive was outshopped from Crewe in 1954, rescued from Barry scrapyard in 1974 and moved to the Great Central Railway, passing its main line test in 1990, as outlined in our special feature in *Heritage Railway* issue 329.

Any groups interested in booking the presentation are invited to apply via www.theduke.uk.com or telephone 07867 875344. BRC8SLT

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March

14 'The West Highlander' (Outward)
Crewe, Fort William. Diesel-hauled.
Loco: TBA. IC

15 'The Thames Valley Wanderer'
Rare tracks tour from Swindon.
Locos: 2x WCR Class 57s TBC. PT

15 'The Cheshireman'
Euston, Chester and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

16 'The West Highlander' (Return)
Fort William, Crewe. Diesel-hauled.
Loco: TBA. IC

19 'The Whitby Flyer'
King's Cross, Whitby and return. Steam-hauled between York and Whitby.
Loco: Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*.
Steam: 'Black Five' TBC. RTC

21 Far North Charity Charter Day 1
Bo'ness, Strathspey Railway, and Inverness.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. BLS

21 'West Highland Pullman' Day 1
Swansea, Fort William.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

22 Far North Charity Charter Day 2
Inverness, Thurso, Wick and return.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. BLS

22 'West Highland Pullman' Day 2
Fort William, Mallaig and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

22 'The Blackpool Steam Express'
Euston, Blackpool North and return. Steam-hauled between Crewe and Blackpool North.
Loco: Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*.
Steam: TBA. RTC

23 Far North Charity Charter Day 3
Inverness, Bo'ness.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. BLS

23 'West Highland Pullman' Day 3
Fort William, Swansea.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

26 'The Golden Arrow'
Peterborough, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Canterbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

28 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

29 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Manchester Victoria, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

29 'The Heart of Wales Explorer'
Circular tour from Eastleigh via Cardiff, Port Talbot, Llangynllo, Knighton, Shrewsbury.
Loco: 2x Class 37s TBA. PT

29 'The Edinburgh Flyer'
York, Edinburgh Waverley and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: 'Black Five' TBC. RTC

29 'The Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Electric: 86529 *Les Ross*.
Steam: TBC. RTC

29 'The Shap Mountaineer'
Birmingham New Street, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Hellifield (return).
Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. VT

SR Bulleid Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* approaches Dent on February 22 with the return portion of 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' from Carlisle to Euston. The steam locomotive swapped with electric traction at Preston for the final portion of the journey towards the capital. BARRY MARTIN

April

2 'The Golden Arrow'
Coventry, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Canterbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

5 Bicester & Oxford Excursion
Hastings, Oxford and return.
DEMU: 1001. HD

5 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

5 'The Weardale Explorer'
Gloucester, Stanhope and return.
Locos: 2x Class 47s TBC. PT

5 'The Worcester Steam Express'
Norwich, Worcester and return. Diesel-hauled between Leicester and Norwich (return only).
Loco: 44871. RTC

5 'The Lakelander'
Llandudno Junction, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Preston and Carlisle.
Loco: TBA. ST

5 'The Snowdonian'
Euston, Holyhead and return.
Loco: West Coast Class 47/57 TBC. UKRT

6 'The Shakespeare Express'
Worcester Shrub Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* or 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

9 Settle-Carlisle Coastal Pullman
Gerrards Cross, Carlisle and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

10 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

11 'West Highland Pullman' (Outward)
Stafford, Fort William.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

11 'The Cambrian Coast Express'
Shrewsbury, Pwllheli and return.
Locos: 1x Class 37, 47, 97 TBC. PT

12 'Torbay Riviera Pullman'
Chester, Paignton and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

12 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Livepool Lime Street, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

12 'The Yorkshireman'
Euston, York and return. Steam-hauled outward only.
Loco: 44871. RTC

13 'West Highland Pullman' (Return)
Fort Willia, Stafford.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

16 'Oban & West Highland Pullman'
Durham, Oban and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

16 'The Sussex Belle'
London Victoria, Eastbourne and return. Diesel-hauled between Eastbourne and Hastings (return only).
Loco: 'Black Five' TBC. RTC

16 Cardiff Excursion
Shoeburyness, Cardiff and return. Diesel-hauled between Shoeburyness and West London.
Loco: 70000 *Britannia*. SD

19 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Telford, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

19 SRPS Excursion
Route TBC.
Loco: TBA. SRPS

24 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

24 'Yorkshire Coast Pullman'
Paignton, Scarborough and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

Regular Tours

Daily (AM) from April 7 'The Jacobite'
Fort William, Mallaig and return.
Loco: 'Black Five'. 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

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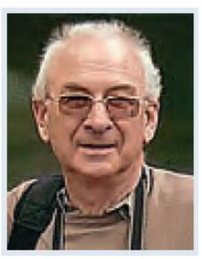

Don Benn covers the Hedge End to Salisbury part of No. 35028 *Clan Line* working the 7.35am Three Bridges to Bristol Temple Meads on December 14, 2024, and tells the story of 'Black Fives' Nos. 5407 and 4767 on the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' in February 1981, plus No. 44767 in February 1984.

OWING to having temporary restricted typing ability and being on light duties, my column is shorter than usual but with plenty of images. Continuing from last time, Table One shows No. 35028 *Clan Line* on the Hedge End to Salisbury section, where once again Bob Baines kept closely to booked times after leaving slightly late and with little or no help from the banking Class 47 No. 47848. The 1-in-189 after Chandlers Ford was topped at 42mph and after Romsey the uphill section to Milepost 86 taken in the mid-50s, speed dropping to 54 on the final mile of 1-in-234 before we reached 60 on the level to Dean. The 1-in-220 to the final summit after Alderbury Junction saw speed drop to 47mph. It's a pity Salisbury saw fit to put a local DMU across our path as we were precisely on time at Tunnel Junction. As my old notebooks state: "The signalmen always win!"

'Black Fives' on the CME

Saturday, February 21, 1981, saw us on the 5.55am Paddock Wood to Charing Cross in Class 411 CEP No. 411510, which was 23 late due to a points failure. We still made the 7.45am at Euston hauled by Class 87 No. 87025 *Borderer* on 12 coaches. This ran to time, with the 140.55-mile Watford Junction to Crewe in 97 minutes 17 seconds unchecked, 86.7mph, max 106mph. Here we joined this version of the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express,' hauled to Carnforth by AL2 electric locomotive No. 82005 on 11 Mk.1 first class open coaches. How we were spoilt then; compare with today's Mk.2 'coffins' – no comparison, in my view. The locomotive ran well enough with a maximum of 88mph.

'Black Five' No. 5407 took over at Carnforth and, after a break, set off vigorously to Wennington. The day was dry and sunny, so it made a much faster start than A4 No. 4498 did as covered my last column, though conditions then were atrocious. With 425 tons, the climb to beyond Borwick dragged speed back to 27mph. After the Wennington stop, No. 5407 did well to top the 1-in-100 at Shaw at 29mph and we were 10 late into Hellifield due to a signal stop at Settle Junction. Table Two shows the detail of this section.

At Hellifield, classmate No. 4767 *George Stephenson* awaited us, and we left nine late on an easy schedule up the mainly 1-in-100 climb to

TABLE ONE: HEDGE END TO SALISBURY

Date	Saturday, December 14, 2024
Train	7.35am Three Bridges to Bristol TM
Loco	MN class 4-6-2 No. 35028 *Clan Line*
Load	10 coaches, 335 tons tare plus mainly non workng No 47848, 112 tons, 480 tons full
Driver	Bob Baines
Fireman	Jack Johnson
Position	Eighth coach
Weather	Sunny spells, calm

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Hedge End	0.00	0.00	00	00	4¾ late
MP 75	1.93		04	53	48½
Eastleigh	3.58	9.00	09	07	4*
Single Line Jct	4.30	12.00	12	35	0*
Signal		21.00	20	50	
Chandlers Ford	5.63		26	00	36
MP 76½	6.79		27	52	39
MP 77¼	7.54		29	32	42
Halterworth LC	9.59		30	34	52½
Romsey	10.88	36.30	33	18	40*
MP 82	12.30		35	12	51½
MP 83	13.30		36	20	54½
Kimbridge LC	13.84		36	57	55½
Dunbridge	14.51		37	45	56½
MP 85	15.30		38	32	55
MP 86	16.30		39	38	54
Dean Hill LC	17.00		40	20	56½
MP 87	17.30		40	44	57½
Dean	18.47	46.00	41	48	60
MP 89	19.30		42	47	56
East Grimstead	20.67		44	02	52
Alderbury Jct	22.42		46	12	50
MP 93	23.30		47	24	47
MP 94	24.30		48	34	54
Milford Jct	25.27		49	20	27*
Laverstock S Jct	26.00		51	47	25*
Tunnel Jct	26.29	57.00	52	14	21*
			sigs stop		
			54	10	0*
			55	45	
Salisbury	27.38	61.00	58	44	2½ late

*brakes or speed restriction

Runpasts were once a common fixture of railtours, and No. 4767 performs one of these at Appleby during a 'Cumbrian Mountain Express,' captured from the footbridge. DON BENN

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No. 44767 battles a gale at Kettlesbeck on February 4, 1984, with the Carnforth to Hellifield leg of the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' from Euston to Carlisle. DON BENN

The red-backed nameplates of No. 4767 *George Stephenson* stand out against the locomotive at Appleby. DON BENN

Three years later, 'Black Five' No. 44767 approaches Hellifield on the 4pm to Carnforth. DON BENN

'Black Five' No. 5407 leaves Carnforth for Hellifield with the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express.' DON BENN

TABLE TWO: CARNFORTH TO HELLIFIELD

Date Saturday, February 21, 1981
Train 10.10am Crewe to Carlisle
Loco LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 5407
Load Eleven coaches, 395 tons tare 425 tons gross
Mk.1 open first stock
Crew Not recorded
Recorder Don Benn stopwatch
Weather Fine

	miles	Sched	mins	secs	speed
Carnforth	0.00	0.00	00	00	11½ late
Carnforth E Jct	0.33	3.00	03	01	23½
Borwick	3.13		08	53	37/27
Arkholme	6.93		15	18	40/36
Melling	8.03		17	52	50 max
Wennington	9.60	20.00	21	32	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	1¼ late
Bentham	3.20		08	29	31/36
Shaw PC	6.12		14	10	29
Clapham	7.45		16	33	32/30½
Eldroth	10.53		21	31	44/33
Giggleswick	13.14		25	23	53
			sigs stop		
Settle Jct	14.85		29	23	0*
			33	56	
Settle Jct SB	14.95	25.00	35	13	22½
Long Preston	16.98		39	09	38
Hellifield	18.20	33.00	42	33	10¾ late

*brakes or speed restriction

TABLE THREE: HELLIFIELD TO APPLEBY

Date Saturday, February 21, 1981
Train 10.10am Crewe to Carlisle 'CME'
Loco Black Five 4-6-0 No. 4767 *George Stephenson*
Load Eleven coaches, 395 tons tare, 425 tons gross
Mk.1 open first stock
Crew Not recorded
Recorder Don Benn
Position Three of 11
Weather Sunny spells

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Hellifield	0.00	0.00	00	00	9¼ late
Long Preston	1.23		04	14	48/*sigs
Settle Junction	3.25	5.00	06	39	56½
Settle	5.21		09	00	45
Stainforth Sidings	6.97		11	49	34½
Stainforth Tunnel	7.40		12	35	33
Milepost 240	8.72		14	57	31
Helwith Bridge	9.22		15	49	33½
Milepost 241	9.72		16	45	36½
Milepost 242	10.72		18	32	35
Ribblesdale	11.26		19	31	34
Milepost 244	12.72		22	11	32½
Selside	13.52		23	52	29
Milepost 246	14.72		26	20	27
Ribblehead	15.92		28	58	29
Blea Moor	17.21	38.00	31	41	24
Blea Moor Tunnel	18.04		33	47	23
Milepost 252	20.72		37	48	46
Dent	22.12	53.00	41	28	2¼ early
	0.00	0.00	00	00	7¼ early
Milepost 255	1.80		03	38	47
Milepost 256	2.80		04	50	50
Garsdale	3.28	10.00	06	13	11 early
	0.00	0.00	00	00	17¼ early
Ais Gill	3.05	8.00	05	55	45/54
Mallerstang	6.60		10	09	44*/54
Kirkby Stephen	9.95		14	10	50*/53
Crosby Garrett	13.10		17	52	46*/51
Griseburn	15.30		20	21	60
Ormside	18.15		23	30	49*/53
Appleby	20.60	35.00	28	04	24¼ early

*brakes or speed restriction

A second runpast at Appleby with No. 4767, this time from ground level. DON BENN

Blea Moor tunnel. A splendid effort was put in, with this load gaining over 11 minutes to the photo stop at Dent and then to another stop at Garsdale for more photographss, before arriving at Appleby 24 early. Here, No. 4767 performed three runpasts, the first on any BR main line special train. By now the weather was dull, but this took nothing away from the occasion. Table Three shows the detail of the run from Hellifield.

We left 10 minutes early and got to Carlisle on time after an extra stop at Armathwaite. No. 82005 took us back to Crewe eight late, covering the 90.1 miles to Preston in 78 minutes, which included a signal stop and 98mph maximum. Can the reader imagine anything like this superb day trip today? Everything focused on the rail enthusiast and not as it is today... no wonder so many of us have given up booking trips now.

At Preston we caught the 7.30pm to Euston, hauled by No. 87004 on 11 coaches, which left seven late and ran the 140.55 miles to Watford Junction in 99 minutes 44 seconds – an average of 84.6mph including checks. Euston arrival was 10 late but we still caught the 10.03pm from Charing Cross with 4CEP No. 7120 and an overall time of 337 minutes for the 336.5 miles home from Carlisle. Total miles that day 715.1 at a total cost of £16.96!

Finally, Table Four shows the work of No. 4767 running as No. 44767 three years later, on the Hellifield to Carnforth section with 12 coaches for 450 tons. Another fine effort with speed only falling from 36mph to 32 on the 1-in-100 from Giggleswick to Milepost 237¾. This was on a 'CME' running the other way round. LMS Duchess No. 46229 on 13 for 485 tons ran Carlisle to Hellifield and topped Ais Gill at 45½mph. Driver Hayton coped with much slipping in the poor conditions with this fine locomotive. February each year since the early 1980s was my time for the Settle and Carlisle.

Next time, I will look at exploits of No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* in 1965 in view of its return to action, as reported on Headline News, page 7. HR

TABLE FOUR: HELLIFIELD TO CARNFORTH

Date	Saturday, February 11, 1984
Train	'Cumbrian Mountain Express'
	4pm Hellifield to Carnforth
Locos	LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 44767 *George Stephenson*
Driver	J Knowles
Load	Twelev coaches, 420 tons tare, 450 tons gross
Position	Back
Timed by	Don Benn
Weather	Cold, misty with drizzle

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Hellifield	0.00	0.00	00	00	2 mins late
MP 232	0.72		02	11	38
Long Preston	1.25		03	00	40½
Settle Junction	3.25	10.00	08	35	sigs 4*
			sigs stop		0*
MP 235¼	3.31		15	26	31½
Giggleswick	5.06		17	25	36
MP 237	5.72		18	32	33
MP 237¾	6.47		19	54	32
Eldroth	7.67		21	23	52½
MP 241	9.72		23	48	54½
Clapham	10.75		25	14	31*
MP 244	12.72		28	16	55½
Bentham	15.00		30	37	59
MP 248	16.72		32	22	62½
Wennington	18.20	30.00	34	20	41*/40
Melling	19.77		36	35	49
MP 7½	20.33		37	13	51
Arkholme	20.87		37	52	51/53
MP 5½	22.33		39	41	46
MP 4½	23.33		40	48	61
Borwick	24.67		42	30	tsr 24*/31
Carnforth East Jct	27.47	44.00	49	29	11*
Carnforth	27.80	46.00	51	06	

net time 42 minutes

*brakes or speed restriction

As No. 5407 draws into Hellifield, No. 4767 waits on the right to take the train onwards. DON BENN

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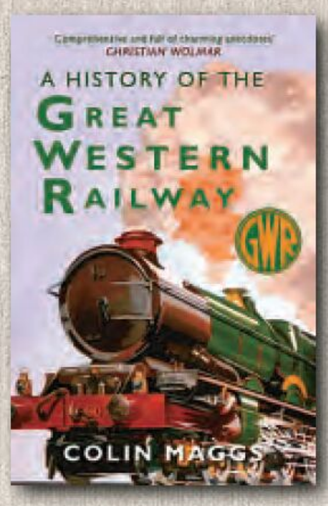

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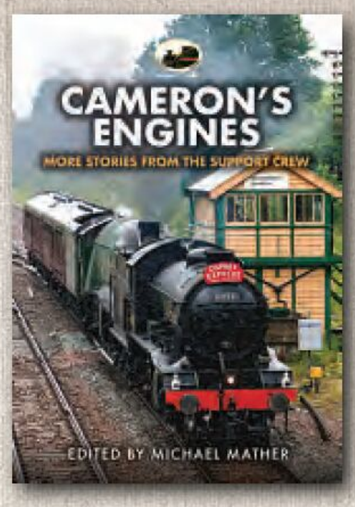

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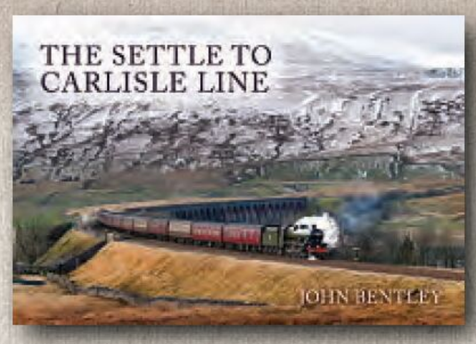

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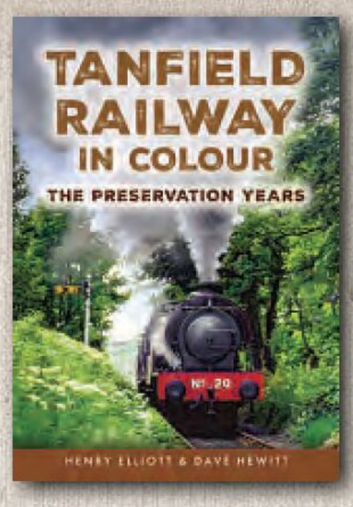

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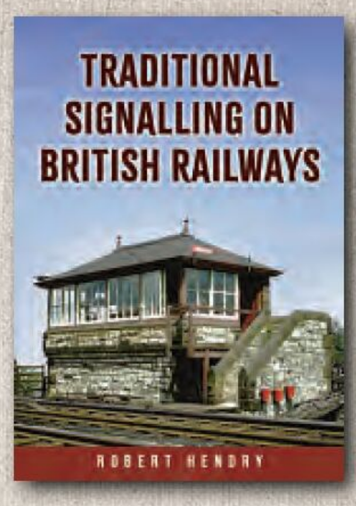

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Auctions of 1000 lots now the norm rather than exception

ONE of the ongoing verbal and social media debates currently circulating within the railwayana movement is the sheer weight of items coming onto the market and the amount of railwayana going under the hammer, with 1000-lot auctions now the rule rather than the exception.

Many collectors, especially those from the BR steam era generation, are lamenting the near total absence of live saleroom auctions – hats off to Talisman Railwayana for keeping that tradition going – and there is no denying that some struggle to keep on top of the bewildering flexibility that online sales give to the auction houses in terms of particularly date changes and last-minute additions.

One of those auction house principals who has fully embraced the internet era is Simon Turner, of GW Railwayana. He is – how shall I put it? – midway between the newcomers and older generation, but realised that post-Covid, the way forward was IT-based and set about adapting to this new order, including seeking professional help when required.

Now he's up there in the premier league, sharing that elevated status with the movement's friends at Great Central and Talisman, with Great Northern and Transport Auctions of London knocking at the door, and newcomer Main Line Railwayana Auctions eyeing up the situation.

Such is the number of items, and in particular nameplates, in Simon's next auction, a two-day affair that will run over the weekend of March 15/16, I thought it opportune to seek his thoughts on the current scene and the years ahead.

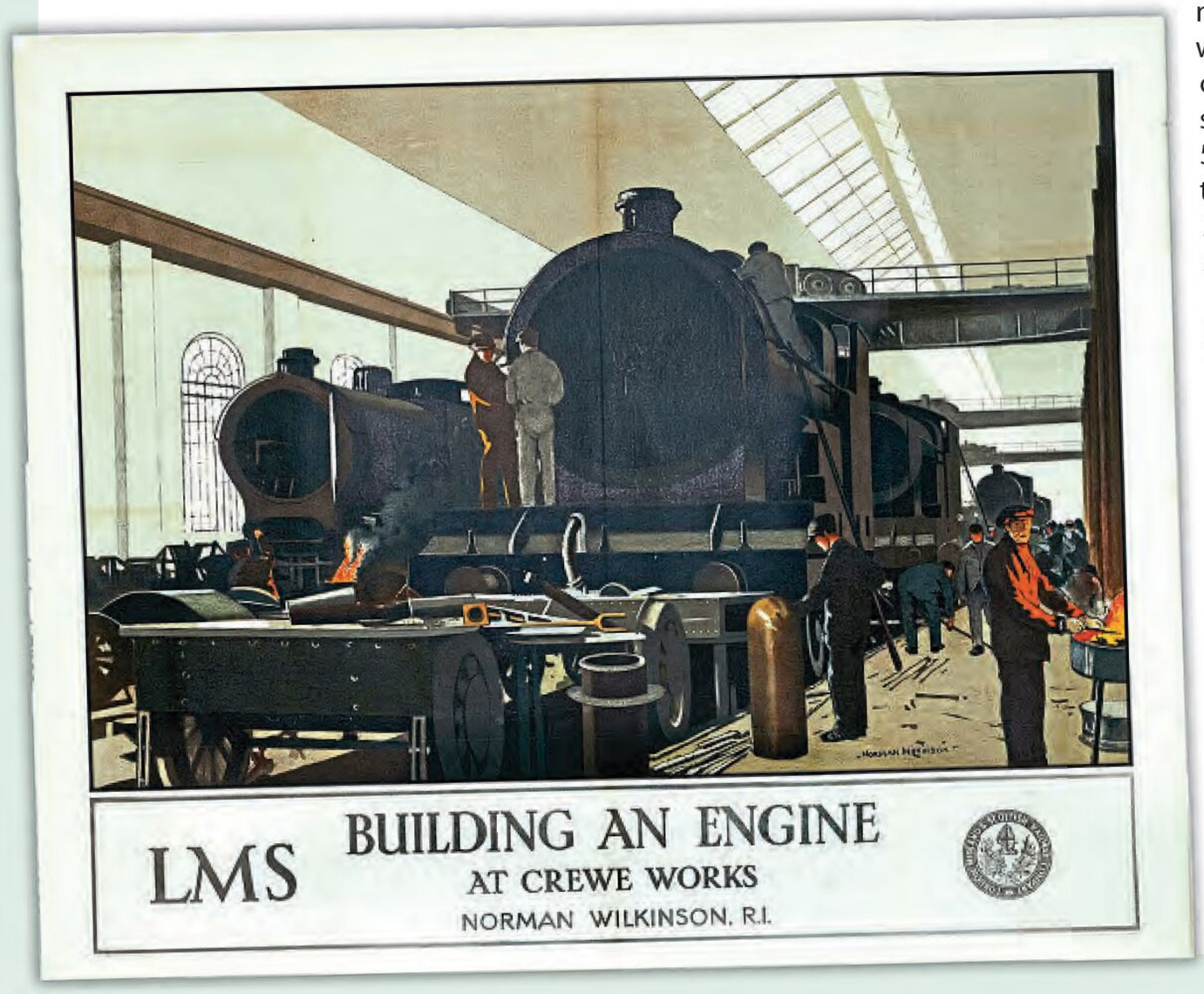
Surprised

Simon admitted that he was surprised by how prices were holding up despite all the railwayana going under various hammers, but felt it would continue, as would the number of items in various auctions, backing this up by saying that by mid-February he had already been assigned 150 lots for his summer auction in July.

"The sheer weight of railwayana coming onto the market is due to a variety of factors," he said. "These include collectors sadly passing away, some collectors deciding to sell now so as not to burden their family with the task when they die, downsizing, and such unpredictable factors as garage finds. There is no sign of it letting up."

He said that the internet had changed so much of the way railwayana was sold, and what he didn't know in this respect he sought advice about. "I come from a sales background, not internet, and was never reluctant to pick the brains of those who were willing to help and advise in this regard, while I was determined to make the website, which I designed, the best, yet easy to navigate." One tradition he continues, as does Talisman Railwayana, is the distribution of a free full colour catalogue. "Not cheap, but worth every penny," he said.

