TINY STEAM LEAVES HUGE IMPRESSION AT KESR GALA

ISSUE 332 May 9 – June 6, 2025

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Nunney Castle returns to the main line

NO. 332
KELSEY media

DOUBLES SUCCESSES
FOR SEVERN VALLEY SPRING GALA

■ ISLE OF WIGHT BUYS ASHEY STATION ■ *BETTON GRANGE* DRAWS THE CROWDS AT PROJECT'S LLANGOLLEN BIRTHPLACE ■ LSWR T3 WOWS THE MID-HANTS AT SPRING GALA VISIT ■ VALE OF RHEIDOL GIVES BAGNALL TO WELSHPOOL

FLYING SCOTSMAN PENDENNIS CASTLE

LEGENDS REUNITED

Steam fans, history buffs, and those who loves a great day out— this is something truly special! Didcot Railway Centre is bringing together two of the most famous steam locomotives in history for an unforgettable event.
Flying Scotsman and Pendennis Castle first met 100 years ago at the British Empire Exhibition in 1925, and now,a century later, they're reuniting for an incredible showcase of railway heritage.

This May and June, come and see these legendary locomotives up close as they stand side by side perfect for an amazing photo opportunity. On steam days, you can even experience the magic first hand with a ride behind these historic engines! Step inside our exhibition to uncover the stories behind their fascinating pasts, from their legendary speed trials to their shared adventures under Sir William McAlpine, even stretching as far as Australia!

Want to get even closer? On display days, step onto the footplate (small additional charge applies) and chat with our friendly crew about what it's like to work these magnificent machines. On steam days, you'll feel the thrill as they fire up and come to life, just as theydid in the golden age of steam travel.

Static Display Days: 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30 May & 1 June
Steam Days: 24, 25, 26, 28, 31 May

This is a rare chance to see two icons of steam together once more. Whether you're a dedicated rail enthusiast or just looking for a fantastic day out, you won't want to miss this. Join us at Didcot Railway Centre and be part of history!

Taking advantage of the recent dry spell and calm weather, Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46441 is reflected in the still waters of the River Leven as it makes its approach to Lakeside station on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway on April 11. WILL SMITH

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Rags to riches:

Lost Victorian station moves to 21st century!

TO say that the latest new feature taking shape on the Nene Valley Railway is a 'silk purse out of a sow's ear' is a gross understatement.

At the line's Peterborough terminus, a forgotten station building that had for decades been enshrouded in the mists of time has been recovered piece by piece from its original site on one of the myriad of meandering branch lines in south west Lincolnshire, most of which closed as soon as a modest level of road transport was in sight.

Having last seen passenger trains in 1929, Wansford Road station, which dates from 1867, became a private house and was later boarded up and forgotten, hidden in the cutting in which it stood However, a marvellous beyond-belief degree of. inspiration and initiative will now see it easily sell more tickets in a year than it did during a decade in its first incarnation.

> "In this year of Railway 200, the public at large will increasingly become more aware of Britain's pivotal place in world history..."

Long the undisturbed haunt of bats and squirrels, it was recently visited by none other than Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh (Headline News, page 7) and will now form a joint gateway between the heritage line and the adjacent Railworld Wildlife Haven. A short walk from the city centre, it will become the entrance to a must-visit family day out, as well as a heritage showpiece in its own right.

Special thanks here are rightly due to the Highways Agency, which needed to flatten the building to make way for a dual carriageway and so gave £200,000 towards the cost of providing it with a new home – where it will proudly retain its historical legacy intact in its new identity as Woodstone Wharf. Herein lies a lesson for everyone concerned with saving Britain's heritage, railway or otherwise.

Listed building status offers protection to countless structures deemed to be of historical worth. Yet so many classic railway buildings have been lost, particularly since the Beeching closures, because they were deemed too recent or special to be saved in their own right, or simply because a developer had no interest whatsoever in them, with profit being the all-consuming motive.

In this year of Railway 200, the public at large will increasingly become more aware of Britain's pivotal place in world history through the development of the steam passenger train – and how it not only connected many isolated towns and villages but also shrunk the globe in doing so. Victorian, Edwardian, and even later-dated station buildings should be considered as defining features of a settlement's history as much as mansions, halls, places of worship and other key public structures.

Maybe it is time to bring in 'halfway house' legislation, whereby developers who seek to legally bulldoze redundant historic structures should be obliged first of all to offer them – maybe free of charge –- to bona fide heritage groups which, as in the case of Wansford Road, would dismantle, remove, and re-erect them at their own expense.