As an illustration of the volume of railwayana currently on the market via auctions, Simon's March 15/16 sale of exactly 1000 lots includes no fewer than 27 main line steam nameplates – an increase of three since the preview in last month's column – 95 steam worksplates, 32 steam cabsides, 46 main line steam smokebox numberplates, 55 shedplates, 104 station totem signs, 51 posters, and 22 pre- and post-Grouping signalbox nameboards.



Nameplate newcomers

The three nameplate newcomers comprise examples from the GWR, LMS and LNER, one of which is from the interwar years, another constructed during the Second World War, and the third the year after hostilities ceased.

Chronologically, there is, firstly, *Royal Naval Division* from LMS Patriot 4-6-0 No. 45502, a July 1932 Crewe product that was withdrawn from Carlisle Upperby (12B) in September 1960 with 1,388,595 miles on the clock. It was named after an infantry division formed in 1914 from Royal Navy and Royal Marine reservists and volunteers.

Secondly, there is *Klipspringer* from B1 No. 61007, built at Darlington in April 1944 and one of 40 in the class named after a species of antelope. A Scottish-based locomotive for almost its entire 20 years in service, the 4-6-0 was withdrawn from Ayr (67C) in February 1964.

The last of the trio is *Eastnor Castle* from GWR No. 7004, which was outshopped by Swindon in June 1946 and was removed from service in January 1964 when allocated to Reading (81D).

The cabside numberplate from this engine will also be going under the hammer, separately from the nameplate.

Heritage modern traction will have a say in the worksplate selection when a 1961 English Electric Vulcan Foundry example from Deltic D9019/55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* goes under the hammer.

This Co-Co diesel was an Edinburgh Haymarket resident throughout its two decades in traffic, other than for a six-month spell at Finsbury Park, and was saved for preservation on withdrawal in December 1981, so becoming one of six in the class to avoid the cutter's torch.

Among the signalbox nameboards is Biggleswade, a 'box on the ECML between Hitchin and Sandy dating from circa 1877 that was a representative of one of the earliest Great Northern Railway designs, and within the poster line-up is 'Building an engine at Crewe Works.'

This c1930 illustration was painted for the LMS by Cambridge-born Norman Wilkinson (1878-1971), who studied in Portsmouth, Cornwall and Paris, was long associated with the *Illustrated London News*, and was the inventor of the First World War life-saving 'dazzle camouflage' for ships.

The auction on its first day on March 15 starts at 9.30am, and at 10am the following day, and both will be live online.

Pre-order Issue 331: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

UK model of South African engine sells for £10k

A TWO-DAY sale of model trains held by Vectis on January 29/30 proved to be a storming success for a 3½in gauge live steam model that sold for £10,000. Based on South African Railways Class 23 4-8-2 No. 2552, the 7ft 6in long model was built by Herbert Clarkson of York between 1979 and 1985 for a South African radio and TV presenter who later moved to the UK.

The mixed traffic German-built Class 23 comprised 136 locomotives of 43,200lb-ft tractive effort that entered service in 1938/39. All had been withdrawn by 1983 and two survive in preservation.

Some way behind was the runner-up, a Marklin of Germany O-gauge four-car express railcar which fetched £680, followed by 12 Hornby O-gauge tank locomotives, including clockwork examples, that sold as a single lot for £500, a price matched by four 0-4-0T engines built by Mamod of Birmingham that also went under the hammer as a single lot.

Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT)

Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **Ends March 14**
  Great Central Railwayana ('Bloxham' auction)
- **March 15/16**
  GW Railwayana
- **March 25**
  Special Auction Services (model trains)
- **March 26/27**
  Vectis (model trains)
- **March 27 -April 6**
  Great Northern Railwayana
- **April 14-29**
  Paperchase

Collectors set their sights on railway anniversary

WITH the country's enthusiasts celebrating 200 years of train travel, a folder of items relating to the Stockton & Darlington Railway was appropriately in the limelight at Thirsk Railwayana's online auction of 1005 lots on January 17-21 when it was first past the post with a hammer price of £1400.

It was on this railway on September 27, 1825, that George Stephenson's *Locomotion No. 1* became the first steam locomotive to haul a passenger-carrying train on a public railway, a seminal moment in the history of the UK's transport history, and one that reshaped the world.

The runner-up was a North Eastern Railway gatehouse crossing enamel nameboard Low Marishes, from the Malton-Pickering line in North Yorkshire, which sold for £700. The two prices exclude buyer's premium of 12% (+ VAT).

Free map sells for £510

A MAP of the London Underground that was issued free nearly 100 years ago sold for £510 at Paperchase Auctions' quarterly postal and email sale that ran from January 14-28.

The map, dated June 1927, featured an advertising overprint for Hugh Stevenson & Sons boxmakers, and included a list of theatres and places of interest.

Another map, of the Midland & Great Northern Railways Joint Committee lines, went for £330.

The Railway Clearing House-style map, which was undated, was in leather-bound hardback covers with title in gold on the front. Both prices exclude buyer's premium of 12½%.

→ A Trix HO gauge hand-made brass set based on a train built by Palatine Railways for the court of Maximilian II, king of Bavaria from 1848-64, was the top seller at £750 in a model trains sale held by Special Auction Services of Newbury on January 28/29. The set comprised 4-2-0 locomotive *Poenitz*, three passenger cars and a baggage car, with one of the cars featuring a coat of arms. The price excludes buyer's premium of 20% (+VAT).

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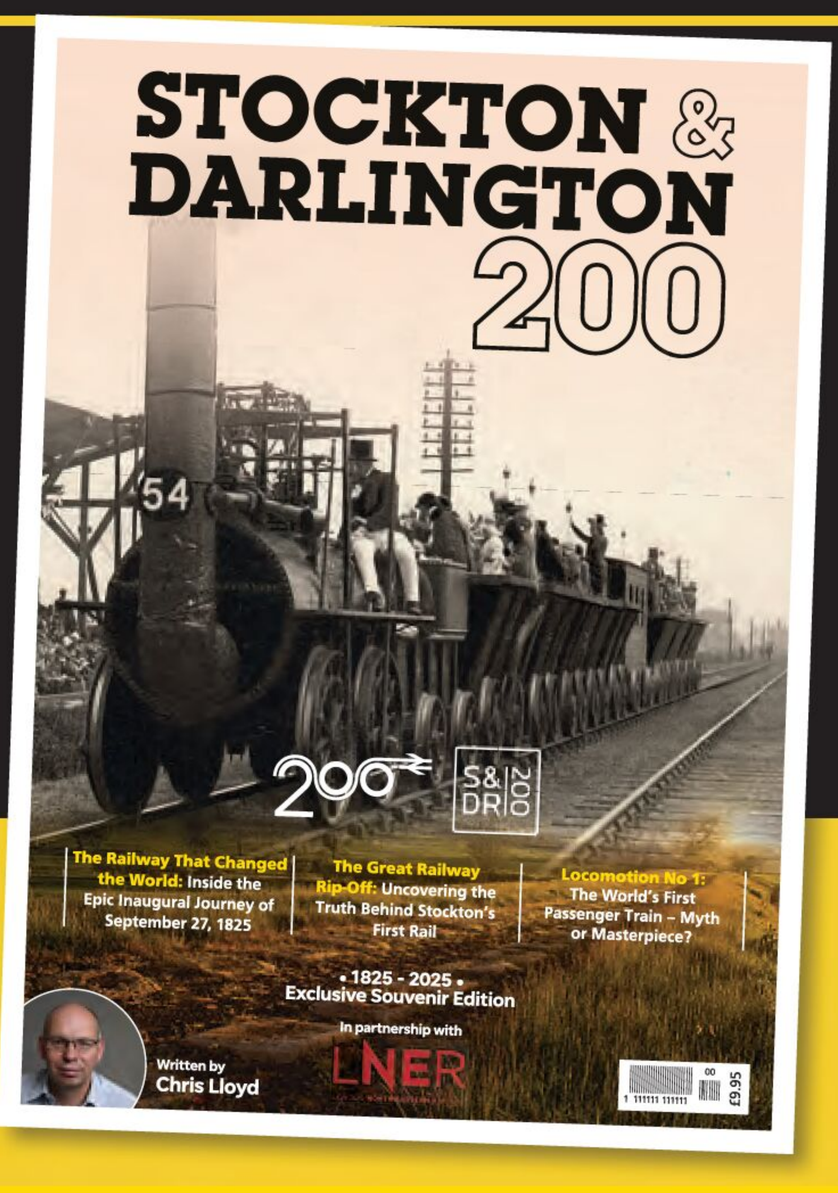

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SIDINGS SUPREME!

Swithland, on the Great Central Railway, has the largest sidings of any UK heritage line, coupled with four running roads alongside. Its size for a heritage railway is difficult to comprehend, plus it has the realistic feel of a main line, reports John Titlow in words and pictures.

During the heritage era, Swithland Sidings has been developed extensively into what it is today – and the Great Central Railway has done a superb, sympathetic job.

The original sidings were built in 1898 for granite trains from the nearby Mountsorrel quarries linked by an industrial branch line. At Swithland, wagons would be marshalled according to their destination for onward travel over the Great Central main line. Returning empties would be similarly dealt with.

Swithland was originally to have an island platform in the same style as Rothley and Quorn & Woodhouse; despite the Up and Down main lines being spaced for this, it was never built. Opened in 1899, Rothley station is less than a mile away. It was local protests that persuaded the GC to build a station there rather than at Swithland, which is in the middle of nowhere, a decision that made more sense as it is nearer to local houses.

Surprisingly, Swithland was involved in preparation for the D-Day landings, where an extra track was built across The Ridings, the road that runs under the railway alongside the reservoir.

Under Beeching and the decline of the railways in the 1960s, the questionable decision was made to close the Great Central route. Final closure came in 1969, and BR removed the track. By the time the preservationists moved in, there was only a single line left and virtually nothing else. Everything you see now has been rebuilt to become the largest track and signalling project in British railway preservation. It has Up and Down main lines, complete with passing loops, giving the atmosphere of a real main line in steam days, plus an array of sidings and buildings used for storage. Another major feature is, of course, the reinstatement of the Mountsorrel branch.

Swithland was the location for the railway scenes in the 1988 film Buster, which portrayed Great Train Robber Buster Edwards. Directed by David Green, it starred Phil Collins and Julie Walters. The Great Train Robbery took place in 1963 and Swithland doubled up for Ledburn, Buckinghamshire, where the crime took place.

The sequences there depict when a mail train from Glasgow to London was stopped after the robbers tampered with the signals to stop the train. Class 40 No. 40106 masqueraded as D326, the original locomotive in the robbery, after a repaint into early BR green with small yellow warning panel, complete with mock-up split-headcode indicator boxes.

The GCR's mail set was used to represent the ex-LMS mail coaches involved in the robbery disguised on one side with flush sides. Unusual for film companies, much thought was given into the authenticity of the railway scenes.

Swithland signalbox

The original signalbox was located on the Down side, opposite where the present one is located. The re-erected structure came from Aylesbury South, where it was built in 1905.

It is a Great Central 'box with a Great Western frame and controls all workings through Swithland, including the Mountsorrel branch and the entrance to the sidings, it became operational in 2012. It has 55 levers, 50 working and five spares, and works on a double-track absolute block system. It also has the capability of being switched out after the main running line signals have been cleared.

The Mountsorrel branch is train staff operated and a new post for it has been erected next to the signalbox. The sidings are controlled by hand points and the signalbox controls access in and out.

One unusual feature is the black-and-white checkered levers inside the 'box that operate detonator placers on the Up and Down lines.

The semaphore signals themselves are a mixture of GWR and BR(WR) types coming from various locations such as Cardiff East Dock and Banbury Junction. Most points are mechanically worked, but three of the furthest from the 'box are electric motor-operated.

The signals at Swithland are lower quadrant and the arms operate differently from the rest of the GC by dropping, which is typical Great Western; others on the line go up.

Inside the 55-lever signalbox at Swithland Sidings.

Signalman Rob Smith relaxes in between trains inside Swithland Sidings signalbox looking north.

Swithland Sidings signalbox which came from Aylesbury.

Running past the beautifully restored Swithland Sidings signalbox, visiting GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850 heads for Rothley on February 2.

Workings on February 2

I was given special permission to access Swithland Sidings and the signalbox under escort to photograph the workings.

Signalman Rob Smith guided me through the complex workings of the 'box. I thank him for this, and his friendliness and guidance on the day.

What made the day even better was that the three visiting locomotives for the gala that took place the previous weekend (as featured in the last issue of *Heritage Railway*) would be in use. These were GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850, on loan from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, which will be taking up residence at Toddington, and GWR 0-6-2T No. 6695, from the Swindon & Cricklade Railway, courtesy of the 6695 Locomotive Group.

An intensive timetable was in operation throughout the weekend, providing nine return workings between Loughborough and Leicester North, plus a 1pm diner hauled by No. 6880. It was basically a 45-minute service between trains.

"Everything you see now has been rebuilt to become the largest track and signalling project in British railway preservation."

The timetable on the day started at 9.45am from Loughborough, with the last departing at 4.15pm. All three locomotives faced south.

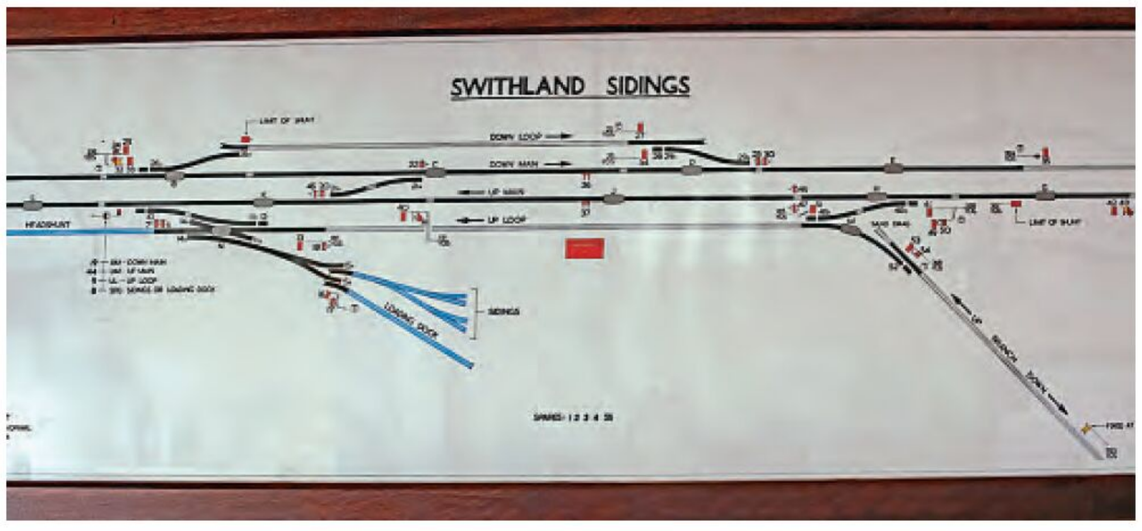
Dominating the scene

Pylons are now becoming a political issue, and you can understand that they are a blight on the British landscape. Swithland has large pylons that dominate the area, and which have been there since BR steam days, but they have become part of the scene now.

With a little care, these can be out of shot for Down trains towards Loughborough. For Up trains towards Leicester, the pylons are not an issue unless you go south where the line returns to double-track.

Walking across four tracks with many signal and point wires and rodding is not for the faint-hearted. Once over the four tracks and standing in a place of safety beyond the many signal cables, I definitely did feel safe, being well clear of any running lines.

The area is protected by an extensive array of signals offering good visibility with time to cross. It is a huge difference to a single-track railway and so understandable is the GCR's



Above: Diagram of lines inside Swithland Sidings signalbox.

Right: Swithland Sidings on a bright sunny day as new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* heads for Rothley with the diner.

The signalman looks out from inside the 'box as GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* heads for Rothley with the diner on February 2.

Above: Running past the signalbox, Churchward 2-8-0 No. 3850 heads for Rothley.

Right: The sun had dipped below the horizon as GWR 0-6-2T No. 6695 and 2-8-0 No. 3850 approach Kinchley Lane.

All mod cons are provided inside the signalbox, looking south.

diligence regarding the issuing of lineside passes, especially being double-track.

Security is tight at Swithland, with CCTV cameras strategically placed for obvious reasons. There is no public access, and it is off-limits for those without lineside passes. While I was there, an unscheduled working took place that was not in the timetable – so you must be diligent at all times.

To say I had a good day would be an understatement. The weather was superb and the steam blew favourably towards the east. This will go down as one of the best days I have had on the GCR.

Permission granted

Permission for access to Swithland Sidings was given by Malcolm Holmes, general manager of the GCR, and I was guided throughout my time there by Paul Mayo, who is the official photographer supervisor/lineside clearance officer. My thanks go to both of them for the access and for their friendliness.

Information for this article came from the excellent GCR website. Visit www.gcrailway.co.uk/station-facilities/swithland-sidings/ to find out more.

Next up

Apart from the regular weekend running and recommended dining trains, for those interested in freight workings, the GCR will be staging Goods Experience Days on April 13, May 25, June 29, July 27 and September 28. Plus, the interestingly named Good(s) Friday is taking place on April 18, with brake van rides available.

If you want to take a look behind the scenes, the Reunification Open Weekend is on April

Visiting from the Swindon & Cricklade Railway, GWR 0-6-2T No. 6695 runs across Swithland Viaduct.

GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850 has crossed Swithland Reservoir and approaches the sidings, with the Mountsorrel branch on the right.

Above: With the first train of the day, GWR 0-6-2T No. 6695 runs past Swithland Sidings on February 2.

Right: As the sun sets, the light dapples as GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850, visiting from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, approaches Swithland.

5/6, where you can find out more about GCR's plans to reunify the line between Loughborough Central and the Great Central Railway (Nottingham).

But the big one has to be the Railways at Work Gala on August 16/17, which recreates the best of British steam operation during the 1960s by combining trains with road vehicles and re-enactors. It is highly recommended.

The Spring Diesel Gala is on April 25-27 and the autumn one on September 4-6. HR

GWR 0-6-2T No. 6695 heads through Swithland Sidings with a mid-afternoon service.

The light had softened but GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 catches the low rays of the sun as it passes Kinchley Lane.

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OF LASTING APPEAL: SEASIDE MINIATURE RAILWAYS

In view of the imminent return of a miniature railway to the 'lost' resort of Severn Beach, near Bristol, after half a century, **Dr Joseph Brennan** examines the history of the concept as major UK attractions at numerous seaside venues beginning at Blackpool in 1901.

"The miniature railway for pleasure is an accepted part of the leisure scene," Anthony Coulls, senior curator of rail transport and technology at the National Railway Museum, wrote in 2003. "It has lasted through two world wars, and there is every sign that the lines at Rhyl and Southport will run to see their centenary in 2011, something their original builders never envisaged."

And indeed, both did: Rhyl Miniature Railway in Wales and Lakeside Miniature Railway in Southport (both opened in 1911) carried on, with the survival of these and others being due to, among other factors, passionate patrons and volunteers, constant renewal and, in some cases, wholesale rebuilding. Rhyl, for example, was rebuilt and re-laid at about the start of the current century, though it still runs round the Marine Lake as it did more than 110 years ago.

Miniature railways have a varied history, but it is in the pursuit of pleasure, especially along seafronts and within seaside towns, that they are probably remembered most fondly – a fondness that has driven the passion to keep them running today.

They have made an indelible mark on the heritage railway scene, despite many challenges in their histories. Here, we take a chronological tour by distinct periods in their development, surveying some significant seaside and close-to-the-sea miniature railways. We focus on those still running today, while also remembering along the way some of those that now exist only in memories and archival documents.

We trace the histories of these select examples, seeing something of the place of seaside (and keeping them there), our tour showing why, in the 2020s, the future of miniature, like love for the bucket and spade, has never been sunnier.

Edwardian miniatures

As Anthony Coulls explained, it was in the Edwardian period (broadly defined) that the miniature pleasure railway with its small-scale versions of steam locomotives rose to prominence, largely as a product of the political landscape in Britain.

The country, having come through the Boer War, was enjoying stability in the early years of the 20th century – a stability out of which spending time away from home in seaside holiday resorts became especially fashionable. Sure, the Victorians loved their watering-places, but the Edwardians were the true leisure-seeking, indeed defining trailblazers. In their pursuit of pleasure, in towns like Scarborough and Weston-super-Mare, when not bathing, visitors were keen to enjoy other amusements – cue the piers, donkey rides, music halls and, yes, miniature railways. And of these amusements, miniatures made their mark fast.

In 1906, for example, rather early in the miniatures' seaside story in Britain, The Street Railway Journal describes the miniature railway 'amusement feature' as one that "has become so fixed in popularity."

Part of this can be understood through the culture of railways at this time. Unlike those other seaside distractions, miniature railways were products of an industrial age, capturing something of the excitement of moving about that, culturally, the railways-proper had helped create. The railways propelled Britain, literally, from an agrarian nation and into the powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution, so it is little wonder that the thrill of experiencing the splendour of steam in miniature was such a

Rhyl Miniature Railway 4-4-2 *Joan* in 2017. HEFIN OWEN/ CREATIVE COMMONS

Opened on May 1, 1901, the Rhyl Miniature Railway has the distinction of being the oldest miniature railway in Britain. This 1978 view depicts 4-4-2 *Michael* in action . LEWIS/CREATIVE COMMONS

drawcard for the intrepid Edwardian pleasure-seeker.

"The novelty of a train in miniature, something tiny but still capable of hard work, appealed to the holidaymaker of a century ago as it does to many in the 21st century," Anthony wrote. "This continued until the 1930s as models of *Flying Scotsman* and the *Coronation Scot* began to appear in leisure locations to attract the trippers."

Blackpool first

As to the genesis of Britain's first public miniature railway, Anthony traces this to the United States and the Cagney brothers' exhibition lines – first opened locally in a 1901 Glasgow exhibition. From here this seed of miniature railways for amusement grew, from zoological gardens, to fairs, to stately homes, and to the seaside.

Out of this lineage, a 15in gauge offering became the standard, and 'Little Giant' (by Wenman J Bassett-Lowke and Henry Greenly) became the first commercially-produced 15in gauge locomotive.

From Bassett-Lowke's work came numerous locomotives and lines, under the Miniature Railways of Great Britain Ltd (MRGB). The first MRGB seaside miniature was in Blackpool on the south side of the town, opened in 1905. It was 15in gauge and used 'Little Giant' locomotives. A real pioneer, it was known as Blackpool's Little Giant Railway (LGR) and is credited as Britain's first seaside miniature.

As reported in the July 27, 1905, edition of *The Model Engineer and Electrician*, it was about 455 yards long and "laid on the flattest portion of the sands in such a way as to miss the sandhills and other permanent buildings in the vicinity, and to reduce the amount of excavating to a minimum."

It was right that Blackpool should be home to Britain's first seaside miniature for, as the *Practical Engineer* writes in the year of its opening, "perhaps in no place in the world are amusements so numerous and varied as at Blackpool ."

Southport's Lakeside Miniature Railway (also known as Pleasureland Miniature Railway) 2-8-0 *Wild West* circa 2020. DAVIDAHULL/ CREATIVE COMMONS

Sadly, however, the LGR was not to last, closing in 1909 – before Rhyl Miniature Railway (RMR) and Southport's Lakeside Miniature Railway (LMR) even opened. RMR seems to have got in first, opening on May 1, 1911, while the first steam train at Southport – *King George V* – ran on May 17, 1911.

While the RMR claims to be the oldest miniature railway in Britain, Southport has the distinction of being the oldest continuously running 15in railway in the world. RMR's closure came in 1969, after Rhyl Amusements' lease of the Marine Lake ran out.

Thankfully, all equipment went into storage – except *Joan*, which was engaged on Manchester's Belle Vue Zoo Railway – and in 1977 a plan to restore Rhyl's miniature was met with approval from Rhuddlan Borough Council, allowing tracklaying to begin.

Trains were running again at Rhyl on July 1, 1978. From 1980, local businessman Les Hughes became a driving force behind its continued survival, while in the present century the Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust has placed it on firm ground, highlights being the 2007 Central Station project and the RMR achieving Accredited Museum Status in 2010.

As to Southport's LMR, it was sold to Norman Wallis, the owner of Southport Pleasureland, in 2016, with plans for a new station terminus, café and ice cream parlour reportedly approved in 2021. Also known as Pleasureland Miniature Railway, at the time of writing Southport Pleasureland was closed, and set to reopen its gates this spring.

First World War miniatures

The Fairbourne Railway (FR), near

Since regauged to 12 ¼in, the 15in gauge Fairbourne Railway is seen in 1980. FOULGER RAIL PHOTOS/CREATIVE COMMONS

The Fairbourne Railway in 1955. ANTHONY HARRISON/CREATIVE COMMONS

Barmouth in Wales, was another Bassett-Lowke venture, Bassett-Lowke changing the name of his company to Narrow Gauge Railways Ltd in 1912, after the previous company went into voluntary liquidation.

Opening in 1916, it was, you guessed it, 15in gauge and used 'Little Giant' locomotives. Still running today from Fairbourne village to the mouth of the Mawddach Estuary (connecting with the ferry to Barmouth), this railway was somewhat of a gamble, as Dr Marcus Rooks explored in his 2012 thesis on seaside miniatures.

Fairbourne is different from most seaside miniature railways in that it was built in an attempt to generate a spectacle and to start a resort/leisure culture in the area but was never directly involved with a seaside spectacle as none developed in the village, as Rooks wrote. Consequently, there was never an associated spectacle to draw people to the area in sufficient numbers to make the line economically viable.

Like other miniatures on our tour, the FR has overcome periods of closure (such as in 1940, when the area was commandeered by the military) and has had its share of fiscal and other challenges. An interesting case in point being from inception, with Bassett-Lowke laying much of the line directly in the

Milner 2-6-T *Russell* of 1985 on the Fairbourne Railway in 2019.
GARETH WILLIAMS/CREATIVE COMMONS

Pictured in 2011, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2025. Although opened as a miniature in 1915, it had a previous life as a narrow gauge iron ore railway dating from 1875.
GENERALISING/CREATIVE COMMONS

Fairbourne Railway No. 759 *Exe* in 2009.
DOROTHEA WITTER-RIEDER/CREATIVE COMMONS

sand – something that had caused considerable problems at Blackpool, where the line was similarly constructed on sand. The FR is one of many to have been rebuilt; in 1986 when it was reconstructed in 12¼in gauge.

Key to survival has been enthusiast entrepreneurs willing to contribute money to keep these schemes alive (including, during the interwar period, local ferrymen). Today, the FR benefits from a charitable body (in place since 2009) working to safeguard its future, while local authorities have also been a key source of miniature salvation – a fact that itself demonstrates the important local heritage functions of these sites.

Another First World War coast-aligned miniature was the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway (R&ER) in the Lake District, opened in 1915. Interestingly, the R&ER had a previous life as a narrow gauge iron ore railway (opened commercially in 1875, carrying passengers in 1876), it being later purchased and converted to 15in gauge for its new life as a seaside miniature.

Combining this earlier history, 2025 marks the R&ER's 150th anniversary and it prides itself on being the first public narrow gauge railway in England. Its seven-mile journey lasting 40 minutes offers stunning views of the coastal estuary.

Interwar miniatures

Margate Dreamland in Kent had a miniature railway, opened in 1920. Sadly, it closed in 1960 after 60 years of continuous operation, while at the end of the 1920s and during the early 1930s, Blackpool and Scarborough gained larger gauge lines, which used diesel-powered, scaled-down versions of well-known express steam locomotives of the time.

The end of hostilities proved a opportune time for miniatures, with many a pleasure garden and resort being equipped with railways, Alton Towers being a notable example.

The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RH&DR) in Kent is our late 1920s pick, however. Opened in 1927, its one-third full-size diesel and steam locomotives still run today along a 13½-mile track from the Cinque Port town of Hythe to Dungeness, with four stations between all in walking distance to a beach.

***Hurricane* at Dungeness on the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway in 2017, when it celebrated its 90th year.** PETER TRIMMING/CREATIVE COMMONS

The RH&DR was the brainchild of Capt JEP Howey and Count Louis Zborowski, who, interestingly, had attempted to purchase the R&ER.

When the RH&DR opened on July 16, 1927, with *Hercules* hauling the inaugural train, it covered, in double track, only Hythe to New Romney, a distance of eight miles.

Now, without Count Zborowski, who had been killed in a racing accident in 1924 (the man who was part of the inspiration for Ian Fleming's Chitty Chitty Bang Bang story), Howey was keen to extend the line, and sure enough, by 1928, there was a double-track line to Dungeness via Greatstone.

The RH&DR became much-loved and celebrated as the smallest public railway in the world. It was, as with many miniatures, hard hit by the Second World War, being requisitioned by the War Department – where the world's only miniature armoured train was also developed.

The RH&DR prevailed, helped in part by public interest in its role in the war. After further challenges led to near closure, it was then saved in 1973 by the efforts of a new patron, Sir William McAlpine, a steward for the railway well into the present century. As its centenary approaches, it remains today, as it

***Typhoon* departs Dungeness on the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway in 1996.** FOULGER RAIL PHOTOS/CREATIVE COMMONS

Entering Northstead Manor Gardens via Scarborough North Bay Railway in 1969. ALAN WALKER/CREATIVE COMMONS

was in the 1920s, a major Kent attraction.

Of the miniatures opened in the 1930s, my pick is the Scarborough North Bay Railway (SNBR) – opened in 1931. Celebrated today as 'Britain's biggest miniature railway,' this 20in gauge beauty is highly picturesque. Travelling the 30 minutes from Peasholm station, next to Peasholm Park, to Scalby Mills station, next to Scarborough Sealife, stunning sea and lake views abound on this amusement that has the added public benefit of also doubling as a transport link.

Postwar miniatures

For those miniatures that managed to (and those willing to resurrect closed railways or invest in new ventures during the rebuilding period), postwar Britain rewarded many as a boom time for the seaside miniature railway. Like the stability of Britain following the Boer War, after VE Day pleasure-seekers flocked to the seaside, and both construction and reconstruction of these railways rose to meet this appetite for some well-earned recreation.

New railways from the 1940s in the 10¼in gauge included Weymouth in 1947, then Cleethorpes, Hastings, Littlehampton, New Brighton and Saltburn in 1948, and Poole in 1949. Among those still running is Hastings Miniature Railway located on the seafront of Hastings Old Town in East Sussex, running from Rock-a-Nore station to Marine Parade.

Also still running are the Saltburn Miniature Railway (with roots in 1947 and a revival in 1985), Littlehampton Miniature Railway (with many close calls in its history) and Poole Park Railway (revived in the present decade). But for our tour, let's take a closer look at the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway (CCLR).

It opened on July 17, 1948, behind Cleethorpes Bathing Pool and ran for 300 yards. A rather restricted site, it found more room to roam the following year on the seaward site of the boating lake at Thrunscoe Recreation Ground.

With a double track and two stations, it was 765 yards long and a success. Yet tensions ran high between owner William Botterill and Cleethorpes Borough Council; a council refusal to renew the lease led to a change in ownership to Arthur Clethro and reopening as Cleethorpes Miniature Electric Railway in 1954 – a marker of the times.

The railway was 'nationalised' as a council-owned enterprise in 1959, and the 1960s was a challenging decade for it – as it was for many lines around the country. The council extended and modernised the railway in 1972, its new track of 14¼in gauge including two gas propane locomotives – one in the style of *Flying Scotsman* – and an extension of the line

A Butlin's branch line

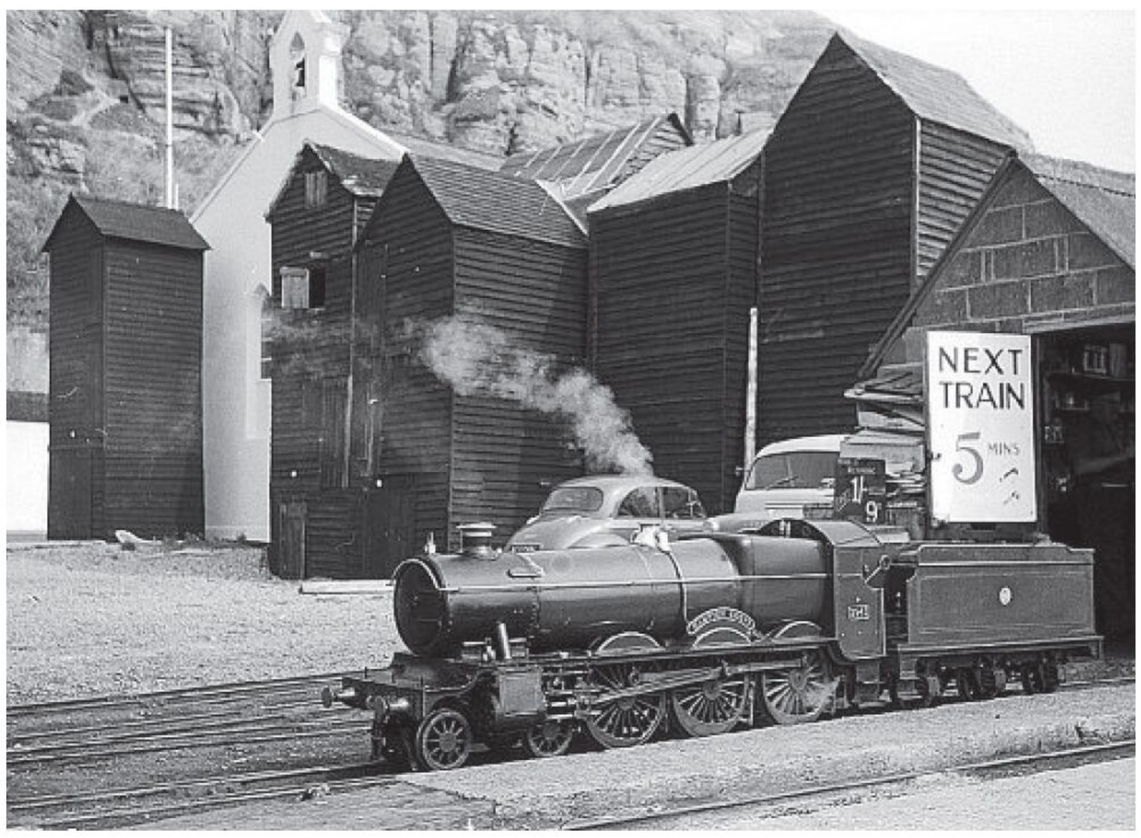
AS A bridge from the interwar to postwar period, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the contribution of Butlin's to the miniature seaside story.

As Peter Scott explained in his 2001 A History of the Butlin's Railways, though Butlin's holiday camps are still a household name, "not so widely known is the fact that Butlin's were operators of numerous miniature railways. These comprised 12 lines of no less than four different gauges. In all they ran for 58 years between 1938 and 1996."

The decline of these miniatures is in line with a broader decline of Butlin's to competition from international package holiday options – something that started in earnest in the 1960s and was fanned by the rise of affordable air travel in the decades following. But the place of these miniatures in the memories of many readers will be very dear to childhood summers indeed.

Given that the more independent seaside miniature enterprises have, on balance, better weathered the ebbs and flows of Britain's seaside town fortunes, remembering Butlin's, even as branch line, is important, I feel.

The miniature railway at Butlin's Ayr in 1984. The camp is now a Haven holiday park known as Craig Tara. STUART JAMIESON/CREATIVE COMMONS



***Hampton Court* at Rock-a-Nore on the Hastings Miniature Railway in 1966.**
ALAN MURRAY-RUST/CREATIVE COMMONS

Seaside fun for the whole family at Hastings Miniature Railway in 2019.
OAST HOUSE ARCHIVE/ CREATIVE COMMONS

Left: Back in business: Poole Park Railway in Dorset reopened in 2022 following a £480,000 refurbishment. Shown here is *Howard* in 2023.
JOHN K THORNE/ CREATIVE COMMONS

north and south. Alas, it did not flourish as was perhaps hoped, suffering from the same kinds of problems that plagued many of Britain's seaside locales during this period, landing itself back in private hands in 1991.

This was a welcome turn in its fortunes, we now know. Upgrades and standardisation of the track to 15in gauge refreshed the offering in 1994, while the year 2000 saw a station relocation and an impressive 45-yard viaduct.

Its current owner (Seaside Railway Group) took over in 2014. This group then purchased the SNBR in 2021 and, out of the challenges of Covid-19, the railway has been embraced. It celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2023.

In addition to challenges borne of cultural changes in how Britons holiday, miniatures near the sea have had to contend with natural calamity, too – such as the Hove Park Railway (HPR) in Sussex (which dates from the 1970s), which had more than a quarter of its track destroyed by the Great Storm of 1987.

It took five years for the HPR to be wholesale rebuilt. But even during this work, short sections were in use, and a scheduled public open day was never missed.

The track in its present form reopened in 1992 and it still runs today, being owned and operated by the Brighton & Hove Society of Miniature Locomotive Engineers.

Preserving heritage

Seaside miniature railways have become very much a part of the heritage sector, a necessary approach that has allowed them to remain open, Rooks observed in 2012. The importance of the heritage/preservation scene that, in this author's view, has only grown in the last decade.

And there's a great optimism and momentum for keeping our railway heritage in working order that underpins miniatures' survival: one that, in Rooks' words, shows "a resilience and popularity that, despite changes in public attitudes towards leisure, shows that miniatures] still remain as an integral part of the leisure facilities of many seaside resorts, albeit with the help and assistance of charities, preservation societies and much voluntary unpaid help."

Clearly, much community and grassroots passion and a groundswell culture of conservation has ensured that seaside miniatures remain a key part of Britain's resorts, seaside identity and broader leisure culture, and yielded with these efforts to keep miniatures alive, have come many exciting acquisitions and opportunities for renewal and remembering along the way.

In 2002, for example, the entire Sutton Park Miniature Railway was given new life on the CCLR following 40 years in storage. This has benefits for all, as these relics of former glory days were able to be properly conserved and actively enjoyed by patrons of all ages for the first time in a generation. "The place of the miniature railway," Anthony wrote in the year after this acquisition, "seems assured for some time to come."

As it was, the heavy running schedule and the seaside elements took their toll on the Sutton stock and it went back into storage, to be acquired by Birmingham-based Vintage Trains, which plans to develop a demonstration track at Tyseley Locomotive Works, as well as taking the collection to other 15in gauge railways around the UK.

However, more recent events in miniatures' seaside story add credence to Anthony's prediction. Heritage organisations like the Miniature Railway Museum Trust (MRMT) have been working hard to raise the profile of miniature, with the seaside being a key site for doing so. In 2010, the trust chose the seaside as the subject for its first exhibition – Rails to the Sands – held in Cleethorpes in partnership with the CCLR.

Tim Dunn, presenter of The Architecture the Railways Built, worked on the exhibition, which explored the phenomenon of seaside holidays and the subsequent growth of pleasure railways in association with seaside resorts. Exhibits included steam, diesel and electric locomotives and several items of rolling stock, film of historic seaside railways, and displays across two galleries.

Appetites for not only preservation, but also reinvention, persist in the present decade. In 2022, Poole Park Railway in Dorset reopened following a £480,000 refurbishment.

The service had been suspended in 2018 – after running under private management in Poole since 1949 – and is now run by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

PPR's new 32-person capacity, wheelchair accessible and dog-friendly railway carriages have a green and yellow livery that pays homage to the Southern Railway, which operated in the area from 1923 to 1947. Herein lies a nod to larger and longer railway enterprises that shows – as with many of the still-running seaside miniatures across Britain – that these small railways have a big past and, maybe, an even bigger future.

*Two locomotives join the fleet for the new Severn Beach minature railway which is aiming for an Easter opening., nearly half a century after the original one in the 'lost' Bristol Channel resort closed - plus details of other minature lines set to open or reopen this year: see Next Stop, page 106. HR

➜ Dr Joseph Brennan is an award-nominated author of historical fiction with a passion for heritage railway preservation. For more information, visit **www.josephbrennan.com**

Long-absent model tools and anniversary of past celebrations feature in Bachmann's spring 2025 catalogue announcements

THE quarterly announcements for model manufacturer Bachmann took place on February 5 and as expected, there was plenty shown to whet the appetites of modellers of all eras, regions, and even scales.

Through N to O, the announcement mainly concentrated on new liveries of existing tools. That it is not to say, of course, that the seasonal announcements were devoid of new tools.

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1. SR Bulleid coaches

These vehicles are no strangers to the Bachmann range and have often seen the tooling revived to offer new identities. These have now had a new suite created to keep up with modern standards which has also resulted in the introduction of two new designs to the range, diagram 2406 brake composite corridor and diagram 2017 third open, both of which have been highly requested by modellers.

Appointed as 'loose' coaches, they were used to bolster capacity on fixed-formation consists or added to rakes that would be split mid-journey.

Introduced post-Nationalisation, each type is offered in four liveries including the SR malachite green with BR markings, BR crimson and cream.

The third opens would often wander 'off-region' and examples could be found on the eastern and Scottish parts of the network, with models including running numbers reflecting such examples. The carriages come with an RRP of £74.95 per vehicle.

2. Railway 200 locomotives

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the modern railway, Bachmann has introduced a Railway Celebrations range showcasing locomotives and rolling stock that gained notoriety during past anniversary events or with a strong connection to the Stockton & Darlington region.

To mark the centenary in 1925, the LNER hosted a celebration featuring locomotives from the past century in a grand cavalcade. One of those was LNWR G2 0-8-0 No. 9446, presented by the LMS as one of the most modern locomotives in use at the time. It was the first of its class to be renumbered after the grouping and repainted ahead of the celebrations; it is in this condition which the model represents.

Another celebration was held to mark the 150th anniversary in 1975, at which GWR 5700 No. 7752 featured as an example of one of the most successful 0-6-0 tank engines ever seen in Britain; it survives currently stored at Tyseley Locomotive Works.

RRP for these two models is set at £189.95 and £124.95 respectively.

3. Buildings

The Scenecraft range expands further with buildings to cater for N, OO and OO9 scales. Narrow-gauge modellers can pick from two colour schemes applied to a new low-level signal cabin, while the manufacturer's Great Central models sees the mess hut join the N gauge range. The impressive March East Junction signalbox is on offer for those modelling OO scale, with other lineside detailing pieces.

4. Hudswell Clarke returns

The EFE range has developed a trend for not only introducing new tooled locomotives, but also reviving those either sold on by manufacturers or acquired from defunct ones.

In 2012, Ixion Models introduced the Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST contractor locomotives as the first mass-produced finescale and injection-moulded ready-to-run O gauge locomotive, which proved immensely popular. Since Ixion's turn to focus on the American market, these have been absent from shops for a number of years but are now to be revived by EFE Rail.

Four models are on offer and supplied without names and numbers, but with a pack of etched plates to allow customisation by modellers. On offer are the green livery as currently worn by the North Norfolk Railway's No. 1700 *Wissington* and the vibrant maroon of No. 1539 *Derek Crouch* on the Nene Valley Railway. Previously unseen are lined grey Manchester Ship Canal and lined blue liveries, with an RRP of £299.95 each.

5. Class 74

New tooling in the EFE range this time round covers the BR Class 74 Bo-Bo locomotives, which until now has never been produced ready-to-run. Rebuilt from Class 71 locomotives, 10 were introduced between 1967 and 1968. These rebuilds were able to work on both third rail electrified lines and under power of their own diesel engines. All 10 only carried BR blue livery and five are on offer, including pre and post-TOPs numbering and one weathered example. RRP is £214.95 per model (£224.95 for the weathered variant).

6. Farish N Gauge

The N scale range under the Graham Farish brand welcomes a plethora of GWR 6400 0-6-0PT and BR Class 47 locomotives to the range, with two surviving identities represented by No. 6412 (recently withdrawn for overhaul on the South Devon Railway) for the former, and Locomotive Services Group's No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* for the latter, which can often be found working main line tours. RRP is set at £119.95 and £179.95 respectively.

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Send your model news to staff writer **Owen Hayward** on **OHayward@mortons.co.uk@mortons.co.uk**

Caledonian 'Single' tops latest Rapido reveals as pre-Grouping range continues its expansion

RAPIDO Trains has developed an impressive catalogue of models since establishing its UK presence in 2018. With a reputation for picking quirky prototypes to model that other mainstream manufacturers have not picked up on or renewed tooling of, the latest project reveals do little to change that.

7. Caledonian single-wheeler

This quirky 4-2-2 locomotive has been available in OO scale as far back as Triang days and often sees re-release by Hornby, though certainly lacks the finesse of modern models. That is set to change as Rapido is creating a high-spec tooling suite for what it describes as "one of Scotland's prettiest locomotives."

No.123 was conceived as a display locomotive, to be shown off as the Caledonian Railway's best at the 1886 International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art in Edinburgh, entering service shortly after.

It was used primarily for working inspectors' and directors' trains with short rakes of saloon coaches but would also be utilised as the pilot loco for Royal Trains heading to Balmoral Castle. This involved running slightly ahead, clearing the line for safety.

With the Race to the North of 1888 becoming a highly promoted event by the British press, CR No.123 was chosen to haul the Carlisle to Edinburgh leg of this non-official race, gaining further national fame, while in the days of Nationalisation it could be found working Railtours around the UK. Retired in 1965, it can be found on display inside The Riverside Museum in Glasgow.

Rapido's model will offer No. 123 in its post-1927 rebuild condition, with four liveries available, including the striking Caledonian Blue as worn during its BR railtour days. Both LMS schemes and a 'what if' BR livery are also to be produced.

The models are currently at the tooling stage, and RRP starts at £294.95 per model.

8. More liveries for 'Evolution' range

The recent announcement of a freelance range of bogie carriages drawing inspiration from the plethora of pre-Grouping designs was welcomed by many modellers. With the first batch selling well, Rapido has already shown what is to follow in the second.

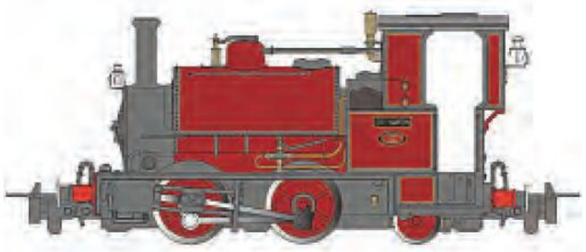
With the Caledonian single-wheeler announced at the same time, it only makes sense that a range of matching carriages were planned to accompany it, with those announced sporting the Scottish company's purple madder and white colours.

Another company of the region represented is the Highland Railway, with its green and white colours applied.

Following the success of its Metropolitan Railway E 0-4-4Ts in 2024, carriages will be presented to match with both Metropolitan Railway teak and London Transport brown liveries released.

Accompanying releases will see the LSWR, early GWR, L&YR, GER, NER and early LMS represented, while Rails of Sheffield have commissioned a set of exclusive North British Railway-liveried vehicles.

Triple packs and single carriages will be offered across all schemes, with RRP set at £199.95 and £69.95 respectively.



Sir Haydn set for OO9

IN 2022, the American branch of Bachmann Trains announced it was releasing Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talylln* as a ready-to-run model in OO9 scale (or HOn30 in the USA). With the imminent UK release of these models, the American arm has now announced that Hughes Falcon 0-4-2ST No. 3 *Sir Haydn* is the next locomotive from this Welsh narrow gauge line to join the range.

Both models are modified tools for the characters of *Skarloey* and *Sir Handel* in the Thomas & Friends range, yet while No. 1 is fairly basic, with features the likes of moulded handrails (the original model having been a test of the waters for the franchise's narrow-gauge characters), the tooling of *Sir Handel* (pictured below) means its real-life counterpart will benefit from additional detailing such as safety valves, regulator reach rods and even air brake pipes.

Confirmed at the same time were models of TR carriages Nos. 1, 2 (Brown Marshalls) and 4 (Lancaster Wagon Co). Carriage No. 3, also built by Brown Marshalls, is similar to Nos. 1 and 2 but has notable differences, hence its absence in this line-up.

Longmoor provides the basis for Accurascale's first train pack

HAMPSHIRE'S Longmoor Military Railway was a popular destination for enthusiasts for open days in the 1960s and its loss was lamented by many. Rolling stock varied from WD 2-10-0s to the humble shunter, including the iconic Austerity 0-6-0STs.

With the tooling for the latter now part of the Accurascale range, along with that for BR Mk.1 suburban carriages also recently released, the manufacturer has unveiled its first train pack which is themed on this long-lost railway.

The locomotive on offer is No. 3796 (LMR No. 196 *Errol Lonsdale*), which arrived there almost immediately after entering traffic in 1953. Something of a movie star, it was repainted into BR black as No. 68011 for the 1965 Great St Trinian's Train Robbery in 1965, before returning to LMR blue upon completion of filming. In 1967 it briefly appeared again in the movie adaptation of Ian Fleming's novel Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

Following the closure of the base in 1970, it was sold to the Kent & East Sussex Railway. In 1976 it arrived on the Mid-Hants Railway, where it was rededicated with its nameplates. After some time on the South Devon Railway, it was sold to the Stoomcentrum in Maldegem, Belgium, where it can be found operating in WD green.

The locomotive is joined by two carriages, brake second No. 5301 and second No. 3302, both in LMR Oxford Blue. They were just two of 13 carriages acquired from BR to work the Army base, all arriving there by 1968. Numbers initially carried an AD prefix, which was later changed to ARMY.

An Accurascale Exclusives release, it is only available direct via the firm's website. This limited-edition set will come in Accurascale's special presentation packaging and features etched nameplates and additional features such as distressed coach roof printing and running numbers that will never be available outside of this set.

Both DCC-ready and DCC sound-fitted sets will be offered, priced at £299.95 and £399.95 respectively, with delivery scheduled for the second quarter of 2026.