Surely, this is a win-win situation for all?

Robin Jones Editor

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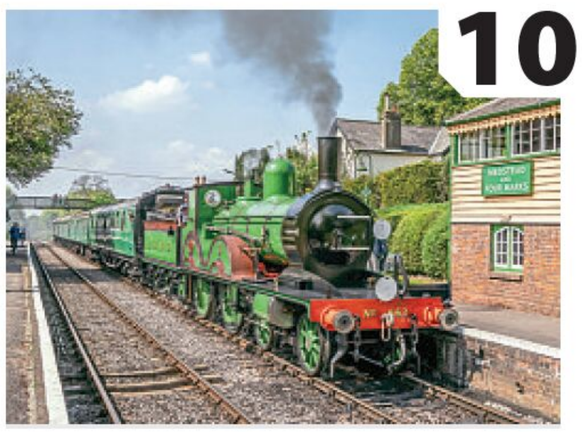

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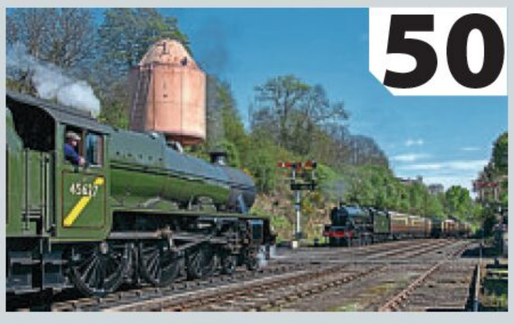
JOHN TITLOW



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Double spring success for Severn Valley

Two visiting Brunswick green LMS Jubilees and rare double-heading by home-based GWR Manors, plus the long-awaited appearance of new-build No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, were among the star attractions at the Severn Valley Railway's April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala, as John Titlow reports in words and pictures.

Pre-order Issue 333: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

CONTENTS: A bridge between worlds: modern wind turbines harvest green energy off the Norfolk coastline as 7F 2-8-0 No. 13809 fails to spook a pair of grazing deer at Sheringham Road on April 20. Having run during February half term as BR No. 53809, the North Norfolk Railway-based centenarian was appearing freshly outshopped in its LMS livery, and trains over the Easter bank holiday weekend were coupled to the Gresley Quad Art stock and LNER pigeon van. No. 13809 is in the final few months of its boiler ticket and will be withdrawn later this year for overhaul.
OWEN HAYWARD

COVER: Following a lengthy overhaul at Locomotive Services Limited's Crewe workshops, GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* has returned to main line service after a decade. On April 17, it worked Jeremy Hosking's private train from Bristol Temple Meads to Kingswear on the Dartmouth Steam Railway, BS pictured passing Langstone Rock along the Dawlish coastline. For the full story, see Headline News, pages 6/7.
JOSHUA CURTIS

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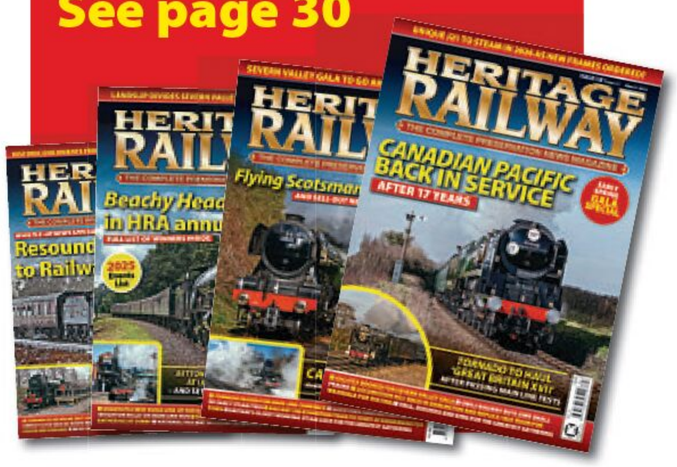

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Nunney Castle is back!

By Robin Jones

GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* is back on the main line after a decade out of action.

Following the completion of its overhaul and running-in tests, No. 5029 hauled 'The Chairman's Train,' a private charter carrying owner Jeremy Hosking and his family on their annual Easter holiday land cruise around the UK.

The first day saw Locomotive Services Limited Class 57 No. 57002 – which was named *Winston Churchill* at Paddington that morning – take the first leg of the 1Z29 10.42am Paddington to Kingswear charter to Bristol Temple Meads. There, the train was handed over to No. 5029, leading another LSL 57, No.57311 *The Institution of Mechanical Engineers*.

The charter paused at Taunton to allow the Castle to take on water before continuing, arriving at Kidderminster 73 minutes late due to the Paignton branch being closed due to a trespass incident.

The second day of the charter saw *Nunney Castle* return the train to Taunton where Class 37s Nos. 37667 *Flopsie* and 37521 took over. Problems with No. 37521 arose at Penzance, however, delaying the departure to Shrewsbury by three hours and eight minutes, and No. 37667 later had coolant issues. Class 47 No. 47810 *Crewe Diesel Depot* arrived at Bristol from Crewe and hauled the train to Shrewsbury. The Shrewsbury to Llandudno leg was worked by Class 45 No. 45118 *Royal Artilleryman*.

Life and times

Built at Swindon in 1934 and first allocated to Old Oak Common, where it spent most of its working life, *Nunney Castle* was withdrawn from Cardiff East Dock in December 1963 and arrived at Woodham Brothers' Barry scrapyard the following June. In May 1976 it was sold to a consortium consisting of private individuals and the Great Western Society. It became the last locomotive to leave the scrapyard by rail.

No. 5029 was restored at Didcot Railway Centre and returned to steam and main line service in 1990. In 2002 it became the first GWR locomotive to be fitted with Train Protection Warning System apparatus.

Later acquired by Mr Hosking, *Nunney Castle* last ran in 2015, two years before its boiler ticket expired. Extensive boiler repairs at LNWR Heritage in Crewe saw its Collett superheater replaced by a later pattern three-row version, manufactured at Timsons Engineering of Kettering, intended to enable the locomotive to deal with the lower quality of coal it is now required to burn.

The boiler was reunited with the frames in February.

Resplendent in its 1946/47 GWR livery along with a new Hawksworth tender, *Nunney Castle* is booked for Steam Dreams' June 21 excursion from London Victora to the Dartmouth Steam Railway.

For more details and to book, visit steamdreams.co.uk/journey/london-to-paignton-kingswear-21-06-24/

GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle,* with Class 57 No. 57311 *The Institution of Mechanical Engineers* tucked inside, heads away from Dawlish with 'The Chairman's Train' on April 17. A strong south easterly wind combined with the high tide provided lively sea conditions, with some big waves breaking over the sea wall. JOSHUA CURTIS

No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* with its new Hawksworth tender passes Beeston Castle on a loaded test run from Crewe to Chester on April 11. KALLUM BUCKLEY

UK land cruise tour becomes last steam train signalled by retiring 'box trio

By Robin Jones

HAULED by Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line*, the London Victoria to Bristol via Haslemere, Southampton and Salisbury first leg of the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain XVII' land cruise on April 26 became the final steam train to be signalled through by three retiring signalboxes between Farncombe and Petersfield on the Portsmouth Direct Line. The 'boxes at Farncombe, Petersfield and Haslemere are nearing 50 years of service and are becoming less reliable and increasingly difficult to maintain.

Later this year, a long-term programme of work to upgrade the signalling systems will be completed, with control of signalling being transferred from these 'boxes to the Basingstoke Rail Operating Centre.

This new digital signalling technology is part of wider upgrades between London and Portsmouth and aims to make the railway more reliable.

Once control of the signalling has been moved, the three 'boxes will be decommissioned. Haslemere 'box, which opened in 1895, will become a small museum, run by the Haslemere Community Station and Signal Box Trust.

Trust chairman Ken Griffiths said: "We are determined to preserve the Haslemere signalbox as an educational facility for future generations to enjoy and celebrate the railway's heritage in this year of Railway 200. We would like to thank Network Rail for its constructive support in our endeavour, and we look forward to being able to open the signalbox up to the public in the very near future."

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Above: Work in progress on giving a new lease of life to Wansford Road station. RAILWORLD

Right: 'Forgotten' Wansford Road station reborn as Woodstone Wharf as seen on April 22. WRCIO

Goodbye, Wansford Road: hello to Woodstone Wharf!