Talyllyn: Fletcher's finest?

It may not have had the glamourous life of working named expresses, instead trundling along through the picturesque Welsh countryside, but it is still very much revered by enthusiasts the world over. **Daniel Long** looks back over the life and times of *Talyllyn*.

LIKE many, my first association with *Talyllyn* was in the Railway Series books by the Rev W Awdry. Although the tales of Thomas and his standard gauge chums are arguably the more famous, it was always the narrow gauge stories of Skarloey, Sir Handel, Peter Sam and the rest which I held closest to my heart. Even as a child, I knew that Thomas wasn't real, but I was fascinated to see that *Talyllyn*, Skarloey's little old twin, was.

When the Rev Awdry wrote his stories, he drew inspiration from real life. Actual incidents on railways were lifted wholesale (though I have yet to discover a real engine that refused to come out of a tunnel and was consequently bricked up). It was during his volunteer work on the Talyllyn Railway in 1952 that he first encountered *Talyllyn*, slumbering in a barn while the newly arrived ex-Corris Railway 'Tattoo' No. 4 took up the bulk of the work.

Talyllyn was, at that point, nearly 90 years old, and quite worn out. In Tom Rolt's Railway Adventure, he recalls: "The condition of No. 1 *Talyllyn* was so bad that any idea of restoring her to good running order was out of the question." Of course, *Talyllyn* would steam again. Although not quite the fairytale of Skarloey's return from the works, it has still proven to be really useful indeed. Who said that old engines can't pull trains like young ones can?

Bucking Bronco

The Talyllyn Railway was built to serve the slate quarry at Bryn Eglwys. Fletcher Jennings & Co was approached to provide the locomotives. The company specialised in industrial designs and had narrow gauge experience. *Talyllyn* was based on the firm's A Class, which was previously built to gauges of 2ft 8in and 2ft 10in. Unlike these engines, however, *Talyllyn* was produced with passenger working in mind, and it was likely fitted with buffers which were sprung as opposed to dumb buffers for this very reason. A gauge of 2ft 3in was chosen, probably to match the nearby Corris tramway.

Reports of *Talyllyn* were seemingly revealed to the public in 1865. It arrived as an 0-4-0 and fitted with a weatherboard only. Both of these would change quickly as it gained a quick reputation for rough riding and the pitiful weatherboard did nothing for crews when the weather went Welsh.

The rough riding was a natural consequence of the choice of engine. The A Class was an industrial shunter with a long overhang at the rear. The Talyllyn Railway expected a locomotive which could run at passenger speeds for long periods of time. As such, *Talyllyn* was returned to the Lowca Works, where it had been built for the addition of two rear wheels. These were not pony trucks, but rigidly mounted. The wheelbase of the engine grew from 4ft to 8ft 4in, though this seems to have been shortened to 8ft shortly after returning to the Talyllyn Railway. It is little wonder that the track gauge was widened slightly to the legendary '2ft 3in and a thumb.' *Talyllyn* also gained a cab around this time – no doubt this made it much more popular with crews!

As an 'off the peg' locomotive, it is no surprise that *Talyllyn* needed some refinement before it was suited to the needs of the Talyllyn Railway. It was designed to shunt wagons in yards, not to haul trains over long distances. The second engine on the line, No.2 *Dolgoch*, was also purchased from Fletcher Jennings. It was built on the experience of running *Talyllyn* and designed with a long 0-4-0 wheelbase which made it much steadier. The lack of trailing wheels also meant all of the locomotive's weight was over the driving wheels, which provided both adhesion and braking power.

Forged in the Fathew

Even so, *Talyllyn* was clearly able to perform what was expected of it. The work was not overly onerous. The typical Talyllyn Railway train consisted of a couple of carriages, the brake van, and a string of 10 or so wagons trailing behind. Speeds were not excessive, even by narrow gauge standards, and *Talyllyn* proved its worth enough that both it and *Dolgoch* were the only engines ever to run on the line before preservation. They were synonymous with the Fathew Valley, providing a much-needed service for those living there.

Eventually, the slate began to run out, but the railway was purchased by Sir Haydn Jones. He committed to keeping the line open so long as he lived. He did not have the resources to reinvest in the line but even as it fell into decline, both engines performed apparent miracles in trying circumstances. Images of *Talyllyn* from the 1930s show significant leakage from the steam chest, for example. By

To celebrate the railway's centenary in 2015, *Talyllyn* and *Dolgoch* were repainted into Indian Red livery, which was believed to be as close as possible to what the pair originally wore when new. Recreating a train from those early days, No. 1 starts to ascend Brynglas bank during a charter on March 20, 2018, shortly before being withdrawn for overhaul. OWEN HAYWARD

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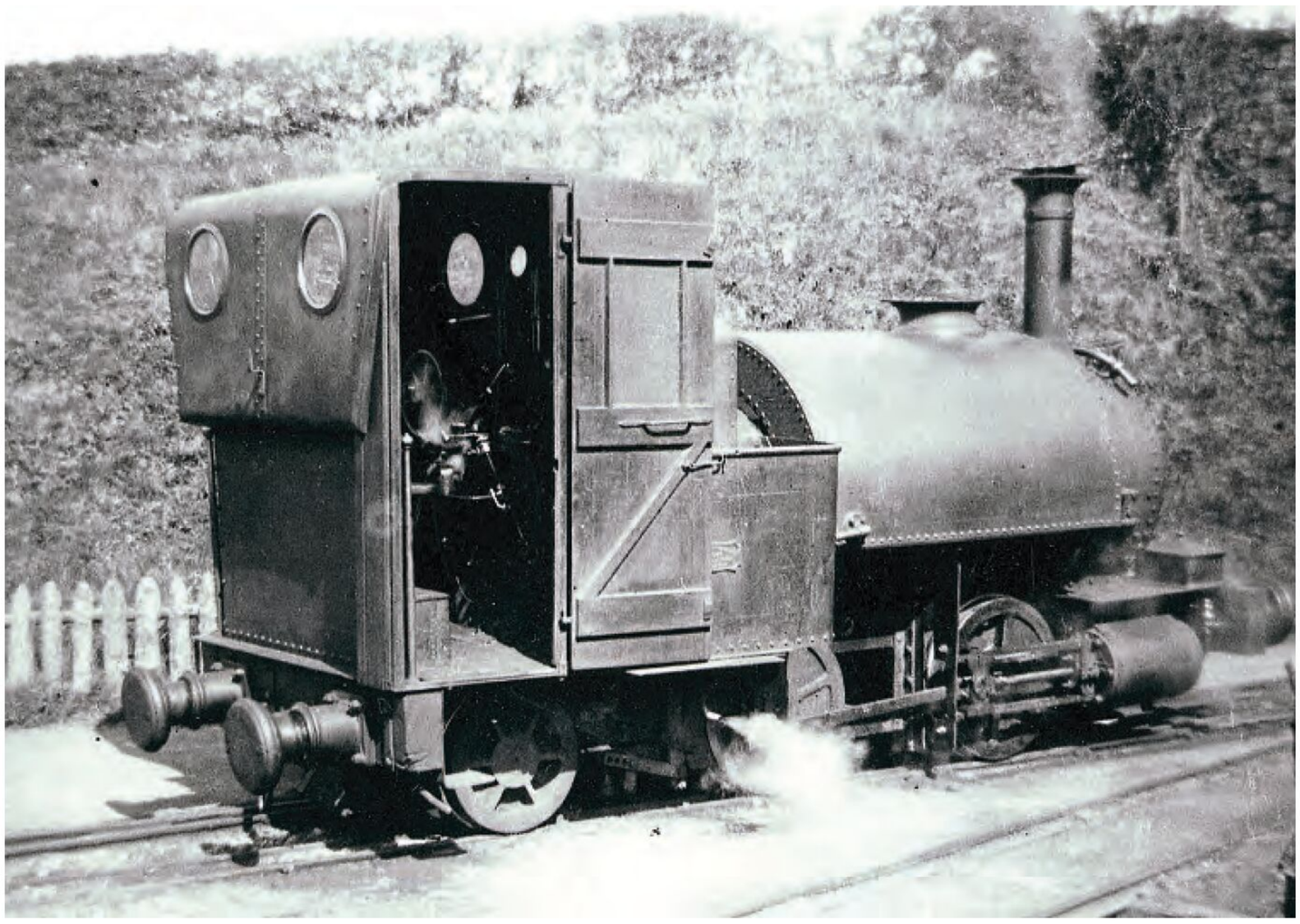
When preservationists took over the railway, *Talyllyn* was in a poor condition and spent many years stored in a barn in the yard at Pendre. TALYLLYN RAILWAY COLLECTION



Even with a full cab fitted, the Welsh weather would often prove less than ideal for crews. During the 1920s and 1930s a makeshift door was fitted to afford further protection from the elements. TALYLLYN RAILWAY COLLECTION

the 1940s, crews resorted to putting oatmeal in the boiler to reduce the leaks. The trackbed was reclaimed by nature, but the little engines continue to plod bravely on.

The railway ran throughout the war, but *Talyllyn* was finally stopped in 1945, leaving *Dolgoch* to maintain the service alone. Early preservationists recall looking inside the firebox and seeing a significant bulge. One compared its condition to a "self-propelled bomb"! In 1950, Sir Haydn died, just as a budding preservation society had formed and made plans to take over the ailing railway.

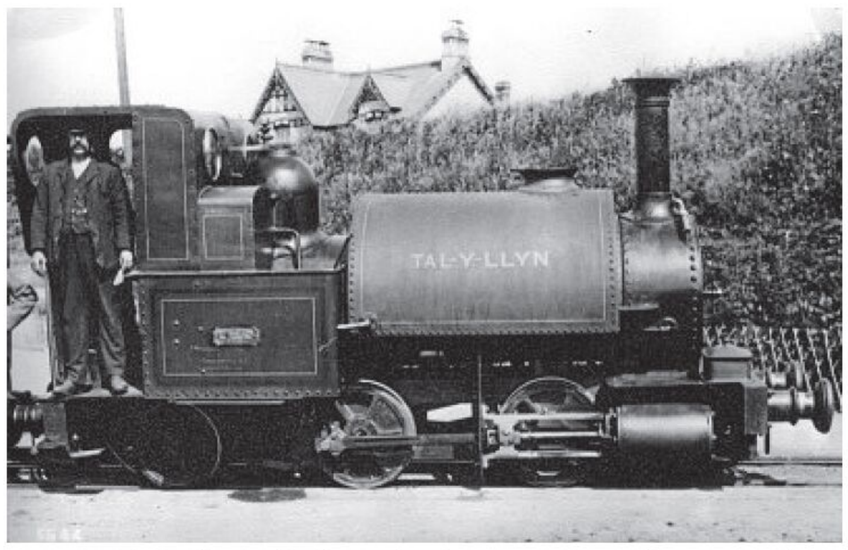
This was no mean feat. The Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society emerged as tourist traffic increased in the area. Unfortunately, the railway had only one (barely) operable engine and trackwork that required urgent attention.

Talyllyn was very low on the priority list. When two engines were purchased from the Corris Railway, it was moved ignominiously from the workshop underneath a nearby barn!

Opinion at the time was that *Talyllyn* was over-cylindered for work on the line. The two new engines, *Sir Haydn* and *Edward Thomas*, were in much better condition than either of the Fletcher Jennings originals. *Talyllyn* slumbered quietly as the railway was transformed around it, undisturbed save for the occasional polish or picture from enthusiasts.

It was not until 1957 that moves were made to restore *Talyllyn* to working order. It was sent to Gibbons Brothers, an engineering firm in the Midlands with strong volunteer links to the railway.

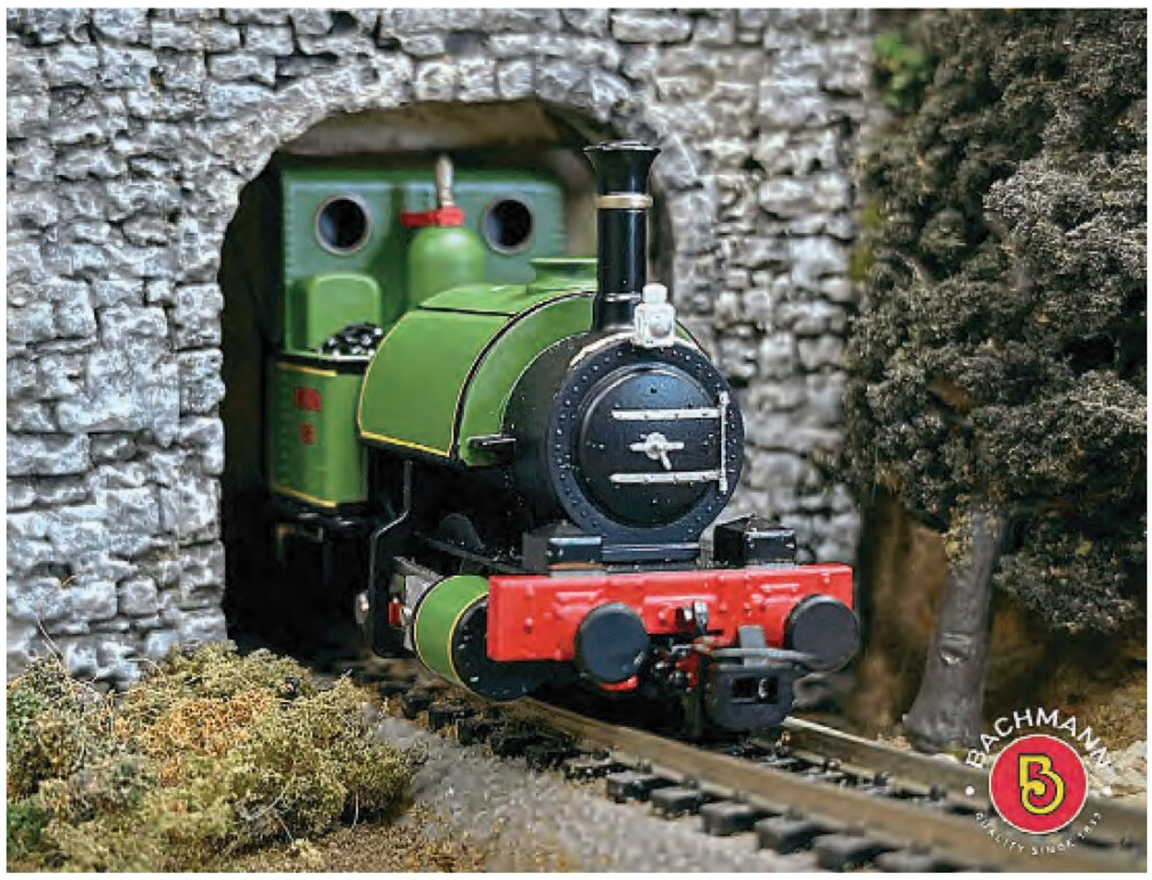
The firm produced furnaces, crematoria and gasworks, but had no direct railway expertise. Nevertheless, the offer had been made, and the



Captured in what is believed to be circa 1900, the original No. 1 had many differences to its modern-day appearance. Of particular note is the lack of running board above the driving wheels, while the water tank is riveted, later to be replaced by a welded example. TALYLLYN RAILWAY COLLECTION

Following its most recent overhaul, completed in 2024, *Talyllyn* can now be seen running in a Great Eastern Railway-inspired lined blue, with lining and lettering all applied by hand. OWEN HAYWARD

***Talyllyn* leads *Dolgoch* towards Brynglas on March 19, 2018, the train shining in the afternoon sun.** OWEN HAYWARD



Talyllyn Railway was in no position to decline. *Talyllyn* was needed back in traffic for 1958 to replace *Sir Haydn*, which needed major work.

The brief was to restore *Talyllyn* while maintaining its external condition as far as possible. With such a tired little engine, however, this proved a challenge. Very little remained once the Gibbons Brothers team was done, with a new boiler, cylinders and saddle tank fabricated for its overhaul. The work took some 15 months.

Home at Last

The restoration brief as delivered to Gibbons Brothers caused its own problems. On *Talyllyn*'s first test run, it failed for lack of steam.

A look inside the smokebox raised the question: "Where's the smokebox floor?" The legendary response? "Oh, was it supposed to have one?"

The original had rotted away and no one had thought to make a replacement! The disappointment behind *Talyllyn*'s performance does not reflect entirely on poor workmanship from Gibbons Bros. Many of the new parts made were of high quality and stayed with the engine for many years.

In service, *Talyllyn* proved uniquely tricky to operate. Crews were known to reach the end of the line at Abergynolwyn with only 25psi on the clock and learned by bitter experience that any less pressure would mean stalling on the points short of the platform!

Despite these difficulties, *Talyllyn* was vital to running the advertised service, being the only serviceable second engine in August 1960 and between March and August 1961. By 1968, it was time for another comprehensive overhaul, this time at Pendre Works.

Previously, the aim had been to get *Talyllyn* running. Now, the intention was to make it capable of performing the expected work. Ten years of experience made its deficiencies clear and clarified what needed to be amended. Although proposals for substantial change were submitted, such as new frames extended by 9in and the boiler raised by 4in, *Talyllyn* ended up looking substantially the same. Much work was done, including extending the frames by 2in and the smokebox by 3in. The engine re-entered service in 1971. Instead of struggling for steam as on its return to the line in 1958, it strolled away with five bogie coaches. Although by no means as forgiving as the more modern engines on the line, steam could be maintained throughout the trip up the valley.

The next challenge was that of the railway itself. Plans had long been in the works to extend the passenger line along the former mineral tramway to Nant Gwernol. The long, fixed wheelbase of *Talyllyn* meant that, in the old days, the track had been widened. Now it was clear that the same problems had arisen once more.

When *Talyllyn* was next out of service in 1982, the trailing wheel was moved back and made into a radial axle to allow for more movement on the tight curvature. The valve gear was replaced and brakes were fitted on all four wheels instead of just the rear two. This set things right, and since its return to service in 1987 the engine has undergone no significant changes.

Old faithful

You might ask what is left of the original *Talyllyn*. Like most steam engines running today, it was rebuilt extensively to keep it going; very few original parts remain.

In 2014, just before the railway's 150 celebrations, the left-hand coupling rods on the engine failed. These dated back to 1865. Both sides were replaced and the originals put on display. It is, in many ways, amazing that they lasted so long in service and are now in a museum while the engine they were attached to keeps on going.

In 2024, *Talyllyn* returned to steam after another overhaul, now painted in a Great Eastern-inspired blue livery. As the figurehead for the railway's 75 Appeal, it continues to be a force to be reckoned with.

From Skarloey to *Talyllyn*

In the same way that I was introduced to the *Talyllyn* by the Rev Awdry's Skarloey books, Bachmann has recently drawn on tooling developed for its Thomas range to create a model of *Talyllyn*. You might think this an unusual place to start, but the result is surprisingly satisfying, if not entirely up to the high standards set in OO9 by the Baldwins or Quarry Hunslets. This will come as little surprise, as the initial Skarloey release in the US was well before them. I daresay there are many *Talyllyns* converted from Skarloey already running on many people's railways.

So, what does the Bachmann release offer? *Talyllyn* is available in green, black and red, although unfortunately not the Great Eastern-inspired blue which I'm personally fond of. These liveries reflect the prototype nicely and the lining is crisply applied.

The character of the engine is also captured well, with the positioning of the rear wheel matching that of the post-1986 rebuild. The engine's origins as Skarloey do shine through, however. An additional bunker has found its way to the driver's side, and the air pump that is characteristic of the modern *Talyllyn* is nowhere to be found. In terms of detail, the handrails are moulded on, the crosshead is made of plastic, and there is no backhead detail at all. It's a far cry from the fidelity of other OO9 locomotives from Bachmann.

Mechanically speaking, *Talyllyn* benefits from the weight of diecast construction. A powerful little motor provides all the traction one needs for a typical *Talyllyn* train. The fixed wheelbase can cause trouble on sharp curves and pointwork, or even on inclines. There are no options for DCC here, meaning that a decoder must be hardwired in and space must be found for sound. The omission is understandable given the age of the initial, but it is also disappointing to those who have had their standards set high by other releases.

Given that *Talyllyn* has lived its life almost exclusively on the Talyllyn Railway, appropriate stock is important. Bachmann has produced slate wagons from the railway and Peco has produced a Glyn Valley carriage with side buffers. More recently, however, Bachmann has adapted other carriages from its Thomas range to produce carriages No. 1, 2 and 4. This means that almost all of the original rolling stock can be run behind the line's original engine.

There are kits available from other manufacturers for Coach 3 and, perhaps most importantly, Van 5. As a Talyllyn enthusiast, it is amazing to think there are so many options now available for this railway in OO9. When I first modelled the Talyllyn Railway more than a decade ago, the only options were kits. Bachmann's models show how much the market has grown.

Talyllyn is not a slamdunk, but it will surely be a welcome addition to many OO9 modellers' layouts. The prototype is an icon of preservation, charmingly recreated in miniature for all to enjoy.

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61264: BACK ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

March 11, 2020, was the day when time was called on the boiler certification of LNER B1 4-6-0 No. 61264. With its overhaul now underway, **Owen Hayward** spoke to Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust chairman Dave Horton about the project and plans for the future of this missed stalwart of Eastern Region steam.

When compared to the likes of the Southern and Midland regions, the LNER and BR Eastern Region is somewhat lacking in preservation, making any such locomotives stand out among their once rival-owned counterparts. The flag is largely flown by three high-profile Pacifics on the main line – Nos. 60103 *Flying Scotsman*, 60532 *Blue Peter* and 60163 *Tornado* – although the last is, of course, a new build based on a LNER design. Then there is No. 61306 *Mayflower*, a Thompson-designed B1 4-6-0. For a time though, it shared the main line scene with a second example of the class – No. 61264.

With the expiration of the BR-built *Mayflower*'s boiler ticket due in the next few years, the latter has started on the long journey towards its next return to steam. Eight years after a triumphant return to steam at Crewe Heritage Centre in October 2012, No. 61264 was withdrawn from service at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway where it had largely been based between visits elsewhere and the occasional main line working. The withdrawal was unexpected, to say the least, but necessary following the discovery of severe cracking in the firebox crown sheet and tubeplate.

Twelve days later, the country went into lockdown, which put a stop to any immediate plans to get the overhaul started. Five years later, that situation is very much changed, with the 'Bongo' now at Ruddington on the Great Central Railway (Nottingham).

"The discovery of the firebox cracks, combined with the Covid-19 pandemic, really knocked us for six," said Dave Horton, chairman of the Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust, "but we haven't been standing still, we haven't given up. We are gradually working our way back and the locomotive could have a bright future – if lots of people are willing to support us."

The move to Ruddington in August 2022 was necessitated by the geographical location of many of the working volunteers who would be leading and involved with the overhaul, which included Steve Andrews, the trust's "redoubtable and long-serving engineering manager," said Dave. While No. 61264 fitted in working the NYMR's services, including the main line section between Grosmont and Whitby, the distance and time for working members of the trust to get to Grosmont would have heavily impacted the overhaul's progress. "The NYMR is a spectacular route for operating a steam locomotive, but Grosmont is a long, long way away, and the time and effort of getting there was starting to take its toll. The hard work also took its toll on the loco, there is no doubt about it."

Local roots

The arrival of the 'Bongo' at Ruddington has, in a manner of speaking, brought it closer to home in more ways than one.

Outshopped in December 1947 from the North British Locomotive Company's Glasgow workshops, No. 61264 was allocated to Stratford in East London but moved less than two weeks later to Parkeston Quay in Harwich. Its next (and final) reallocation saw it shedded at

Just a few months prior to its withdrawal from service, No. 1264 departs Grosmont on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on September 25, 2019. KENNY FELSTEAD

In the early years of its life, No. 61264 was based at Parkeston Quay (Harwich). On August 16, 1950, the B1 prepares to leave with the 'Scandinavian' boat train to London Liverpool Street. SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

Just a few months after its restoration was completed in 1997, No. 1264 (in LNER green) prepares to depart Loughborough on the Great Central Railway, double-heading with A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter*. TBLT

An undated and evocative shot captured No. 61264 on station pilot duty at Nottingham Victoria during the 1960s. TBLT

In the year 2000, No. 61264 could be found operating for a short while on the Great Central Railway (Nottingham), captured here hauling a demonstration freight train across Stanford Viaduct, with the village of Stanford-on-Soar in the background. The GCR(N) has recently returned trains to this structure after an absence of nearly five years, and it will eventually form part of the reunified Great Central Railway. JOHN BAGSHAW

Colwick, on the outskirts of Nottingham, from November 1960, less than 10 miles away from its current location. Although it was originally a Great Northern Railway facility, Colwick had an allocation of locos which often worked on GCR metals, including on the London extension through Nottingham, Loughborough, Leicester, Rugby, and all the way down to Marylebone. It was there that it would go on to be withdrawn from BR service on November 27, 1965. In a turn of fortune, this was not to be the end for the locomotive, with it instead being allocated the departmental identity of No. 29 and put to use as a stationary boiler. Its condition decayed, and at one point the centre driving axle was removed. In July 1967, time was finally called, and it was completely withdrawn. Long after all but one of its classmates had themselves been cut up, it was sent to the Woodham brothers' scrapyard at Barry – the only ex-LNER locomotive to have been so – sometime in 1968, where it lay forlorn and assumedly forsaken.