By Robin Jones

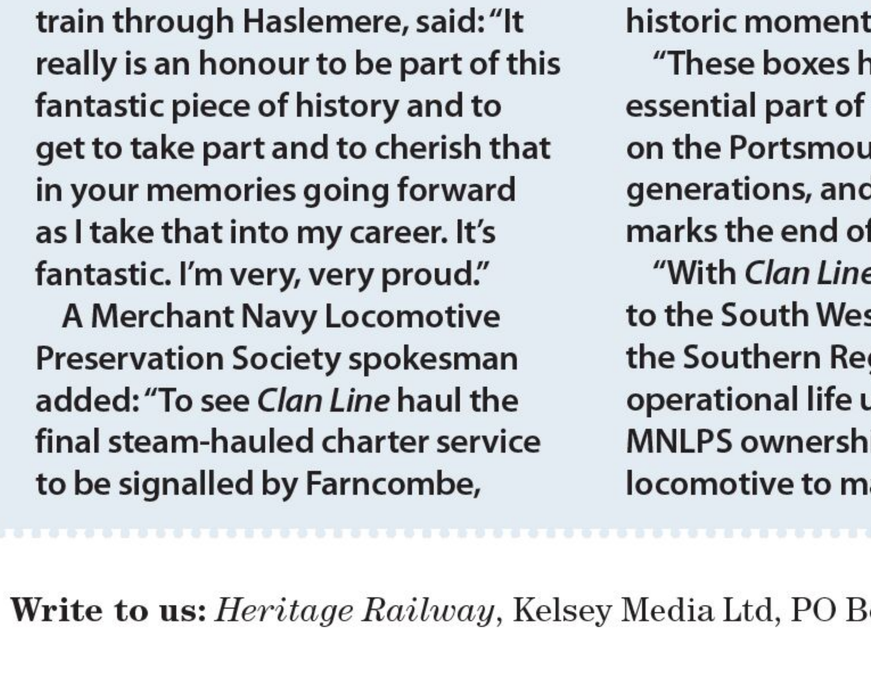
A £150,000 appeal to refit a 'lost' railway station that has been rebuilt eight miles away as a new joint entrance to two major heritage attractions near Peterborough city centre has been launched.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 322, the station building at Wansford Road, an intermediate stop on the Stamford and Sibson branch of the Stamford & Essendine Railway, has been dismantled brick by brick and re-erected at the Nene Valley Railway's Peterborough terminus, placed at right angles to the heritage line's track – where it will form a joint gateway to the adjacent Railworld Wildlife Haven.

The 1867-built station, closed by the LNER to all traffic on June 29, 1929, lay in a deep cutting completely obscured by trees from the view of passing traffic on Sutton Heath Road, near the village of Sutton, and afterwards became a private residence before eventually being boarded up and abandoned.

When National Highways made plans for the dualling of the A47 to the east of Wansford, including the bulldozing of the forgotten station, it allocated more than £200,000 for the deconstruction, movement and reconstruction of the building as part of its 'designated funding' programme.

Plans for the move and rebuild were drawn up by architect Hudsons of Norwich, including Lewis Williams, a former NVR youth group member. With full permission from Peterborough City Council, granted after it was demonstrated that there would be no impact on the environment or risk of pollution to the nearby river, the rebuild began.



Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, after unveiling the plaque at the rebuilt station, with Nene Valley Railway chairman Michael Purcell. RAILWORD

It was decided that the historic station name would have to change as Wansford Road was just too confusing, the NVR having its own Wansford station at its headquarters.

The name Woodstone Wharf was chosen, Woodstone being the archaic spelling of the local district in Peterborough and Wharf reflecting the old loading stage on the river bank.

Prime contractor Fordsons undertook the careful dismantling process and worked through a multitude of adversities – from protected bats and birds and unstable ground to freezing temperatures and near- impossible timescales – with a combination of stonemason skills and mastery of modern building standards to deliver a building that will stand for many years to come.

In February, Railworld chairman Brian Pearce arranged that a visit to the Haven by The Duke of Edinburgh could include a visit to the 'new' station. The duke unveiled a stone commemorating his visit and recording the station reconstruction efforts for posterity in a ceremony also attended by NVR chairman Michael Purcell.

Following months of painstaking reconstruction from piles of carefully numbered bricks, in April the rebuilt outer shelf and roof of the building were unveiled. The building is being returned to its original condition, with no modern additions being fitted, and damaged features like chimneys, doors and windows reinstated as far as is possible.

Stan Bell, who has been leading the project, which is administered by The Wansford Road CIO charity, said £150,000 was needed to cover the remaining work, which largely centres on the interior, fitting out the building (electrics, heating and internal décor), plus external landscaping. The building's main function will be the sale of tickets and it will be decorated in the style of a Victorian ticket office, with period artefacts on display.

The small rooms on each side of the centre will be used to host typical railway station services, a toilet equipped to modern accessible standards, a tearoom, a small book/gift shop, and a store.

Stan said: " This is fundamental to our railway heritage. I hope people will rally round and help us get it through."

➜ To donate to the appeal to complete Woodstone Wharf, visit https://woodstonewharf.org.uk/support/ or https://donate.justgiving.com/charity/thewansfordroadcio/donation-amount or https://gofund.me/4e2a079d

Alternatively, bank transfers can be made to sort code 23-05-80 and account 48351220, The Wansford Road CIO, reference Donation, or sent a cheque to: The Wansford Road CIO, Woodstone Wharf station, Pleasure Fair Meadow Road Peterborough PE2 9NR, with 'Donation' written on the rear.

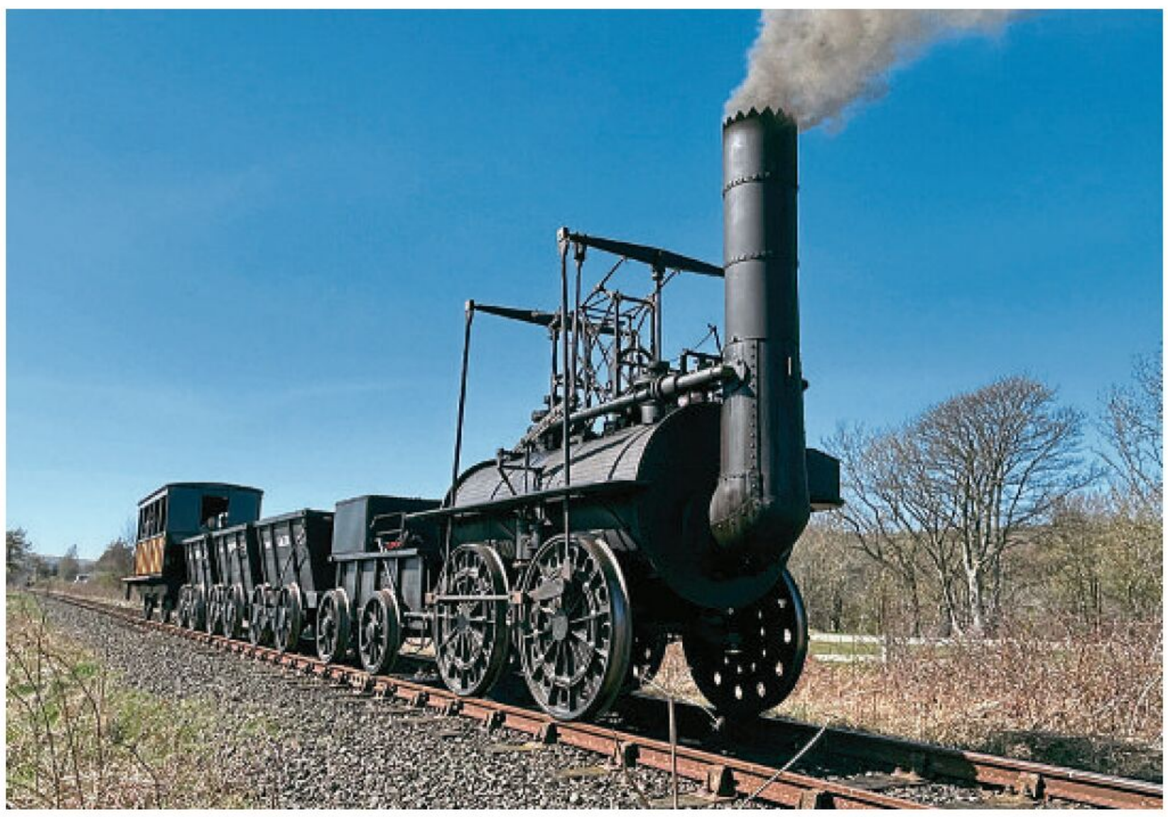
Network Rail signaller Ashley Hillier, who signalled the final steam train through Haslemere, said: "It really is an honour to be part of this fantastic piece of history and to get to take part and to cherish that in your memories going forward as I take that into my career. It's fantastic. I'm very, very proud."

A Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society spokesman added: "To see *Clan Line* haul the final steam-hauled charter service to be signalled by Farncombe, Haslemere, and Petersfield signalboxes is a poignant and historic moment.

"These boxes have been an essential part of railway operations on the Portsmouth Direct line for generations, and their closure marks the end of a remarkable era.

"With *Clan Line*'s strong links to the South Western division of the Southern Region during its operational life under BR and under MNLPS ownership, it is the ideal locomotive to mark this milestone."