Its future was, thankfully, in safe hands. The TBLT was established, and No. 61264 was saved from facing the cutter's torch in 1976, moving by road that July to the Great Central Railway at Loughborough. What followed was a 21-year-long restoration which cost more than £230,000.

Outshopped in its LNER green guise as No. 1264, the B1 returned to steam in 1997. The following year it moved to Carnforth for main line certification, the move necessitated due to rifts between organisations at that time.

"That is ancient history now," said Dave, "The GCR is under new management. The trust is under new management. I'm all about looking forward – and indeed, that is also the GCR's motto."

On March 28, 1998, No. 1264 successfully hauled a 420-ton train between Carnforth and Carlisle, which included tackling the summit of the West Coast Main Line at Shap. A few months later it worked London Underground Steam on the Met specials. Unfortunately, recurring boiler leaks saw it stopped for remedial work; reassembly took place at Carnforth the following year.

In 1999, its main line running saw it allocated to work West Coast Railway's 'The Jacobite' services, a role it would continue to fulfil for another seven summers before moving to the NYMR in 2007 to work over the main line stretch to Whitby. When withdrawn for its first overhaul in 2008, it had covered some 80,000 miles. Overhaul largely took place at the LNWR Crewe works, with No. 61264 giving its first rides upon completion in the yards there on October 27, 2012. From there it returned to Yorkshire and put in sterling service until its premature withdrawal in 2020.

The overhaul required to bring the B1 back into service once again is by no means a small project – and comes with a considerable price tag attached.

"The estimated cost is in the region of £750,000," Dave explained. "As well as the firebox cracks to deal with, which will involve the incredibly labour-intensive job of removing the inner firebox and tubeplate, and writing off thousands of expensive copper stays and fire tubes, the locomotive also needs a new tender tank, plus new tyres on all of its wheels, which will mean when it re-enters traffic it will have the thickest possible tyres. If we had part-worn tyres on the centre driving wheels, we'd have to turn the new tyres on the bogie down in order to achieve what's called 'parity' with the wheel diameters, and that would be a waste of material and money.

"We are under no illusions regarding the scale of the challenge. Earnings from steaming fees while at the NYMR were nowhere near enough to cover the work now required. Much of our reserves were burned up when cracks were discovered in the driving wheels, which had to be dealt with and took the loco out of traffic for 20 months between November 2014 and July 2016, so we had a double whammy of expensive repair work, plus the loco being unable to earn its keep for a long period of time."

Fresh approach

Dave, whose day jobs sees him employed as a mechanical engineer with the modern-day Great Western Railway, has strong memories associated with the 'Bongo.' Elected as chairman at the trust's October 2024 AGM, he has previously held several roles since first becoming a part of its support crew during the 2004/5 'The Jacobite' services, a time he describes as the glory days.

"Being on the support crew 20 years ago was a fantastic introduction to heritage and main line steam, and I've never forgotten the warmth with which I was welcomed into the group. The hours were long, the work was hard, but it was an unforgettably positive experience for my 21-year-old self. It is the memory of those experiences which drive me on – I really want to see No. 61264 back in steam, inspiring the next generation of loco women and men, on heritage lines earning its keep, but especially back on the main line – which is something else!"

Over the last few years, Dave and his fellow trustees have refreshed and modernised the trust. "The first step was to overhaul our membership scheme. Up until 2021, rates were set at £10 per year, or £40 for five years. This may have been reasonable in 1988, or whenever those rates were set, but doesn't even cover the cost of printing and posting our newsletters in the 21st century, let alone get anywhere close to covering the cost of maintaining or overhauling a steam locomotive or covering our sizeable annual overheads such as insurance.

"Something had to change, so we came up with the '6-12-64' scheme, which offers bronze (£6 per month), silver (£12 per month) and gold (£64 per month) membership levels, with correspondingly increasing levels of benefits.

"Existing members were offered the chance to convert their membership, but were under no obligation to do so immediately, only becoming mandatory to choose one of the new options upon the natural expiry of their existing membership under the old scheme.

"Thankfully, most members willingly agreed to make the switch, and it has paid off. Regular monthly income is now double what it used to be.

"The new membership levels default to being online-only (i.e., all communication is electronic), but silver and gold members can still opt for paper copies of B1 News, the trust's newsletter which is produced three or four times a year. We recognise that not everybody does the internet or emails, and we didn't want to make anyone feel excluded.

"A further benefit of being an online member is that you get regular updates via email, not just the newsletter. About 75% of members are now online-only; as you can imagine, this has really helped to reduce our postage costs. The regular email updates are really appreciated by our members. They like to see things happening."

Of course, a locomotive group such as the TBLT is not just about the membership tiers, but also the people behind the running of it, and this is an area that Dave is particularly proud of, having recruited several new members to the management council – including two under the age of 30. Jonny Johnson and Philomenah Holladay are regular volunteers within the locomotive department at Loughborough on the GCR – in fact, Jonny is on the payroll as a fitter there. Since joining the trust, he has taken on the role of team leader and project planner, running monthly working parties to begin the long process of stripping the locomotive.

In a modern world, where so many people are connected through the internet, it is no surprise that a prominent web presence can make all the difference to the success of a project and/or group. To this end, Wendy Ibbotson, the daughter of one of the trust's original founders, has taken a leading role in establishing a social media presence for the trust, creating and regularly posting content on Facebook and Instagram, routinely reaching thousands of people.

David Lewis, a keen model engineer who has built a 5in gauge model of B1 No. 61003 *Gazelle,* which has been displayed several times on the trust's promotion stand (which is also organised by Wendy and her husband Lee), has become a director of Thompson B1 Locomotive Ltd, which owns the locomotive, but has placed it on a 99-year lease to the trust.

A project group has been formed to take forward the design of a new tender tank. Led by CAD designer and trust member Tony Stockman, and aided by Alistair Leach, another professional mechanical engineer who is a specialist in railway assurance in his day job, the new tender tank will be designed with space provision for the future fitment of European Train Control System (ETCS), the high-tech in-cab signalling system which is eventually set to be rolled out across much of the UK rail network. It will replace conventional lineside signals in many areas. If steam locomotives such as No. 61264 are to have a future on the UK main line, a way to retro-fit this equipment on locomotives will have to be found, and as is widely known, this is exactly what is currently being done by The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust with *Tornado*.

Main line futures?

The work on *Tornado* is being paid for by Network Rail since it is, officially speaking, a 'Network Change,' for which NR is liable for the costs. As a locomotive which is still registered on the NR database, No. 61264 would be eligible for fitment in future and NR would have to pay for that too. "We are keeping a weather eye on how things develop with *Tornado* and ETCS," Dave explained.

"Being the 'first in class' is never going to be easy, and already we are looking at *Tornado*'s design and thinking how can we make life easy for ourselves in future.

"The design work we are doing includes things such as building in additional steel enclosures for the electronic equipment, conduits for cables to run to and from various locations, thinking about the human factors (how equipment will be accessed, operated and maintained), and ensuring that equipment is protected, as far as is possible, from the dust, vibrations, heat and moisture that is the very nature of a steam locomotive."

There are currently no plans for ETCS to be fitted as part of the current overhaul; however, the inclusion of provision for it will make things easier as and when that time does eventually come round.

The design of the new tender tank will mean externally it will appear unchanged, thus still giving the impression of an original B1 tender. Design work was almost completed in early February, with the intention of placing the order with the fabricator not long after.

While progress may appear to have been slow since arriving at Ruddington, Dave pointed out that it has been deliberately so while the trust has undergone restructuring and consolidation, with 2025 starting to see an acceleration of work take place.

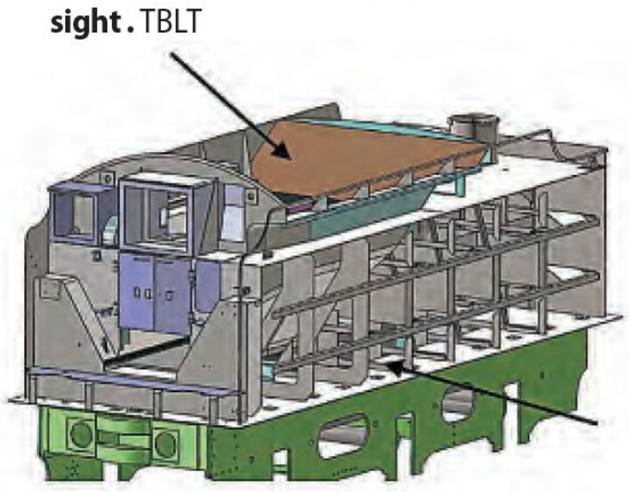
"We didn't want to start stripping the loco too soon – the last thing you want is to have a loco in bits, with nowhere to put the stuff. To that end, the GCR(N) has very kindly allowed us to have three storage containers at Ruddington, and we have made many round trips to Grosmont and back with vans and lorries to retrieve our large collection of spare parts and tools accumulated during 48 years of preservation.

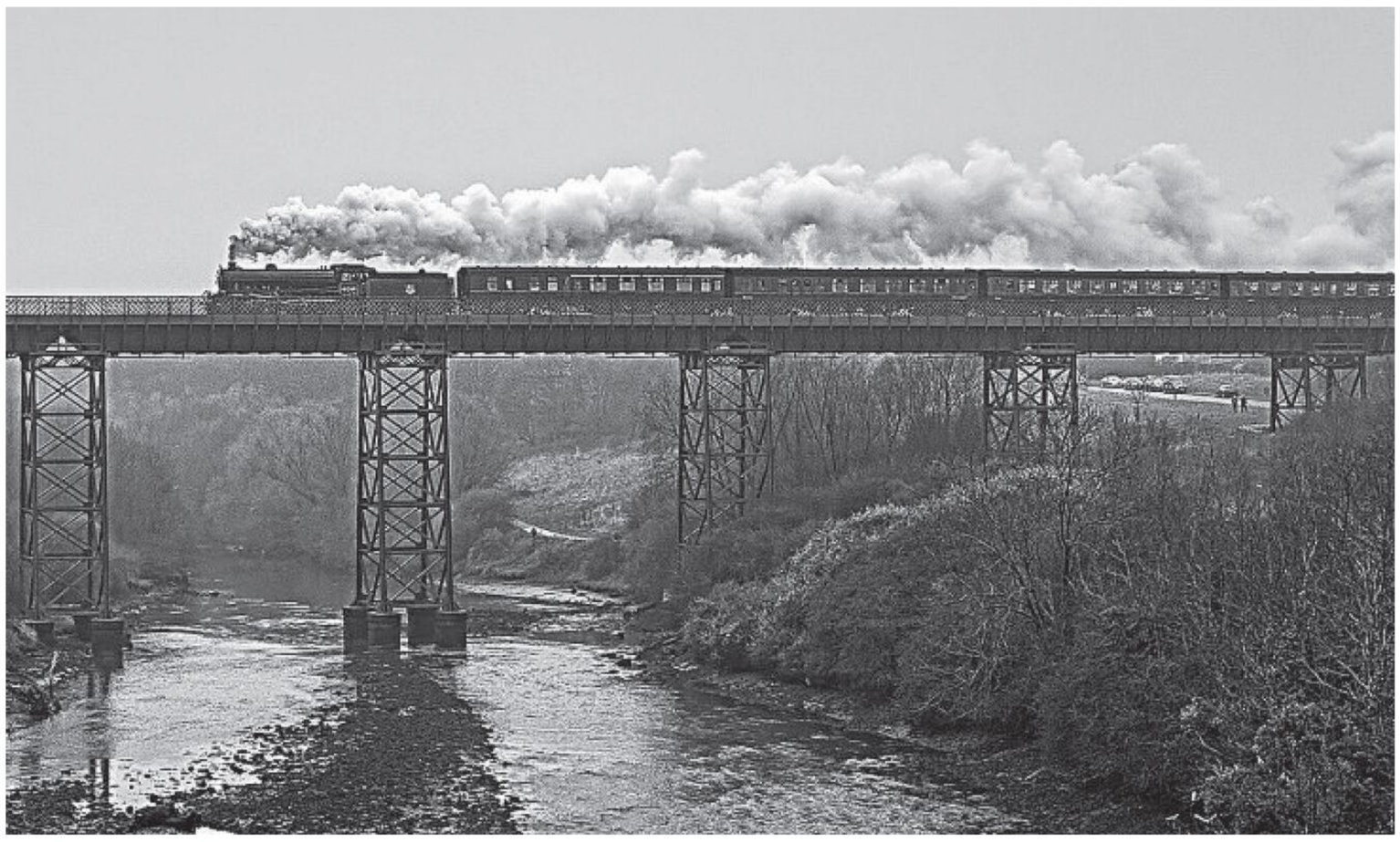
"With these storage facilities in place at Ruddington, we can now begin the process of taking the loco to pieces."

Left: On one of the main line outings away from the North Yorkshire Moors, the B1 is seen putting in a spirited performance on the 'Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' on January 25, 2014. It double-headed with LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45407, seen tearing through Grayrigg. PETER VAN CAMPENHOUT

Below: No. 61264 at speed on the East Lancashire Railway on January 19, 2014. JOHN MARRIOT/TBLT

Below: The CAD of the new tender tank is almost complete. Provision for future ETCS fitment has been included which will hide much of the equipment from sight . TBLT





On March 29, 2014, No. 61264 hauls 'The Wansbeck' across Bedlington Viaduct, just south of the former Bedlington station on the old Blyth and Tyne railway system. This double-track iron viaduct over the River Blyth dates from 1930, replacing an earlier timber viaduct from 1850. When this photo was taken, the Blyth and Tyne network was freight only, so to see a steam-hauled passenger train traversing this route was rare indeed. Happily, on December 12, 2024, a passenger service was restored to the Blyth and Tyne network, with regular trains now operated by Northern Rail over the viaduct, and the reopening of Bedlington station will follow later in 2025. KEN SNOWDON

Since August 2022, the 'Bongo' has been safely tucked away in No. 1 shed at Ruddington, secure and protected from the elements, waiting for its overhaul to begin. It is planned that much of the work will initially be carried out in this shed, bringing a welcome new presence and activity to the Ruddington site. Interestingly, this angle is reminiscent of a photograph which exists of the locomotive during use as a stationary boiler at Colwick. THOMPSON B1 LOCOMOTIVE TRUST

Focus will first be on the tender; all parts which can be reused will be removed and stored before the tank is separated from the chassis. It will then be sent to the fabricator to be used as a template for the replacement one, and work on this is already under way.

Meanwhile, the work required on the boiler is carefully being considered. To keep costs down as much as possible, the majority of what is required will, where practical, be carried out in-house by the trust's own volunteers. This will include the removal of tubes and stays; however, there will come a time where professionals are required, and it is at that time a contractor will be appointed.

New tyres have been purchased and are currently in store at Carnforth, but will require a substantial sum to pay for them to be fitted as required to all the wheelsets.

The people's engine

While the changes recently instigated have made a significant difference to the trust's income streams, much more is still needed, and other avenues of finance – such as grant funding – are being investigated, though as Dave pointed out, such routes "cannot be relied upon – it will be amazing if it happens, but it's no silver bullet."

He said: "I worked out recently that at the present rate of monthly income, it could take us 20 years to get the loco back in steam, on top of the five years it has already been out of traffic. That is a sobering thought.

"I don't want it to take that long. Nobody wants it to take that long. Many of our members are, frankly, worried that they won't see it completed in their lifetime.

"The only way we are going to succeed faster than that is by increasing our regular monthly income.

"We already have a very solid and loyal support base of about 225 members and shareholders, many of whom have been with us since the beginning. This in itself would be the envy of many loco groups, so we are very lucky to have such a following. But I'd love to double it. A relatively modest donation every month from lots of people would soon add up and give us the certainty that would allow us to plan and contract the overhaul work, where necessary, in the most efficient manner."

The long road to recovery may only just be starting but it is set to be an exciting one for the B1. Dave was keen to stress that No. 61264 is the only 'democratically owned' example of the class. While no. 61306 *Mayflower* is currently still gracing the main line scene, it is privately owned as part of the Locomotive Services empire, so, as Dave said, "while rail enthusiasts can enjoy watching *Mayflower* go past, No. 61264 is the only one they can own a part of and be actively involved with. We are the people's B1!"

When asked about what livery the B1 might return in, Dave highlighted that the trust has always seen *Mayflower* as having "the green B1 thing covered" and is why No. 61264 has traditionally been black. That said, he was aware of the appeal of locomotives in other colours.

"They seem to generate more interest, particularly for the youngsters, and since the 1990s (when it last wore that colour) are in fashion again, why not? Ultimately though it will be the democratic choice of our members.

"Upon completion, No. 61264 is likely to be based at the GCR as part of the home fleet, subject to agreement with the GCR management at a future stage, but with main line appearances and, of course, availability to visit other heritage lines for galas and so on.

"My dream is to see No. 61264 rolling across the new viaduct at Loughborough shortly after the reunification of the GCR.

"A historically appropriate, authentic original loco with genuine local connections, supported by hundreds of proud members from around the country, operating on a railway to which it is perfectly suited with access to the main line, from where it can go off and be an 'ambassador' for the GCR from time to time – that is the dream.

"The timescale for the reunification project is itself very much funding dependent. But we can only turn that dream into reality with considerable new support." HR

On February 1, volunteer Jack Spencer sets to work removing bolts holding the tender tank to the chassis. TBLT

PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT

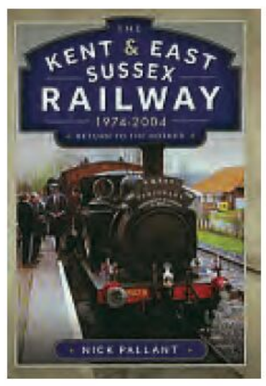
There are several ways to support the Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust's overhaul of No. 61264. A tender tank specific appeal has been set up to raise the £75,000 required to fund this particular aspect of the overhaul: see www.**thompsonb1.org/tender**

Supporters of the Wheel Deal appeal, which will fund the fitting of new tyres to all of the locomotive's wheelsets, can benefit from rewards such as their name inscribed on a 'wheel of honour,' a complimentary ticket for a ride on the first public train hauled by No. 61264 upon its completion, and three years of free silver tier membership of the trust, depending on the level of contribution: see **thompsonb1.org/wheeldeal**

For general donations and membership, see **thompsonb1.org**

The Kent & East Sussex Railway, 1974-2004: Return to the Rother

By Nick Pallant (hardback, Pen & Sword Books, 232pp, £30, ISBN 978-1-036102-22-7).



FOLLOWING the author's earlier book, Preserving the Kent & East Sussex Railway, which covered the railway's tough early days from closure in 1961 to running a heritage line in 1974, this one follows in detail almost in a diary format the next 30 years.

Nick Pallant covers rebuilding infrastructure as the line was extended, rolling stock acquisition, and famous visitors along the way; no stone is left unturned as Nick, using the headlines of railway's members journal Tenterden Terrier (formerly known as The Farmers Line), outlines the major ups and downs from 1974, the year which saw the official opening of the line, running from Tenterden Town to Rolvenden station. The same year it was decided to set up a Colonel Stephens Museum, with just eight of the Colonel's lines to be covered at first.

The 75th anniversary of the opening of the line, then called The Rother Valley Railway, was celebrated in 1975. Work started by volunteers for the push onto Wittersham Station, which was finally achieved on March 5, 1977.

The plans for reaching Bodiam were shelved in 1980 as it was decided not to overstretch the railway, although by 1982 extension plans were back on from Wittersham to Northiam.

As passenger numbers continued to increase past the 50,000 that year, 1982 saw extension plans onto Bodiam revived, helped by the Challenge Anneka TV programme which drafted in helpers to assist with tracklaying and work around the station, offering priceless publicity to help visitor numbers continue to increase – making 1990 one of the line's most successful years to date.

A recession in 1991 saw passenger numbers drop for the first time, but the pragmatic approach by the railways volunteers saw things improve and eventually they reached Bodiam. Perhaps a third book book dealing with the next 25-30 years will be equally exciting, covering the challenges of lockdowns and the final push to restore a network railway link at Robertsbridge.

Nick has held numerous roles with the KESR over the last 60-plus years. He is currently editor of the Tenterden Terrier, which has left him with a invaluable insight and knowledge about the running of the railway. His expertise has offered up a book that will keep readers riveted. Unlike other books about this railway, it is not a pictorial journey, although there are some wonderful supporting photographs taken during these 30 years.

PROGRESS STEAMING AHEAD ON A CLASSIC LIGHT RAILWAY

Celebrating the A4s

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Compiled by Hector Maxwell (hardback, Transport Treasury Publishing, 80pp, £13.50. Cheques payable to Transport Treasury Publishing, 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe, HP13 7PJ, ISBN 978-1-913893-17-0).

ALTHOUGH he describes himself as a Southern man, Hector Maxwell, the compiler of this latest publication to laud Gresley's A4 class, does not hold back in his admiration of these iconic locomotives, **writes Geoff Courtney.** To him, a clean A4 in BR green without the valances was "a joy to the eyes," and the design, he says, "looks right."

He also describes his only sighting of an A4 in service, during a visit that led him to an East Coast Main Line embankment "somewhere out of King's Cross" when he was aged about 10 and the class was close to ending its ECML days.

The engine, he writes, was beautifully clean, and seen sideways on "it presented a sight I can still visualise decades later."

The A4 he remembers is in stark contrast to the book's cover showing No. 60016 *Silver King* at King's Cross on the Down 'Norseman' in a decidedly grimy state.

For an A4 enthusiast such as me who 'copped' all but two of the class, its condition is regrettable, but perhaps I am being a romantic and the image is representative of these locomotives in their operating days. Maybe, maybe not.

Images of all the members of the class taken by a variety of photographers in their BR days are included in the book, from No. 60001 *Sir Ronald Matthews* on Naburn swing bridge over the River Ouse between Selby and York, to No. 60034 *Lord Faringdon* in Tay Bridge yard as late as December 1965, while some are additionally featured in the LNER era.

One of the eye-catching images is No. 60003 *Andrew K. McCosh,* taken from ground level as it passes through York with the Down 'Flying Scotsman' and named, Hector informs readers, after one of only five directors to serve the LNER throughout its 25-year existence.

Another attention-grabber, due to its dramatic impact, features No. 60015 *Quicksilver* bursting out of Copenhagen Tunnel a mile out of King's Cross in July 1953 en route to Edinburgh.

The image shouts of speed, and presumably thanks to a zoom lens, the impression is that the photographer is kneeling right by the track, the A4 just inches away.

This publication has no delusions of being a coffee table tome but is an easy-to-read illustrated analysis of an iconic class of locomotives written by a Southern enthusiast who isn't reluctant to place on record his admiration for a Gresley masterpiece.

LNER TRIBUTE FROM A SOUTHERN MAN

British Railways Diesel and Electric Locomotives

By Hugh Longworth (hardback, Crecy Publishing, 388pp, £35, ISBN 978-1-800352-98-8).

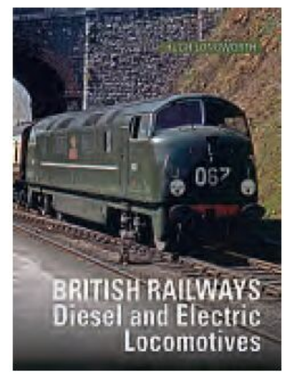
LOCOMOTIVES were numerous – almost immeasurably so – and keeping tabs on their regularly changing allocations was a never-ending challenge, **writes Owen Hayward.** That is, of course, unless you are exceedingly dedicated and thorough with your record-keeping and research. Luckily, for some of us, this author is!

Following his previous volumes which cover British Railways steam locomotives, DMUs and coaching stock, Hugh turns his focus to the swathes of diesel and electric locomotives, many of which were introduced under the modernisation scheme but some dating from even before then. Covering everything from the minute fleet that was the Class 41 prototype HST through to the seemingly endless identities of the Class 31, or the common Class 08 shunter to the sole English Electric Gas Turbine, near enough every class is covered within as far as the modern Class 69 fleet.

The publication is divided into two key parts. The first covers each individual class, introducing them with some of their technical specifications before giving a brief outline as to the purpose for which they came into existence. The full fleet list is then displayed, including build date and company, along with any dates of renumbering under TOPs. Records are often sketchy as to when some locomotives were retired, but this is an area the author has evidently researched in some depth the dates, for both withdrawal and scrapping, as well as highlighting examples of those of a more heritage nature which have been preserved.