On April 26, *Clan Line* heads the last steam train signalled through Haslemere signalbox. NR



Highlighting the world's first steam-hauled passenger train, the replica *Locomotion No. 1* and its train of three chaldron wagons and passenger coach *Experiment* in full cry during test runs on the Weardale Railway on April 16. DAVE SMALLIN

Pause for thought: The replica 1825 train stops on a test run for its performance to be analysed. DALE SMALLIN

Time travel in Weardale!

By Robin Jones

The *Locomotion No. 1* replica is delivered to Wolsingham by the Weardale Railway's Network Railway-livered Class 31 No.31465 on April 8. DALE SMALLIN

THE Weardale Railway has been used as a test track for the modern-day replica of the Stockton & Darlington Railway's opening day train of September 27, 1825 – and it looked exactly the part.

The 1975-built replica of *Locomotion No.1*, which hauled the world's first steam passenger train and which, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 331, underwent running tests on the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) in March, was brought to Wolsingham in early April alongside the new replicas of the pioneer passenger carriage *Experiment* and three chaldron wagons, which Northern Heritage Engineering Ltd of Darlington was contracted to build.

The train is equipped to run on the modern main line and will run over the S&DR route from Shildon via Darlington to Stockton-on-Tees on September 26, 27 and 28 at the height of the S&DR200 festival bicentenary celebrations, which includes a re-enactment of that watershed first journey.

The replica, built to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the S&DR, was initially based at the Beamish Open Air Museum before moving to the Head of Steam Museum (now Hopetown Darlington) in April 2021 and has since undergone an overhaul at Locomotive Maintenance Services in Loughborough. The four vehicles has been displayed in Hopetown Darlington.

While the Weardale test runs have not been open to the public, on one day, a group of Year Six-aged children from Wolsingham Primary School were taken on a walk to the station to see the replica train and were allowed to climb inside *Experiment* while it was stationary. A member of the testing team said that the Wearedale runs went well and lessons were learned. "Turns out that it runs best on eco coal briquettes!" he said.

An extension of the S&DR, the Weardale line opened in 1847, initially terminating at Frosterley, and linked the quarrying and iron industries of Weardale to Teesside.

The Weardale line closed to passengers in 1953 and to goods in 1965. The Weardale Railway Preservation Society in 1993 and services restarted in 2004.

The line's season services run over the 11 miles from Witton-le-Wear to Stanhope, with an aim to extend and open stations at Eastgate and Bishops Auckland.

Meanwhile, in Stockton-on-Tees in late April, Tees Archaeology undertook a dig along part of the trackbed of the original S&DR in the garden of South Lodge, in the grounds of Preston Park Museum and Gardens, in order to establish how the line was built, such as whether stone or oak sleepers were used, and also if there are any hidden relics.

The section of line through the park was in use only between 1825 and 1853 and therefore offers a unique snapshot of the original track.

Preparations are underway to celebrate an even older railway in Scotland

THE 1722 Waggonway Heritage Group is to mark Railway 200 by celebrating Scotland's first railway.

The community heritage project was created to interpret, preserve and enhance the route and associated industries and environments of the Tranent-Cockenzie Waggonway.

The group has arranged a free evening at The Battle of Prestonpans Jacobite Museum in Prestonpans Town Hall, East Lothian, at 7.30pm on May 16 with a talk by historians Anthony Dawson and Ed Bethune, who will discuss the latest research and archaeological findings relating to the waggonway and its place in Scottish railway history.

On Saturday, May 17, the group is planning a special day at its heritage centre on West Harbour Road, Cockenzie, from 10am to 11pm, with traditional skills activities including making trenails, quill and ink writing, donning historic costumes to have photographs taken with the group's waggon, and guided walks over the route of the waggonway.

An evening celebration will run from 5pm-11pm. For more details, visit www.1722waggonway.co.uk/post/rail200-waggonway-celebration-event

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Darlington's Northgate to be renamed to showcase area's railway heritage

By Robin Jones

DARLINGTON'S Northgate conservation area is be expanded and renamed to celebrate its railway heritage.

The site will be rebranded as the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area following consultations with residents and heritage experts.

The area is identified as a designated heritage asset of international significance due to its structures and associations directly linked to the early years of the S&D starting in 1825. A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'

Historic buildings and structures within the conservation area consist of buildings within the multiple award-winning Hopetown Darlington museum attraction, including a carriage works and goods shed, Skerne Bridge, Railway Tavern and Edward Pease House,

TV star's support

Despite Northgate's historical importance, it has been on the national At Risk Register since 2010. Darlington Borough Council is planning to write a new draft appraisal to replace one from 2007, which officials say is now out of date. It is aimed to implement the update later this year.

Meanwhile, TV presenter and historian Dan Snow MBE has been filming in Hopetown Darlington as part of the Stockton & Darlington Railway bicentenary celebrations. He filmed the three locomotives

Dan Snow MBE (right) in front of the original *Locomotion No. 1* inside Hopetown Darlington. DARLINGTON BC

that are currently displayed in the Grade II-listed carriage works as part of its Railway Pioneers exhibition: the original *Locomotion No. 1*, which hauled the world's first steam-hauled passenger train, and the replicas of Richard Trevithick's 1804 *Penydarren* locomotive and the Steam Elephant of 1815.

A Hopetown spokesman said Dan filmed with the trio for a TV programme about the railways, which will air later this year. "Dan spoke to festival director Niccy Halifax about wider S&DR200 festival plans around the region and to Hopetown Darlington's director, Leona White-Hannant, about the history of the S&DR, the significance of the three locomotives, and Darlington's impact on railways and communities around the world."

In 2013, the BBC aired Dan Snow's History of Railways, a three-part BBC documentary series.

Meanwhile, Hopetown Darlington is again set to show that it can host major non-railway events. Comic Con, the premier event for all things comics and related popular art, including movies, television and gaming, is returning on July 5/6 in partnership with Cute Fox Events after a successful debut in February.

Returning for Hopetown Summer Con is the ever-popular DeLorean DMC-12 car made famous by the Back to The Future films, allowing the public to sit inside it for the ultimate fans' photographic opportunity.

Guests already announced for the event include Dene Michael, from the band Black Lace, Phil Fletcher and Hacker T Dog, from CBBC, original Gladiators Saracen and Scorpio, and Art the Clown from the Terrifier horror series.

Reaching new audiences

A mainstay of the event is cosplay, or costume play, an activity and performance art in which participants called cosplayers wear costumes and fashion accessories to represent a specific character.

Darlington Borough Council's cabinet member for local services, Coun Libby McCollom, said: "Hopetown Darlington's first Comic Con in February was such a positive and fantastic event. It was a real crowd-pleaser as it brought a brand-new and now loyal audience to the attraction, and we cannot wait to welcome everyone back for Summer Con in July."

For more information and to book tickets, visit www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/whats-on/Hopetown-Summer-Con

New Deltic history made as *Alycidon* gala line-up includes Moorsline homecoming

APRIL 17 saw all three of the Deltic Preservation Society's Class 55s in action on the same day at two different locations, when D9015 *Tulyar* commenced testing as its protracted overhaul nears conclusion.

On April 13, 1997, *Tulyar* was powered down at the Midland Railway – Butterley for what was expected to be a two-year overhaul, which has taken substantially longer than that original forecast. Just four days beyond 28 years since it last worked under its own power, *Tulyar* was started up at the DPS depot at Barrow Hill and made its first moves unassisted to check that its control systems were operating as intended. During these tests around the site, it towed classmate No. 55009 *Alycidon* out of the shed into the yard, where it too was started up and ran up and down the branch on test. Elsewhere, the third of the DPS fleet, No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier*, was working trains on the Great Central Railway, the result of which meant that all three of the society's locomotives were in operation on the same day – something which has not happened since July 5, 1986.

Further work will be carried out on *Tulyar* prior to its planned upcoming move to Loughborough, where it will undergo testing on the GCR. All three will also be at Alstom's The Greatest Gathering at Derby on August 1-3. In addition to this, *Alycidon* will be visiting two heritage lines for diesel galas. The first of these will be the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for its June 12-15 event, where it will debut with its freshly-applied Finsbury Park white cab. The NYMR was *Alycidon*'s first base when preserved in 1982, so the visit will be something of a homecoming, it not having been based there since 1998; see www.nymr.co.uk/Event/annual-diesel-gala for full details.

It will then head straight for the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway for its June 19-22 gala, meaning all of the society's Deltics will have operated there in preservation, with D9015 having appeared in November 1988 and No. 55019 in June 2018. For further information, visit www.kwvr.co.uk/events/dieselgala

P3 makes it three for Stainmore S&DR bicentenary gala schedule

TWO North Eastern Railway locomotives and a former regional resident will help the Stainmore Railway celebrate the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway at a gala on August 23-25, with 0-6-0 J27 No. 2392 the final visitor to be announced as heading for Kirkby Stephen for the occasion.