Listings are accompanied by a pair of drawings and a photograph (mostly colour) of an example, for reference; there are quite a few oddities amid the more familiar designs, which were interesting to find as I perused the pages.

The second half then looks at the individual members of these classes, detailing their depot allocations and when they were moved between them. The more modern classes are notably absent from this section; given their 'go where required' nature, and the lack of fixed 'depots' as would have been had in the BR era, it is hardly surprising this is the case. When considering the differing length of service life locomotives had, the number of depot changes is often surprising – often for how plentiful they were, but on occasion sometimes for how rare too.



As it is a BR-focused volume, industrial diesels are not included, save for a selection of departmental locomotives from the likes of Ruston & Hornsby, Fowler, and Hunslet to name but a few.

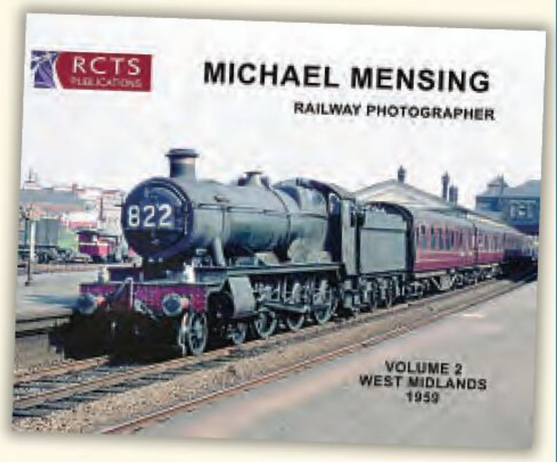
Given the vast number of such locomotives, it is probably no bad thing, for their detailed listings would no doubt have more than doubled the size of this already weighty publication.

For anyone who is researching a particular locomotive, or just generally interested in the life of a particular class, there's no doubt that this comprehensive volume will perfectly scratch that itch. It will also prove ideal for those such as railway modellers looking to research those allocated to a specific region.

COMPREHENSIVE BIBLE OF 'MODERN' BR TRACTION

Pre-order Issue 331: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Michael Mensing Railway Photographer Volume 2: West Midlands 1959



(Hardback, Railway Correspondence & Travel Society, www.rcts.org.uk 14pp, £25).

THE name Michael Mensing is synonymous with his photographs in the Ian Allan ABC spotters' books of the 1950/60s, and also in the railway magazines of the day. Of course, those were virtually all published in black-and-white, so this publication gives an opportunity for his excellent material to be shown in colour.

Based on the West Midlands during 1959 when Michael lived in Solihull, it is inevitable that almost (but not all) of the photographs were taken on the Western Region lines rather than the London Midland Region.

Drawing from the collection of Michael Mensing images held in the RCTS photographic archive, these are very much 'action' pictures of trains in service and show the working environment of the railways at that time, an era long lost to today's scenes, that bring back many happy memories of either sitting at the platform end on a porter's trolley or alongside the line sitting on a fence to watch the variety of stock passing throughout the day. Each one-per-page picture is accompanied by extended captions that bring the locations to life.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED LOCAL HISTORICAL FLASHBACK

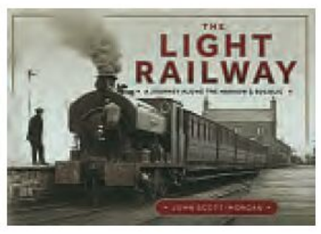
The Light Railway: A Journey Along the Narrow & Bucolic

By John Scott-Morgan (hardback, Pen & Sword Books, 226pp, £25, ISBN: 978-1-036106-61-4).

JOHN Scott Morgan has been writing railway books for more than 50 years, His books include The Light Railway Era, Branches & Byways, The East Kent Railway – The Line That Went To Nowhere and Colonel Stephens' Railways – A Pictorial Survey, so his latest volume promised to be another treat.

Indeed, this is a superb journey supported by 216 black-and-white photographs that starts in Jersey, moves across mainland England before crossing into Scotland, then onto to Ireland, and finishing in the Isle of Man.

The Light Railways Act of 1896 opened up the opportunity for many unusual and different railways to be built. This book will also please Colonel Stephens enthusiasts as it includes no less than 14 of his lines.



Many of these railways' rural communities and industries have long since gone. Favourites such as the Bishops Castle Railway and the Wisbech & Upwell Tramway are included, with lesser-knowns such as Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors Light Railway and the North Sunderland Light Railway, with a photograph of a station named Sea House, plus the Wolverton & Stony Stratford Tramway.

Also included are those now resurrected as heritage railways with Ravenglass & Eskdale, Derwent Valley & Welshpool & Llanfair as examples, and there are a couple on the comeback trail like the Gwendraeth Valley Railway and Glyn Valley Tramway.

This book succeeds in capturing the days of rural light railways that in most cases offered both passenger and goods traffic, and it will be enjoyed by enthusiasts who love the unique budget lines that once played an important part in their localities.

NEW WINDOW INTO LOST ERA

Railways Around The Fens

By John Jackson (softback, Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com 96pp, £15.99, ISBN 978-1-398117-83-9).

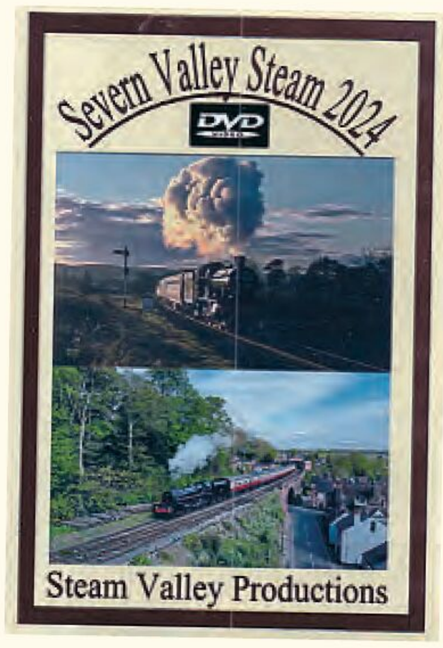
HERE is a vivid portrait of the surviving network that serves the flatlands of East Anglia, still providing vital links to local communities.

The volume focuses on the network as it is today, spanning Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, with 180 colour images of modern traction which, in the 21st century, run by relics of past times, including manually-operated level crossings and semaphore signals.

FASCINATING JOURNEYS THROUGH A UNIQUE LANDSCAPE

Severn Valley Steam 2024

DVD (Steam Valley Productions, www.steamvalleyproductions.com/07875 556615; 1 hours 35 mins, standard DVD £15, Blue-Ray £20, both plus £5.20 p&p).



ALWAYS worth waiting for is this annual collection of footage of all steam locomotives that ran on one of the world's great heritage lines in the previous year, both from the home fleet and visiting engines.

February 2024 saw the testing of A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter*, its first moves in 22 years, and the first appearance of LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* on the line in three decades.

We also see new GWR Saint No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*, LBSCR A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch*, Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway saddle tank No. 11456, Lambton tank No. 29, GWR 0-6-0PT No. 1369 and LMS 'Black Five' No. 44932 alongside the home fleet of flagship GWR No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*, West Country No. 21C127 *Taw Valley*, GWR No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 and GWR auto tank No. 1450.

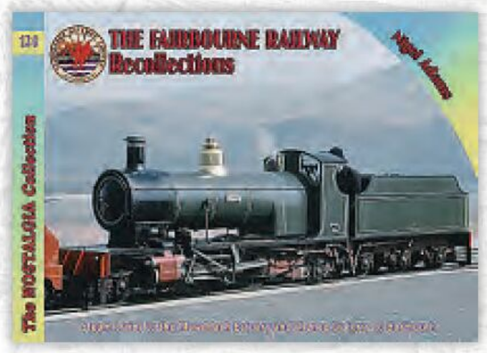
The DVD opens with footage of newly lined-out Stanier mogul No. 13268.

Drone footage affords the viewer different perspectives of familiar locations through the film. The standard DVD can also be bought from www.svrshop.co.uk

UNMISSABLE FEAST OF VALLEY STEAM

HERITAGE RAILWAY

BOOK CORNER



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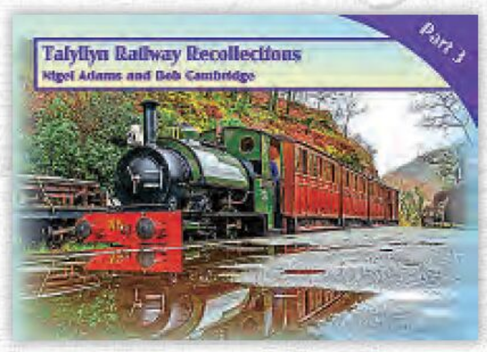

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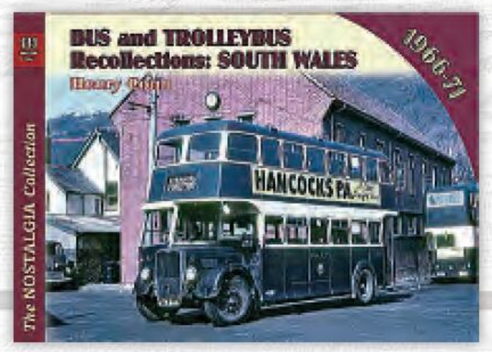

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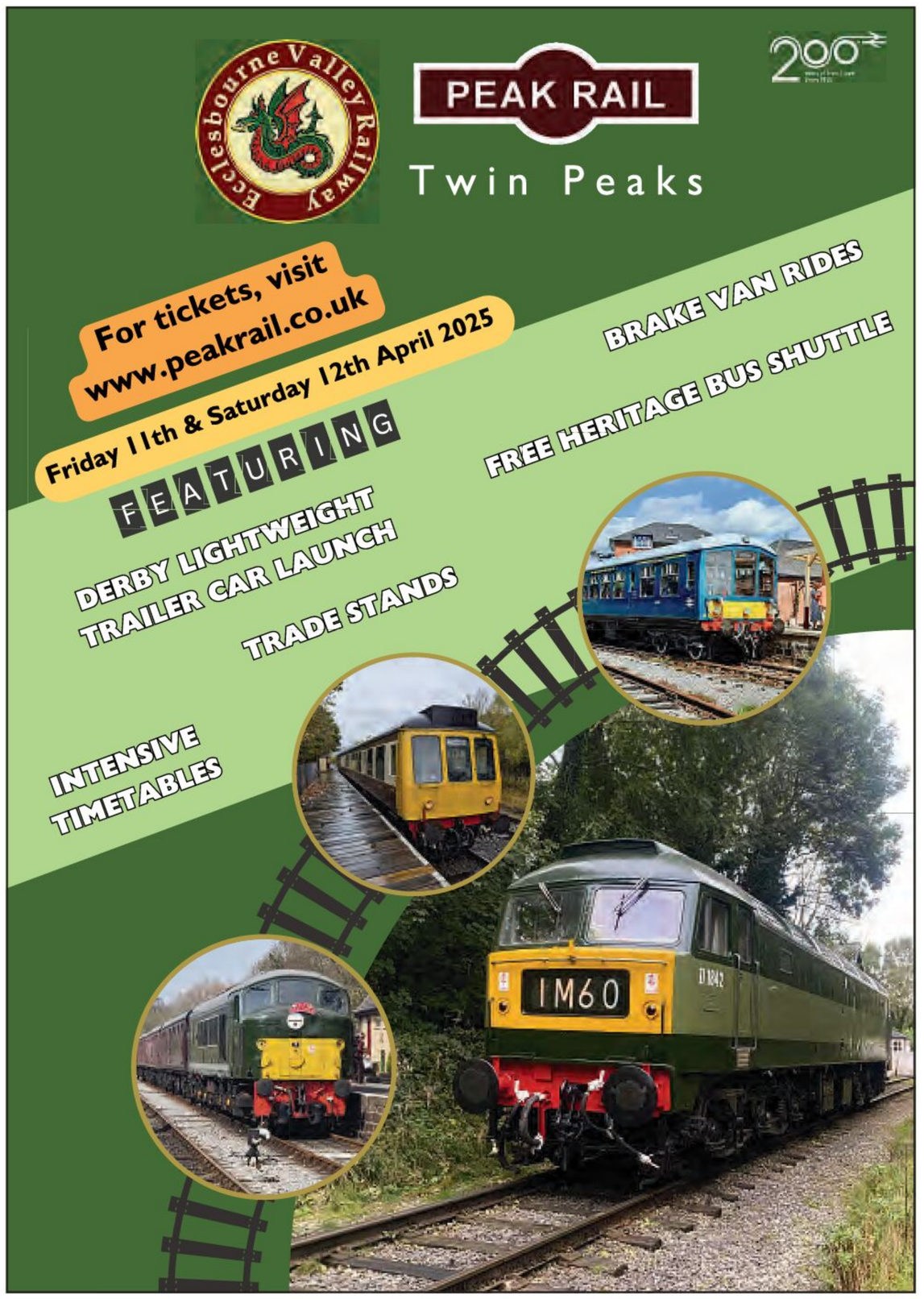

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

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SWANAGE RAILWAY

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TRACK TALK

➜ Ballast is not freight

I DO NOT wish to denigrate the Swanage Railway's Winter Warm Up event in January and the report thereof in *Heritage Railway* issue 328.

However, I have spent more than 50 years working professionally within BR rail freight/wagon preservation and the suggestion within the article that eight ballast wagons and a brake van (and with the brake van at the wrong end half the time), was a recreation of freight trains "reliably delivering goods and farm produce" is somewhat misleading.

It's clearly a ballast train, so why not describe it as such rather than make statements, for which younger people might not know the difference?

There are many railways – such as the Great Central, Mid-Hants, Bluebell, Nene Valley, North York Moors, Keighley and East Lancs, to name a few – which put out far more representative and credible freight/goods trains.

If we are going to run recreations of trains to educate visitors, let's get the facts straight!

Chris Le Corney, Birchington, Kent

➜ Trainspotting at Ilford in the late 1950s

I GREATLY enjoyed Geoff Courtney's *Heritage Railway* contribution on pages 40/41 in issue 329 because, firstly, I did my trainspotting at our local station of Ilford and all around London termini and sheds during 1957-61, and secondly, I met Dick Riley a few times as he was a friend and colleague of my late brother-in-law Clive Peake, at Glyn Mills & Co bank (later Williams & Glyn's, RBS).

I did no photography myself during those days but do have a Kodak Brownie snap of me in short trousers spotting a Britannia steaming through Ilford towards Liverpool Street in 1957.

High spots of my GER memories include the sight and sound of Sandringhams clanking through the station, a works tour of Stratford with the Gants Hill Boy Scouts on which I clocked a line of rebuilt Clauds that had already been removed from my Combined Volume (like Geoff), I kept only that), and a most unexpected sighting of No. 72009 *Clan Stewart* during its trials of, I think, 1958. Geoff will probably also remember the old electric locomotive No. 26510 that inhabited the sidings at Goodmayes.

I recall that most Ilford station staff (for good reason) would not admit unaccompanied young trainspotters on a platform ticket at either entrance. To overcome this, if we had enough cash, we would buy return tickets to Seven Kings. Quite likely, our paths crossed at the time. Geoff has pursued his railway interest more avidly than me, though I was editor of *Railway Strategies* for a couple of years 20-plus years ago.

Congratulations on his ongoing achievements in this field.

David Tyler, email

STAR LETTER

A fascinating insight into a county's railway art

I WAS pleased to read Geoff Courtney's report in *Heritage Railway* issue 329 of the Lincolnshire railway poster, totem and carriage print exhibition at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, which I was privileged to open on January 11.

Lincolnshire may not be one of the highest-profile railway counties in the UK, but the LNER and BR produced some superb posters promoting the area, and the exhibition is a colourful delight that I would urge enthusiasts to visit during its run until May 4. A bonus is the centre itself, which provides a fascinating insight into the port's fishing heritage.

Within my own poster collection I have a Great Northern Railway lithograph showing the coming of the railways to Skegness in 1873. At that time, this Lincolnshire seaside town was very small, but this was to change as the railway's arrival had a major impact, supported by the advertising via posters that helped the local economy to grow.

In the summer, Skegness and Cleethorpes were popular destinations for the families of steelworkers from Sheffield who travelled there by rail, and in addition the county's coast saw holidaymakers coming from the industrial Midlands, again by rail.

Trainspotters watch a busy scene at Spalding Town in Lincolnshire on September 30, 1958, as Class 9F 2-10-0 No. 92173 passes B17 No. 61627 *Aske Hall*. An exhibition of posters, carriage prints and totems, which was opened by poster specialist and *Heritage Railway* reader Richard Furness on January 11, has brought the county's railways into the spotlight.
TRANSPORT TREASURY/DONALD ROBERTSON

Another poster in my collection is a Great Central Railway example from about 1920 promoting its ferry services by 'new saloon steamers' from Grimsby to the continental ports of Antwerp, Rotterdam, Hamburg and Esbjerg.

This poster shows that in addition to a strong fishing industry, Grimsby had excellent North Sea railway-run ferry links to the continent. Both have now sadly declined, and it is amazing that in about 1950, Grimsby was the largest fishing port in the world.

Richard Furness, Charfield, South Gloucestershire

This Great Central Railway 1920 poster from the Richard Furness collection promotes the company's ferry links to the continent from Grimsby, then the largest fishing port in the world.

Pre-order Issue 331: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Marley Hill should also be up there!

THE article 'Steam Sheds Supreme' in *Heritage Railway* issue 327 was certainly interesting, although it wasn't able to cover all of those structures on our steam railways. There is an important omission, however: the oldest working locomotive shed in the world.

The Tanfield Railway's Marley Hill engine shed is not mentioned. Built in 1854 for the Pontop & Jarrow Railway, it houses six working steam locomotives, and, unlike the other steam railway sheds, it welcomes customers to wander around free of charge on operating days (but not while locos move, nor where any hazardous work is in progress).

Of course, those looking for locomotives in their old spotting book may be disappointed. All locomotives are locally relevant and are restored to their former liveries in what is a real working museum.

The shed has more to offer than any other and, I hope you agree, it shouldn't be overlooked.

Peter Weightman, Newcastle upon Tyne

➜ **Tanfield300 celebrations start: see News, pages 32/33.**

Inside Marley Hill shed with Robert Stephenson & Co. 0-6-0T No 2730 of 1891 and Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-4-0ST No. 7409 of 1948 *Sir Cecil A. Cochrane* on December 26, 2024. PETER WEIGHTMAN

'A Day in 1908 at Wylde Green Train Station'

AS THE name suggests, the painting captures a day in a life at Wylde Green station in Sutton Coldfield, as it would have been in 1908.

On this particular day, a local LNWR 'Precursor' tank comes chuffing in onto Platform 2, where stationmaster George Morris is checking his pocket watch to see if the local southbound passenger train for Birmingham is running on time.

On Platform 1 is the station cat, on duty for any mice or rats. Behind the cat are two Edwardian ladies, observing the station buildings as they wait for the next northbound train to Sutton Coldfield (a homage to the founding members the station community group).

The colourful, nostalgic picture was painted by artist Harri Hampson (harrihampson.co.uk) for Friends of Wylde Green Train Station to display at the ticket office of Sutton Coldfield station for the Sutton Heritage Week on in September 2024.

Friends of Wylde Green Train Station is a community group which adopted the local station in 2020, promoting sustainable travel and community involvement, and has its own Facebook page giving more details.

In addition, the painting will be available to see on the website of The Spaghetti Line, a community group dedicated to representing all stations on the Cross City Line running through Birmingham's iconic Spaghetti Junction.

Mediums used were pencil, watercolour paint, colouring pencils, fine line pen, soft pastels, varnish spray, varnish spray and A2 sketchpad paper.

Harri Hampson's vision of everyday life at Wylde Green station in Edwardian times.

Comprehensively blowing the lid off the Beeching era

HAVING just finished reading Robin Jones' Beeching – 60 Years Since the Axeman book which my wife bought as a Christmas present, I have to say you produced the most readable and comprehensive insight into the saga of Beeching and his 'famous' or infamous tenure with British Railways!

It has been a real revelation to read the whole story in such a readable and interesting way, with the illustrations and anecdotal observations by other notable people around that time.

The Earnest Marples period was very revealing. I had no recollection of his undoing and exile, or his pro-road feelings, obviously related to his connection with his company's massive motorway construction contracts. It all makes sense now, after all this time! The Barbara Castle interlude was also very interesting as we, here in Tenterden, had some dealings with her over the Kent & East Sussex Railway saga back then!

The coverage of the subsequent possible errors in closing some lines too early was also very interesting, and the effects it had on society; in fact, the whole story you put together so succinctly is really a social documentary of one of the most interesting periods in our varied transport history here in the UK.

The latter part of the work covering the after-effects, not only on our transport, but also on our social habits was very enjoyable, followed by the continuing changes in our heritage railways to date.

As a lifelong railway enthusiast who started his interest with volunteering on the Talyllyn back in 1956, through many years with the KESR as a volunteer (and full-time commercial manager in the 1980s), and still involved as a tour manager for main line railtours to this day – and I'm only 82! – I have to congratulate you, Robin, on an excellent piece of our history covered in such a readable and factual way. Well done!

I have also read, and still retain, all issues of *Heritage Railway* since its launch and enjoy them again and again.

Kind regards, and thanks again for publishing Beeching!

Doug Lindsay, trustee, 5-BEL Trust and Colonel Stephens Museum

➜ **The book Beeching – 60 Years Since the Axeman may be ordered at www.mortonsbooks.co.uk/book/beeching-60-years-since-the-axeman**

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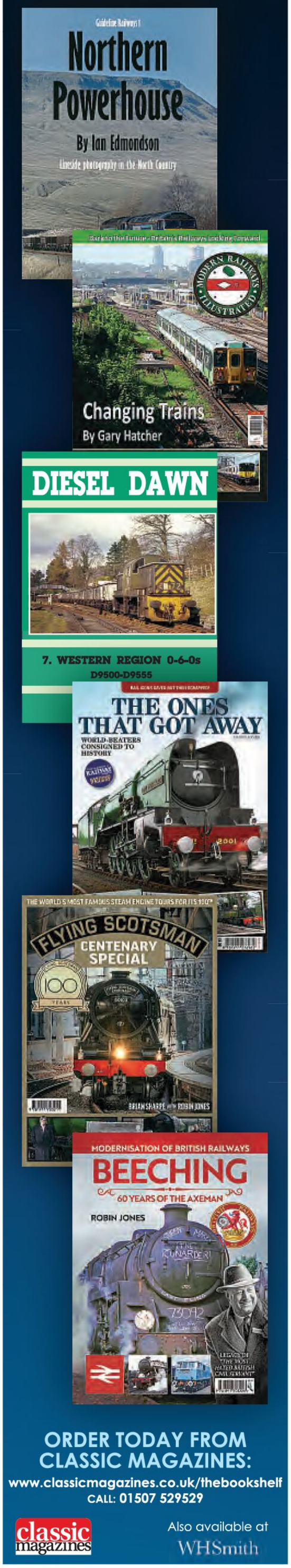

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Celebrating Railway 200

CELEBRATIONS for both Railway 200 and the Stockton & Darlington Railway bicentenary are taking place around the UK, involving main lines operators, heritage lines, museums and local communities. Here's a preview of some of those happening in the next few months. If you have an event, exhibition, talk, or other way of celebrating this anniversary planned and would like it to be included here, please email Owen Hayward at ohayward@mortons.co.uk with the details.

➜ For a full list of events taking place in 2025, visit railway200.co.uk and sdr200.co.uk

As reported on News, page 11, LNWR Coal Tank No. 1054, seen at Ropley on October 7, 2023 , will attend The Greatest Gathering in Derby. OWEN HAYWARD

Headline events

August 1-3 – Alstom presents: The Greatest Gathering in Litchurch Lane Works, Derby (see News, page11).
September 26-28 – Locomotion No. 1 on the Stockton & Darlington route
March-September – Stockton & Darlington Railway Bicentenary Celebrations

Extended celebrations

National Railway Museum and Locomotion Shildon – activities, displays and events throughout the year including the reopening of Station Hall in York.
Hopetown Darlington – Nine-month festival celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Enjoy immersive art installations and augmented reality digital games, see treasured artworks in the region for the first time, join thousands of others for awe-inspiring outdoor events, and see some of the world's favourite locomotives, from March 29-November 30

International events

May 1-July 31 – FEATI University Railway Laboratory tours.
Manila, Philippines
May 3/4 – Maldegem-Eeklo Steam Railway (Belgium)
Maldegem Steam Festival

Heritage railways, museums and works

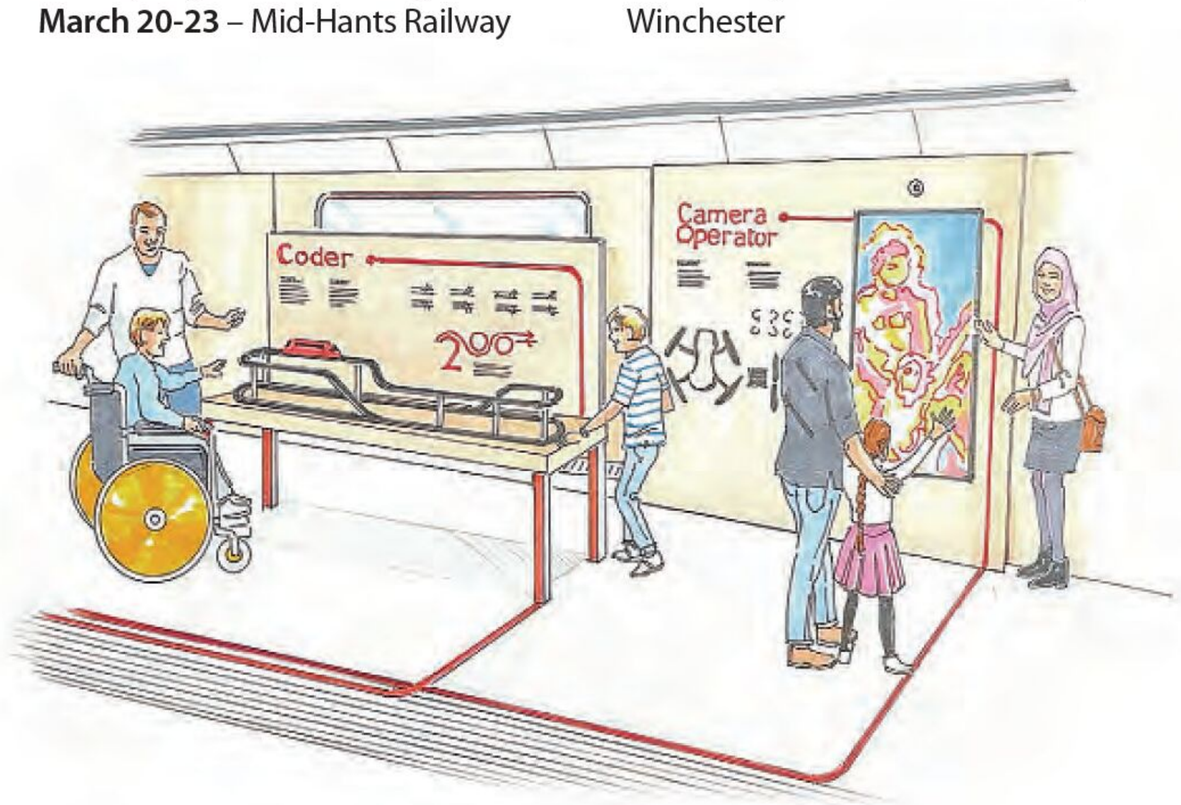
March 14-16 – East Lancashire Railway Legends of Steam gala
March 20-23 – Mid-Hants Railway launch of 35005 *Canadian Pacific*
April 12 – Hengist Locomotive Works Open Day, CTL Seal Ltd, Sheffield
April 20/21 – Yeovil Railway Centre Railway 200 Easter Weekend
May 1-31 – Swanage Railway Swanage Railway 140th anniversary and Railways To The Seaside
May 2-5 – West Somerset Railway Spring Steam Spectacular
May 24 – Corris Railway Gala Day
May 24-26 – Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Cotswold Festival of Steam

Dates throughout the year

Heritage Open Days
Churnet Valley Railway
The Railway Children Theatre Show
Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Have a Go days
M Shed, Bristol
Riverside Depot tours
Seaton Tramway
Meet the Volunteers & 25th Anniversary
STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway, Swindon
Southport Model Railway Society Open Days
57A Portland St, Southport

Main line

March 29 – Railtour 'The Shap Mountaineer' with No. 45596 *Bahamas* (Vintage Trains). Birmingham New Street, Carlisle, and return.
May 10/11 Micheldever Station 185th anniversary. Micheldever Station, Winchester
July 5 – Railtour 'The Cathedrals Express' (Vintage Trains). Birmingham New Street, Swansea, and return.
July 26 – Penmere Platform Station 100th anniversary. Penmere Platform Station, Falmouth



Another artists impression of the interior of one of the vehicles of Network Rail's *Inspiration* **travelling exhibition train, as reported in News, page 10.** NR

Talks

March 15 – Thomas Brassey: The Greatest Railway Builder in the World (John Violet). Llangollen Station, Denbighshire
March 27 – 200 Years of Britain's Railways (John Parkin). Honeywood Museum, Carshalton
April 1 – The Real Stockton & Darlington Railway (Dennis A Lovett). Enfield Drill Hall Sports Club, Enfield
April 12 – The Early Days on and around the Llangollen Railway (Dave Waldren). Llangollen Station, Denbighshire
April 12 – The Stockton & Darlington Bicentenary (Caroline Hardy, Niall Hammond). Friends Meeting House, Manchester
April 23 – Hackworth: A Quest for Truth (Mike Norman). Shildon Railway Institute, Shildon
April 24 – Rails to Midhurts (Bill Gage). The Novium Museum, Chichester
May 10 – Thunder and Smoke: The Arrival of the Railway into Llangollen (Peter Dickinson). Llangollen Station, Denbighshire
May 14 – Railway History: A Journey Through Politics, Performance and Song (Dr Ilaria Scaglia, Dr Joseph Yannielli, Dr Sarah Olive).
Aston University, Birmingham

Exhibitions

Until May 4 – Rambles in Lincolnshire: Lincolnshire tourism railway posters.
Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre,
Until December 10 – East Surrey Railways. East Surrey Museum, Surrey
Until November 2 – 1825 and all that!
Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, Tywyn
March 31-April 30 – Ashford's Railway Legacy. Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre, Kent
April 12 – Essex Electrics.
East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel & Wakes Colne
April 26 – September 7 – Smoke and Steel: The History of Scotland's Railways. Stirling Castle, Stirling
April 26-September 28 – 200 years of British Railway Locomotives.
Ongar Station, Essex
May 1-31 – The Heart of Metroland.
Rickmansworth Library, Hertfordshire
May 3-October 26 – The Bishop's Waltham Branch Line. Bishop's Waltham Museum, Hampshire
May 26-30 – Railway 200 @ Dartmouth Town Council. The Engine House, Dartmouth

Miscellaneous

March 14 – Passengers and Pioneers album launch.
The Common Room, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
April 2–July 31 – Railway 200 Poetry Competition.
Lordshill Library, Southampton.
April 5 – Brunel & the Great Western Railway: Kensal Green Cemetery tour, Kensington, London
April 12 – MRX 2025 (High Wycombe & District Model Railway Society).
Cressex Community Centre, Buckinghamshire
April 12/13 – Green Valley Railway O Gauge Open Weekend. Raynes Park, London
April 19 – Guided walk: Pioneers Trail (Tales from the Tracks).
Ashford, Kent
April 24 – Teversal Trail Walk (Rushcliffe Ramblers).
Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire
May 3 – Heritage walk (North Eastern Railway Association).
Barnard Castle, Durham
May 10 – Railway Bicentenary Tea Dance.
Shildon Railway Institute
May 17 – BCIMO Family Day.
Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre, Dudley
May 25 – Hoddesdon Model Railway Club Extravaganza.
Broxbourne, Hertfordshire

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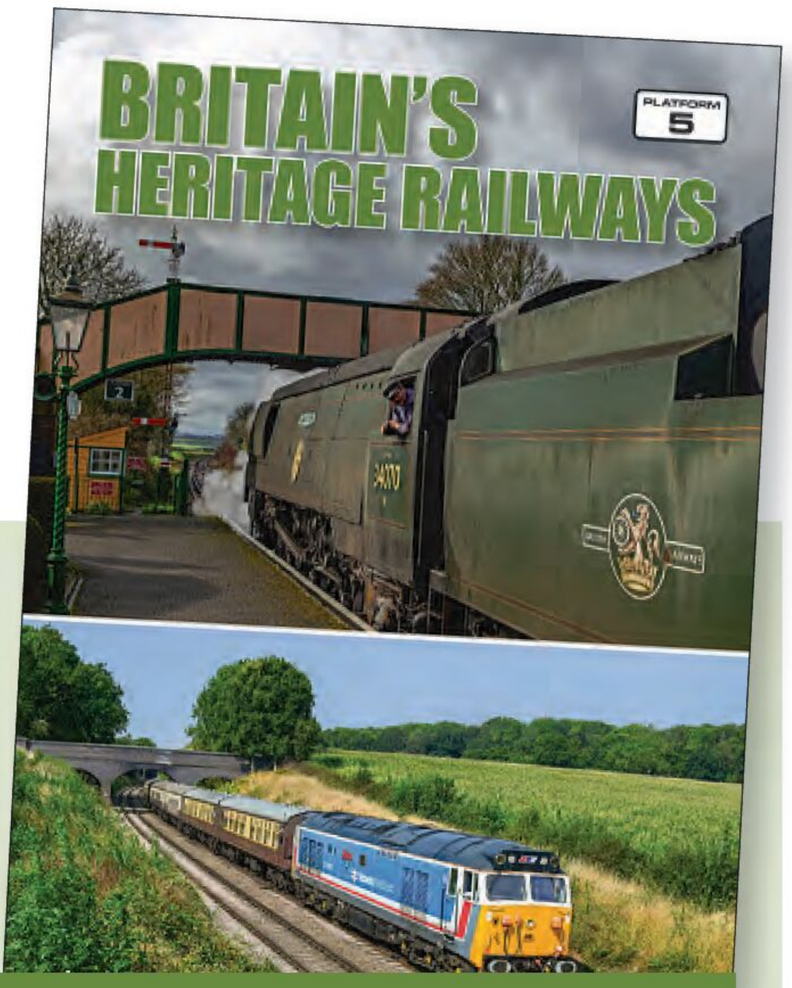

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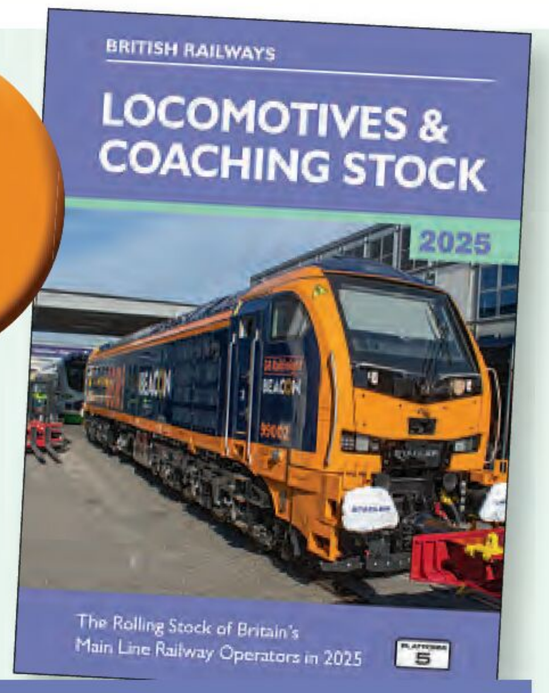

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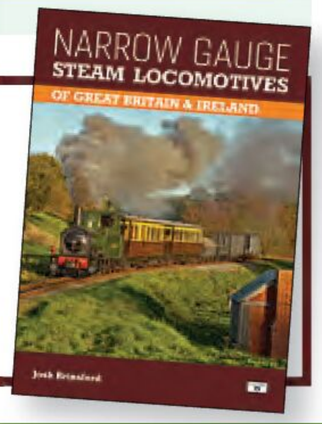

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OPERATIONAL HERITAGE LINES AND MUSEUMS

SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex. Tel: 01798 831370.
Open: Weds-Sun.

Bluebell Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL. Tel: 01825 720800.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.
Tues-Suns from Apr 1

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.
Running: Weds + Apr 20, May 4.

Chatham Historic Dockyard
Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent. Tel: 01634 820800.
Open: Daily.

East Kent Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042.
Running: Suns from Mar 24.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway
10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway
12¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Exbury, Southampton. Tel: 023 8089 1203.
Open: Daily.

Hayling Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Hayling Island, Hants. Tel: 07902 446340.
Running: Weds, W/Es, sch hols.

Hollycombe Steam in the Country
2ft gauge, 1½ miles. Liphook, Hants. Tel: 01428 724900.
Open: Suns from Apr 20 + Apr 18, 21.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204.
Running: Thurs, Suns, sch hols.

Kent & East Sussex Railway
Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.
Running: Mar 23.

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.
Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es + Apr 8, 15.

Mizens Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922.
Reopens: Easter.

Old Kiln Light Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.
Running: Mar 15/16, 29. W/Es from Apr 5.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Apr 1

Royal Victoria Railway
10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent .Tel: 01795 424899.
Running: Suns from Apr 6.

Spa Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.
Running: W/Es + Apr 9/10, 16-18, 21.

Volk's Electric Railway
2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton.
Running: Daily from Apr 5.

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538.
Running: Suns + Mar 29, Apr 9, 16, 18, 21.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.
Running: Weds, Suns + Tues & Thurs rom Apr 1.

The final guest for the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway's April 4-6 diesel gala was announced as A1A Locomotive's Class 31 No. 31108, which joins previously announced Class 45 No. 45108 and the Class 50 duo of Nos. 50008 *Thunderer* and 50015 *Valiant*. Examples of the Class 31 have worked the line in preservation, with the visit of Butterley-based No. 31108 being the first appearance of one without a headcode box fitted to the cab roof. The gala will feature resident shunters D2069 and No. 08825 alternating on brake van rides at Princes Risborough station, while driver experiences on some of the visiting locomotives are available and take place on days before the event. See chinnorrailway.co.uk for more details. MIDLAND RAILWAY – BUTTERLEY

Bristol Harbour Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.
M Shed Museum open Tues-Suns.

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 from Apr 5.

East Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset. Tel: 01749 880417.
Running: W/Es + Apr 9, 16, 18, 21.

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752.
Running: Apr 21, May 26.

Helston Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597.
Running: Thurs, Suns from Apr 17.

Lappa Valley Railway
7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile. Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.
Open: W/Es, sch hols.

Launceston Steam Railway
1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665
Reopens Spring 2025.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es from Apr 1.

Moors Valley Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

North Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, 1200ft. Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset. Tel: 01258 860696.
Open: Weds, W/Es.

Plym Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Marsh Mills, Plymouth. Tel: 01752 345078.
Running: Suns from Mar 16 + Mar 22, Apr 5, 12 , 19, 21.

Seaton Tramway
2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.
Running: W/Es, sch hols. Daily from Apr 1.

Somerset & Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221 Open: Suns.
Running: Apr 6, 9, 16, 20/21, May 4.

South Devon Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.
Running: W/Es & sch hols from Mar 22.

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.
Running: W/Es, sch hols + Tues-Thurs from Apr 1

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.
Running: W/Es & bank hols from Mar 29.

West Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, 20 miles. Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Tues, Weds from Apr 1.

Yeovil Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.
Running: Mar 16, 30 Apr 6, 20/21.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum
Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.
Open: Daily from Mar 27.

Bure Valley Railway
15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Apr 1.

Colne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.
Running: Suns + Apr 9/10, 16-18, 21.

East Anglian Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.
Open: Weds, W/Es.
Running: Apr 6, 9, 13, 18-21.

Ferry Meadows Railway
10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01733 398 889.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Mangapps Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Tel: 01621 784898.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Mid-Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 11½ miles. Dereham, Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.
Running: W/Es + Weds from Apr 30.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.
Running: April 20/21, May 25/26.

Nene Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01780 784444.
Running: W/Es + Weds from Apr 2.

North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA. Tel: 01263 820800.
Running: Suns, sch hols + Sats from Apr 5.

Southwold Railway Trust
3ft gauge. Blyth Road, Southwold. Tel: 01502725422.
Open: Apr 20, May 4, 25.

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: W/Es.

HOME COUNTIES

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Quainton Road, Bucks. Tel: 01296 655720
Cafe open Mon-Fri.
Running: Suns from Apr 6 + Apr 9, 18/19.

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‘Ironclad’ heads south this spring

L&YR Class 25 0-6-0 No. 52044 will make an exceedingly rare venture away from its Yorkshire home this spring when it heads south to visit the Spa Valley Railway.

Built by Beyer Peacock & Co Ltd in 1887 as No. 957, the star of the 1970 EMI film adaptation of Edith Nesbitt’s The Railway Children (for which it was painted into a fictional green livery to become ‘The Green Dragon’) has been based at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway since 1965. It was the second locomotive to be bought privately from BR, having been purchased by Tony Cox in 1960; upon arrival at the Worth Valley, it was towed to Haworth by LNER J52 0-6-0ST No. 1247, which had coincidentally been the first. Since then it has only visited the Severn Valley Railway for overhaul in 1996 (which was completed in 2002 following which it underwent trail running there) and the East Lancashire Railway for a L&YR gala in 2022.

No. 52044 will arrive at Tunbridge Wells West in time to work trains on April 5/6, with its appearance there being the furthest south it is ever known to have travelled.

It will also work the following weekend of April 12/13, before its final appearance over the extended Easter bank holiday of April 18-21. During the four-day weekend, it will operate alongside another Victorian pre-Grouping veteran, ex-Caledonian Railway class 812 0-6-0 No. 828, before returning to Yorkshire.

Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway ‘Ironclad’ No. 52044 will be the third locomotive of that company to visit the Spa Valley Railway when it appears there this April. It has rarely ventured away from its home at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. TOM MARSHALL/KWVR

General manager Jonnie Pay said: “The visit of No. 52044 means that all the currently operational main line L&YR engines aside from 0-4-0ST *Pug* No. 51241 will have traversed our line, with Class 27 No. 52322 having visited in 2018 and Class 23 0-6-0ST 51456 in 2022. This will also be the 33rd steam engine to visit our line. When you add in the four different Thomas the Tank engines and our past or current residents, the total goes to 48 that have operated on our railway in the last 28 years.”

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366
Running: Suns from Mar 30.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Wallingford, Oxon.
Tel: 01491 835067
Running: Mar 30, Apr 12, 19-21.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: W/Es .
Running: Weds + W/Es from Apr 5 + Apr 18.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Running: W/Es, bank hols from Apr 5 + Apr 9, 16, 25.

Great Whipsnade Railway
2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.
Tel: 0344 225 1826.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.
Daily from Apr 23.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway
2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.
Tel: 01932 212235.
Reopens Spring 2025.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles.
Leighton Buzzard, Beds.
Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Suns & bank hols from Mar 30 + Apr 9/10, 16/17.

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: Apr 5, 19/20.

Apedale Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.
Tel: 0845 094 1953.
Running: W/Es, bank hols from Apr 19.

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 from Mar 22.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys). Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols from Apr 18.

Chasewater Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Walsall, West Midlands. Tel: 01543 452623.
Open: Daily.
Running: Suns, bank hols from Mar 30 + Mar 29, Apr 16, 19, 24, 26.

Churnet Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 5¼ miles.
Cheddleton, Staffs.
Tel: 01538 360522.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Apr 2.

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.
Reopens Mar 29.
Tel: 01270 212130.

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre
Donegal.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 00353 (0) 749722655.

Hopetown Darlington
North Road Station, Darlington.
Open: Tues-Suns.
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: Daily.
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: W/Es.
Tel: 01258 353084.

Rail Story
Ingrow, West Yorks.
Open: Carriage Works daily, Engine Shed Tues-Suns.
Tel: 01535 690739 or 01535 680425.

Railworld Wildlife Haven
Peterborough.
Open: Weds, W/Es.
Tel: 01733 344420.

Riverside Museum
Glasgow.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 0141 287 2720.

STEAM – Museum of the GWR
Swindon.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 01793 466637.

Tiverton Museum
Tiverton, Devon.
Open: Tues-Sats.
Tel: 01884 256295.

West Cumberland Railway Museum
St Bees, Cumbria.
Open one week per month or by appointment for special interest groups – contact petergrooke@btinternet.com

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile.
Crich, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01773 854 321
Open: Fris-Weds.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles.
Norchard, Lydney, Glos.
Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles.
Wirksworth, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 823076.
Running: W/Es + Apr 9-11, 16-18.

Echills Wood Railway
7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.
Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.
Running: Suns.

Foxfield Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Blythe Bridge, Staffs.Tel: 01782 396210.
Running: Suns from Mar 30.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Standard gauge, 15 miles.
Toddington, Glos.
Tel: 01242 621405.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + tues-thurs from Apr 1.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323.
www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: W/Es.

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 + Apr 8-10, 15-17, 22-25.

Midland Railway – Butterley
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.
Running: W/Es, bank hols from Apr 5 + Apr 9, 16.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Pitsford, Northants.
Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: Mar 30, Apr 13, 20/21.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Tel: 01604 702031.
Reopens Spring 2025.

Peak Rail
Standard gauge, four miles.
Matlock, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 580381.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 9, 16.

Perrygrove Railway
15in gauge. B4228, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Tel: 01594 834991.
Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es.

Rocks by Rail
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Cottesmore, Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.
Reopens: April 17.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants. Tel 0300 3023 150.
Running: Apr 20/21.

Severn Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 15-17, 22-24.

Statfold Country Park
Multiple gauges, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU. Tel: 01827 830389.
Open: Fris-Suns + Apr 15-17, 22-24

Tanat Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Nantmawr, Shropshire SY10 9HW. Tel: 01691 780042.
www.tanatvalleyrailway.co.uk
Open: TBA.

Telford Steam Railway
Standard gauge, one mile. Telford, Shropshire.
Reopens Apr 20.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.
Running: Apr 20/21

Valley Railway Adventure
15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.
Running: W/Es.

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Blackpool, Lancs. Tel: 01253 209521.
www.blackpoolheritage.com
Depot: Mons, Sats & bank hols from Apr 18.
Heritage tram tours: TBA.

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.
Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 9/10, 16/17.

Eden Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.
Running: Suns from Mar 31 + Mar 30.

Great Laxey Mine Railway
19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 862007/670386.
Running: Suns from Apr 20.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 670453.
Running: Apr 20/21.

Heaton Park Tramway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.
Reopens Spring 2025.

Isle of Man Steam Railway
3ft gauge, 15½ miles. Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 662525.
Running: Thurs-Suns, sch hols.

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: Sch hols, March 29/30. Daily from Apr 5.

Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway
3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER), 5½ miles (SMR).
Douglas, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 697473.
Running: Daily from Mar 29.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.
Running: Sats-Thurs. Daily from Apr 1.

Ribble Steam Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Preston, Lancs.
Tel: 01772 728800.
Running: Mar 22/23, 29/30, Apr 5, 18-21.

South Tynedale Railway
2ft gauge, 4¾ miles. Alston, Cumbria.
Tel: 01434 338212.
Reopens Spring 2025.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria.
Tel: 01768 779747.
Open: Tues-Suns, bank hols, sch hols from Apr 5.

West Lancashire Light Railway
2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs.
Tel: 01772 815881.
Running: Suns from Mar 23.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland. Tel: 0300 030 3311.
Reunning: Wes, Sats from Apr 16 + Apr 13, 20/21.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe
Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.
Tel: 07889 297271.
Running: Apr 5, 26, May 3.

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: W/Es, sch hols.

Derwent Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.
Running: W/Es.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 710614.
Running: Tues, W/Es, + Weds from Apr 3.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles.
Ford Forge, Northumberland.
Tel: 01890 820244.
Running: Daily from Mar 31.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ.
Tel: 01535 645214.
Running: W/Es, sch hols + Weds from Apr 2.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway
2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.
Tel: 07407 500884.
Reopens May 24.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.
Running: Mar 30, Apr 20/21.

Middleton Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunslet, Leeds.
Tel: 0845 680 1758.
Running: Suns from Apr 5.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.
Running: Sats-Weds, sch hols from Mar 31

Scarborough North Bay Railway
20in gauge, 7/8 mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.
Running: W/Es and sch hols.

Stephenson Steam Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
North Shields.
Tel: 0191 277 7135.
Open: W/Es. Running: Suns from Apr 6 + Apr 5, 17, 21, 24.

Tanfield Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.
Tel: 07508 092365.
Running: Suns, bank hols + Apr 19

Weardale Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles.
Stanhope, Co. Durham.
Running: Sats from Mar 30 + Mar 29, 31, Apr 1, 3, 10, 14.

Wensleydale Railway
Standard gauge, 22 miles.
Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.
Tel: 01677 425805.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Apr 2.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)
15in gauge, four miles.
Huddersfield, West Yorks.
Tel: 01484 865727.
Open: W/Es, sch hols.

The Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway in Carmarthenshire reopens to the public in 2025 with a gala on March 22 that celebrates Railway 200. As well as Rolls-Royce Sentinel No. 10222 and a Pacer giving rides, Baguley track inspection vehicle *Winnie* will also be giving rides along the former Llanelli Tramroad, which dates back nearly 219 years. L&MMR

Pre-order Issue 331: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.
Open: Suns, bank hols from Apr 6.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway
2ft gauge, 4½ miles.
Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01678 540666.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols from Apr 1.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Blaenavon, Torfaen.
Tel: 01495 792263.
Running: W/Es from Mar 22.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.
Pant, Mid-Glamorgan.
Tel: 01685 722988.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols from Apr 5.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile.
Corris, near Machynlleth.
Tel: 01654 761701.
Running: Apr 12, 18-21.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne, Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.
Running: W/Es, sch hols from Mar 22.

Ffestiniog Railway
2ft gauge, 13½ miles.
Porthmadog, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es from Mar 29.

Gwili Railway
Standard gauge, four miles.
Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 01267 238213.
Running: Weds, Thurs, Suns from Apr 2.

Llanberis Lake Railway
2ft gauge, three miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01286 870549.
Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns, sch hols + Apr 5, 12, 19.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 07956 082305.
Running: Mar 22, Apr 19.

Llangollen Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen, Denbighshire.
Tel: 01978 860979.
Running: W/Es + Weds from Apr 2 + Apr 11, 21.

Rhyl Miniature Railway
15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.
Tel: 01352 759109.
Running: W/Es, sch hols from Apr 5.

Snowdon Mountain Railway
800mm gauge, 4½ miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01286 870223.
Running: Daily from Mar 29.

Talyllyn Railway
2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.
Tywyn, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01654 710472.
Running: Daily from Apr 1.

Teifi Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Henllan, Ceredigion, SA44 5TD.
Tel: 01559 371077.
Running: sch hols.

Vale of Rheidol Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles.
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion.
Tel: 01970 625819.
Running: Daily from Apr 5.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.
Running: Tues-Sats from Apr 5.

Welsh Highland Railway
2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es from Mar 29.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, eight miles.
Llanfair Caereinion, Powys.
Tel: 01938 810441.
Running: Weds, Thus, W/Es from Mar 29.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Bo'ness, West Lothian.
Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: Tues, W/Es, bank hols from Apr 1 + Apr 2, 9.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles.
Brechin, Angus.
Tel: 01356 622992.
Running: Mar 29, Apr 19/20.

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge.
Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Running: Apr 21, May 4.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Dufftown, Banffshire.
Tel: 01340 821181.
Running: W/Es from Apr 5.

Lathalmond Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Scottish Vintage Bus Museum,
Lathalmond, near Dunfermline.
Tel: 07379 914801.
Open: Suns from Mar 31.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South Lanarkshire.
Reopens: Easter 2025.

Royal Deeside Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Banchory, Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.
Reopens Spring 2025.

Strathspey Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.
Running: Weds-Suns, sch hols from Apr 5.

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway
3ft gauge. Drumod, Co. Leitrim.
Tel: +353 71 963 8599.
Reopens: Easter 2025.

Downpatrick & County Down Railway
5ft 3in gauge.
Downpatrick, Co. Down.
Tel: 028 4461 5779.
Running: Mar 17.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim.
Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.
Museum open: Thurs-Sats.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and other events in the coming weeks

MARCH
- 14-16 Bluebell Railway Branch Line Gala
- 14-16 East Lancashire Railway Legends of Steam Gala
- 15 Spa Valley Railway The Gruffalo Visits
- 15/16 Gwili Railway 6 for 60 Gala
- 15/16 Nene Valley Railway Best of British with Britannia
- 19-23 Mid-Hants Railway Canadian Pacific Launch
- 20-23 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway Steam Gala
- 22 Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway Rail 200 Gala
- 22/23 Nene Valley Railway Thomas' Branch Line Weekend
- 22/23 Statfold Country Park Day Out with Thomas
- 22-30 North Yorkshire Moors Railway *Sir Nigel Gresley* Excursions
- 23 Great Central Railway Railwayana Swapmeet
- 23 Seaton Tramway Birdwatching Tram
- 28-30 Swanage Railway Spring Steam Gala
- 29/30 Lappa Valley Railway Original Engine Weekend
- 30 Tanfield Railway Freight Train Day

APRIL
- 4-6 Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway Diesel Gala
- 5 Abbey Pumping Station Model Railway Show
- 5 Middleton Railway Community Day
- 5/6 Great Central Railway & GCR Nottingham Reunification Open Weekend
- 5/6 Kent & East Sussex Railway Bodiam 25th Anniversary Celebrations
- 5/6 Midland Railway – Butterley TUGS Weekend
- 5/6 Severn Valley Railway Open House Weekend
- 5-8 North Yorkshire Moors Railway *Bahamas* Excursions
- 5-21 Kent & East Sussex Railway Easter Bunny Trains
- 6 Foxfield Railway Vintage Vehicle & Classic Car Rally
- 6-21 Isle of Wight Steam Railway Great Railway Easter Event
- 10 East Lancashire Railway Dinosaur Day
- 10-13 North Yorkshire Moors Railway *Bahamas* excursions
- 11/12 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway & Peak Rail Twin Peaks Diesel Gala
- 11-13 Llangollen Railway Branch Line Gala
- 12 Apedale Valley Light Railway New Members' Day
- 12 East Anglian Railway Museum Essex Electrics Exhibition
- 12 Great Central Railway Peter Rabbit visits
- 12 Kent & East Sussex Railway Land Rover Rally & Morning Birdwatching Experience
- 12-14 Statfold Country Park Model Railway Show
- 13 Kent & East Sussex Railway Green Fun Day
- 16 Epping Ongar Railway Easter Egg Hunt
- 17-21 Mid-Hants Railway Easter Bunny Train
- 18 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Day Out With Thomas
- 18 Great Central Railway Good(s) Friday
- 18 Talyllyn Railway Stations at Stations
- 18-21 Bala Lake Railway Easter Egg Hunt
- 18-21 Battlefield Line Easter Eggspress
- 18-21 Crich Tramway Village Easter Eggstravaganza
- 18-21 Seaton Tramway Easter Egg-tram-aganza
- 18-21 Severn Valley Railway Spring Steam Gala
- 18-21 Tanfield Railway Easter Eggstravaganza
- 18-24 Midland Railway – Butterley Easter Egg Hunt
- 19/20 Barnards Miniature Railway Easter Express
- 19-21 Apedale Valley Light Railway Easter Egg Hunt
- 19-21 Epping Ongar Railway Easter Egg Hunt
- 19-21 Great Central Railway Road Rail Steam
- 19-21 Middleton Railway Easter Weekend
- 20 Foxfield Railway Teddy Bear's Picnic
- 20 Mizens Railway Easter Sunday Trains
- 20 Talyllyn Railway Dinosaur Easter Egg Hunt
- 20/21 Groudle Glen Railway Easter Egg Hunt
- 20/21 Leighton Buzzard Railway Easter Trains
- 20/21 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Easter Bunny visits
- 20/21 South Tynedale Railway Easter Egg Trail

Are you organising a gala or other big event and would like it included in these listings? Let us know the details by emailing Owen Hayward at ohayward@mortons.co.uk

The details in this list were correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise that you confirm details with the venue concerned. Pre-booking is often essential.
TBA = To Be Announced

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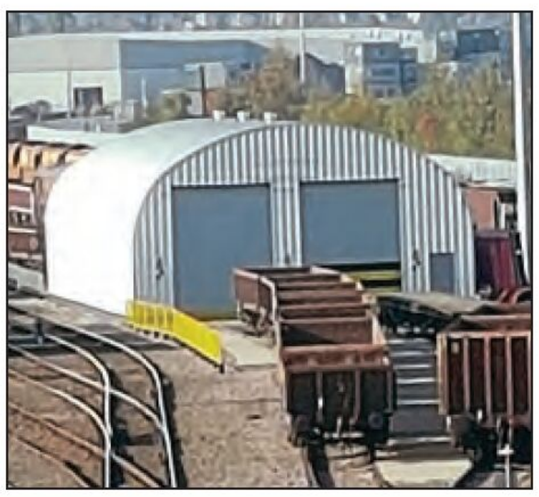

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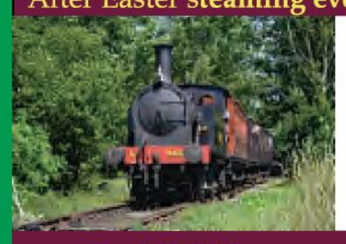

20th/21st April - Easter Steam Gala with three locos in steam
25th/26th May - Middy in the 1940s
1st June - The Middy Model Railway Show - all popular gauges
8th June - Steam Railway Day
15th June - Steam Railway and Suffolk Vehicle Enthusiasts Day
22nd June - Steam Railway and East Anglian Practical Classics Day
29th June - Steam Railway and Vintage Bus Day

For full 2025 programme details visit www.mslr.org.uk or call 01449 766874/766899
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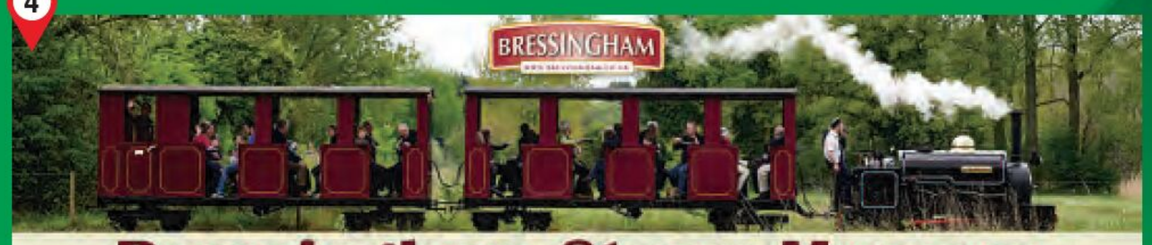

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5

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Sittingbourne's Steam Railway

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Behind the Scenes Day (18 May)
Pirate Weekend (31 May/1 June)
Railway 200 Steam & Beer
Music Festival (28/29 June)

www.sklr.net | 01795 424899 | @SandKLR

It's time to be out and about

Winter is loosening its grip, the sun is occasionally shining, and with the change of clocks imminent, we can all look forward to a fantastic start to the Railway 200 year... full of hope and events for all the family – ranging from the die-hard enthusiasts to those simply in need of a great day out.

We're sure you will have your favourite heritage line, museum or attraction to visit, and of course they need your support... but maybe you can also spread your horizons and have a look further afield?

If you are looking for somewhere a bit special, perhaps in a part of the country you may not have been to for a while or have always meant to visit, or even an attraction on your doorstep you'd forgotten all about, then take a look at our map and the adverts on these pages to gain some inspiration.

All the venues and businesses here provide a memorable day out or help with that essential short break that often combines inspiration, entertainment and education... you really can't beat a super day out with the family at one of the fabulous attractions highlighted on these pages... and maybe some lovely locally-sourced food and hospitality too!

Even better, you can always find some interesting byways and highways to and from any museum, heritage line or attraction, so it's a great opportunity to get off those motorways and explore the great British countryside.

As you can see from the map here, there are venues to visit around Britain, so go on, support these great British attractions... you will not be disappointed!

7

RAILWAY OPENS SATURDAY 5th APRIL
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Regular train services commence 10.30am
Railway Station and Museum opens from 10am
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Please check website for full details **www.middletonrailway.org.uk**

8

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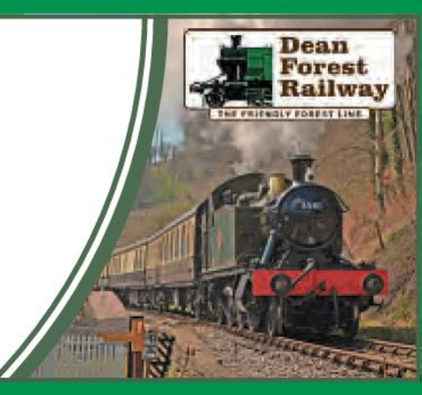

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Renaming planned as locomotive pair set for Severn Beach miniature line

By Robin Jones

TWO locomotives have been lined up for the forthcoming launch of the revived miniature railway at the 'lost' Bristol Channel resort of Severn Beach, as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 326.

However, while the first section of the quarter-mile line is on track for an Easter opening, a public GoFundMe appeal for £6000 to complete more of the infrastructure by June has been launched by rebuilder and local resident Joe Nemeth, of Nemeth Engineering, which has been installing miniature railways for 20 years. He has just bought Exmoor Steam Railway-built 2-4-2T No. 333 of 2008 *Phalaenopsis*, a sister to No. 332 of 2007 *Victoria* which runs on the Statfold Barn Railway's Mease Valley Light Railway.

Joe had ordered *Victoria* for his abortive Tintern Steam Railway project and it was subsequently sold elsewhere.

Furthermore' Joe's friend Robert Giles has agreed to loan his former Clevedon Miniature Railway 2-8-0 No. 595 *Rio Grande*, a petrol hydraulic built by Severn Lamb in 1976. Joe Nemeth Engineering carried out a full overhaul on this locomotive and its two carriages a decade ago for operations on the then-new line at Puxton Park, Weston-super-Mare before they went into storage.

Exmoor Steam Railway-built 2-4-2T No. 333 of 2008 *Phalaenopsis* has been acquired for the new Severn Beach miniature railway, and will shortly be renamed. SBMR

Severn Lamb petrol hydraulic 2-8-0 No. 595 *Rio Grande* will soon be in action along the Severn shore after years in storage. SBMR

The initial phase of the line will be out and back with run-rounds loops added shortly afterwards.

Building work, which has included reclaimed sleepers, has been delayed by the weather in February, but Joe was planning to arrange a public open day around the end of March, when a new name for *Phalaenopsis* will be unveiled.

To donate to the appeal, visit www.gofundme.com/severn-beach-miniature-railway-project

Meanwhile, a new 7 1/4in gauge miniature railway built by the North Tyneside Steam Railway Association at the Stephenson Railway Museum in North Shields will open for the first time with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Good Friday, with steam, petrol and electric locomotive pulling passengers over the Easter weekend

The line will have two stations, 500ft of track, a level crossing and a picnic area, and will allow visitors to get up close to exhibits in previously-inaccessible areas of the museum, giving visitors the chance to see miniature steam trains running alongside their full-size counterparts as they ride from the museum to Engine House Halt.

Elsewhere, the 10 1/4in gauge Basildon Miniature Railway in Wat Tyler Park in Pitsea is on course for a May reopening after being rebuilt by Rayleigh resident Dan Harrison and his team of volunteers since it fell into disuse after closing in 2019.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 325, a new Cromer Light Railway is taking shape with a view to running its first trains this summer.

➜ **Of lasting appeal: seaside miniature railways – feature by Dr Joseph Brennan, page 74.**

Sir Daniel Gooch immortalised in Swindson's GWR Park

A nine-foot tall statue of Sir Daniel Gooch, the first locomotive superintendent on the GWR and its chairman from 1865 until his death in 1889, has been created in wood by carver Graham Dereham in Swindon's aptly-named GWR Park.

In 1840, Gooch was responsible for identifying the site of Swindon works and in 1846 for designing the first complete locomotive to be constructed there, *Great Western*, prototype of the Iron Duke class of 4-2-2s, which could reach 70mph and lasted until the end of the broad gauge era.

Gooch was also a transatlantic cable engineer and Conservative MP for Cricklade from 1865-85.

The carving was commissioned by South Swindon Parish Council whose chairman of Leisure, Environment and Amenities said: "Public art such as this is so important as it enriches our public spaces and represents Swindon's railway heritage.

"We're delighted that Graham's exceptional craftsmanship has created a new landmark for residents and park visitors to enjoy and learn about over the coming years."

Graham said: "Daniel Gooch was remarkable, his engineering expertise, compassion towards the workers, his energy, forethought and will is inspiring. I hope I've done him justice and helped bring to light a man who is so often overshadowed by Brunel."

Sir Daniel Gooch superbly reborn in Swindon's GWR Park by wood carver Graham Dereham. SSPC

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 331 out Apr 11

As *Canadian Pacific* enters service on the Mid Hants Railway, Owen Hayward asks CEO Rebecca Dalley about what the future holds.

PLUS

STAFFORDSHIRE: ITS HISTORY AND HERITAGE RAILWAYS

With a high concentration of lines with industrial connection, Staffordshire is quite rich in railway history, as Martin Creese uncovers.

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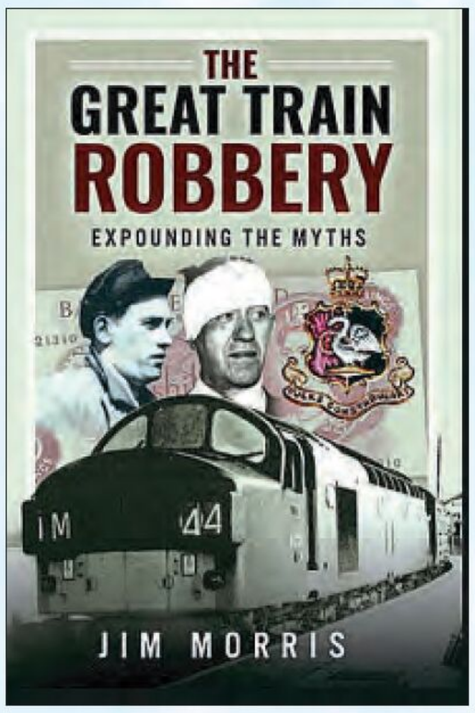

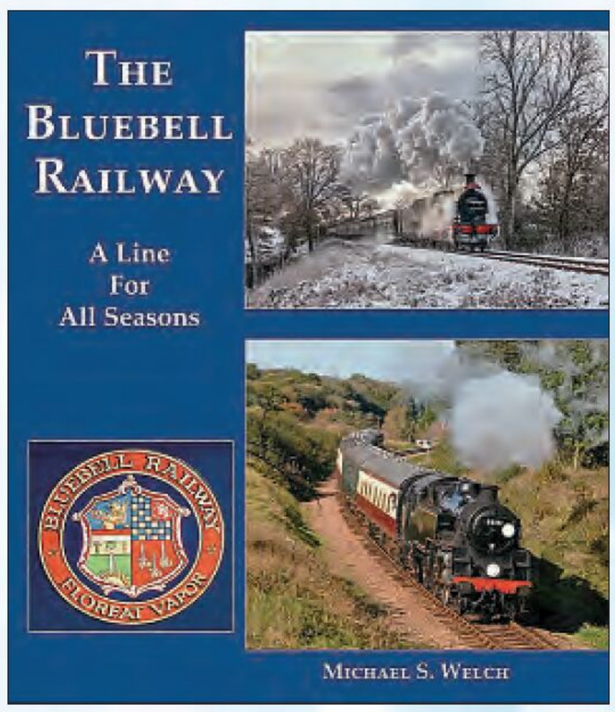

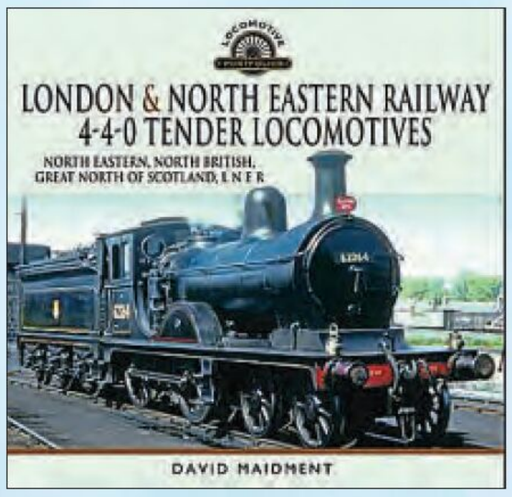

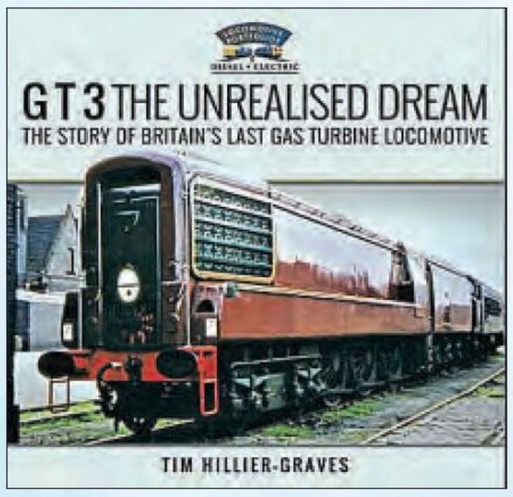

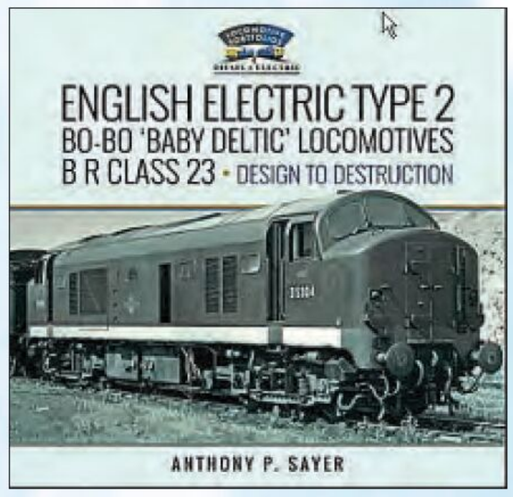

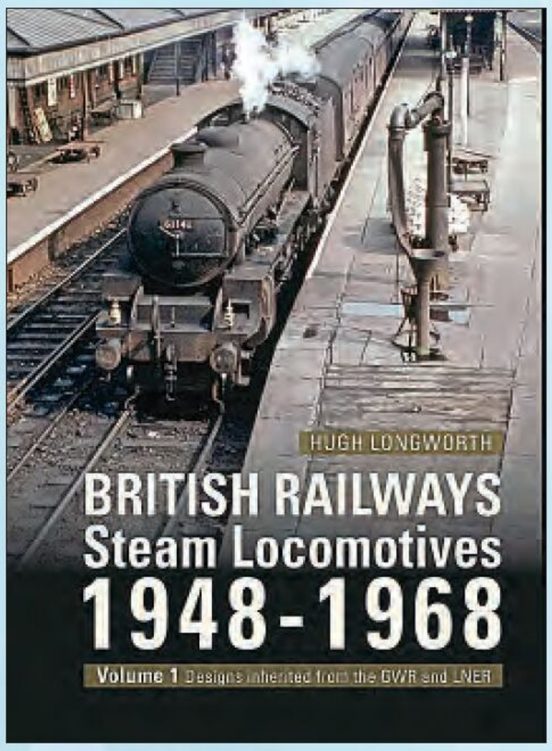

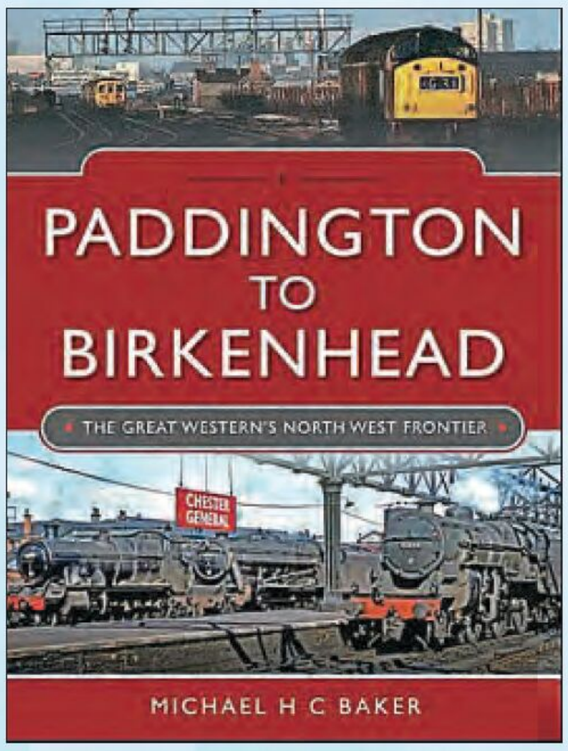

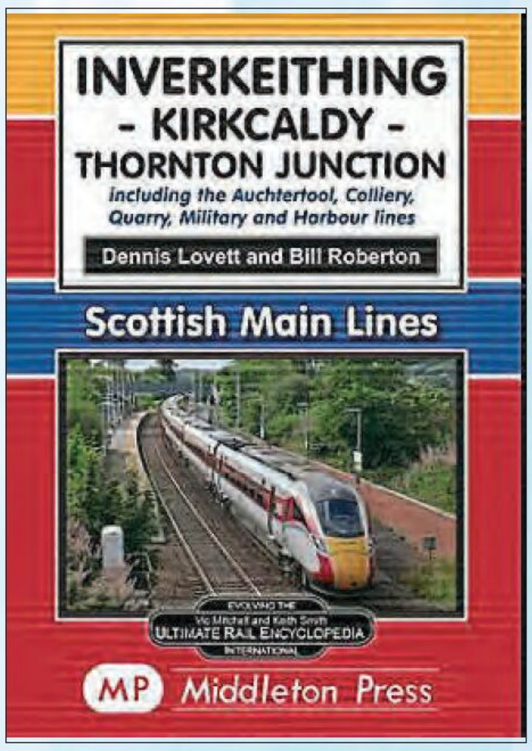

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