Once a part of the S&DR route, the 200th anniversary of which is being celebrated throughout 2025, the line was taken over by the NER in 1863. While No. 2392 is not recorded as having ever run over the S&DR itself, it is one of the few surviving examples of locomotives with origins in the company that took over the line, the class being derived from Wilson Worsdell's P3s.

Local connection

It will join previously announced LNER Y7 0-4-0T No. 985, which also has NER roots, having been built in 1923 to Thomas William Worsdell's H class design first introduced in 1888. It is currently based on the Mid-Suffolk Railway, where it is coming to an end of a 10-yearly overhaul. Also visiting is BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78018, which was once based at Kirkby Stephen depot and is now resident on the Great Central Railway.

A railway statement said: "The addition of the P3 completes the line-up for our gala, with two NER-designed locomotives and an ex-Kirkby Stephen-based BR Standard Class 2, plus two clerestory coaches (NER luggage third No. 818 and inspection saloon No. 1661), two Gresley coaches and NER Snowplough No. 18.

"This gala is part of a larger West Side Story project, generously supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As such, admission will be free. However, the grant does not cover gala-related items such as haulage, steaming fees, coal, insurance and so on, all of which amounts to more than £30,000.

"As a result, we and all other such groups can only continue to organise these events for you all to enjoy if, at the very least, we cover our costs.

"Do please support our efforts by purchasing a ticket to ride on the trains and/or leave a donation during your visit."

Above: Aspinall 0-6-0ST No. 11456 climbs over Grosvenor Road with the mixed set bound for Alton. OWEN HAYWARD
Left: BR 2MT No. 41312 ran all three days carrying a replica headboard of which it wore on April 2, 1967, when it worked the last BR steam branch service to Lymington. PAUL LAWRENCE

North meets south at spring gala of 'firsts' for Mid-Hants

By Owen Hayward

LANCASHIRE came to Hampshire at the end of April as the Mid-Hants Railway's annual spring steam gala brought a wave of firsts for the line, drawing in the crowds despite a late locomotive failure.

There was no doubt that the star of the April 25-27 gala was LSWR T3 4-40 No. 563, making its first trip away from its home at the Swanage Railway following its return to steam there in the autumn of 2023, while the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway duo of classes 23 0-6-0ST No. 11456 and 27 0-6-0 No. 52322 were making their first visits to line, both found residing on the East Lancashire Railway. If that was not alluring enough, it was also both the first gala event and public outing to feature SR Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* since its launch event in March, as reported last issue.

Midland meets Southern

The varied line-up brought with it a mixed representation railway companies and ages throughout the operating fleet. No. 563 was built in 1893 at Nine Elms and at 132 years of age was both the oldest locomotive operating that weekend and the only one to be carrying the colours of a pre-Grouping company, it being resplendent in LSWR Drummond green.

Conversely, the LYR locomotives each tell later parts of their stories. Outshopped from Horwich Works just two years after the 4-4-0, No. 52322 entered service as No. 1300 but currently runs carrying its BR number and unlined BR livery, while the saddle tank appears as it would have under LMS ownership. Neither the T3 nor Class 23 made it to BR ownership, having been withdrawn in 1945 and 1937 respectively. No. 11456 was sold to the Blainscough Colliery Co, of Coppull, Lancashire, where it remained in use until entering preservation in 1967, while No. 563 went into storage at Eastleigh.

While No. 563 is not known to have ever run over the former diversionary route from Alton to Winchester, it and other examples of the T3 were based nearby at Eastleigh and it is therefore likely that some of the class did work trains over the line, with the last having been more than 80 years ago. Saved from the cutter's torch, No. 563

LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 gleams in the sunshine as it drifts into Medstead & Four Marks station on April 27. EDWARD DYER

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Above: The eight-coach train proves no challenge for *Canadian Pacific* as it heads for Ropley at the start of the express run on April 26. OWEN HAYWARD
Left: No. 52322 climbs towards Rookwood Lane with the freight train on April 25. OWEN HAYWARD
Below: The T3 looks right at home on this former LSWR route as it emerges from Sun Lane cutting on April 26. OWEN HAYWARD

was partially restored and put on display for the 150th anniversary of Waterloo station in 1948, following which it was stored in the electric carriage shed at Farnham, further strengthening its local links.

Later parts of the SR story were represented by *Canadian Pacific*, which was built at Eastleigh in 1941 and worked fast expresses in the region, and Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41312, which was outshopped from the former LMS works of Crewe in 1952 to a successful Midland design of cross-country and branch line locomotives.

It had been hoped to see No. 563 working alongside the Urie Society's S15 4-6-0 No. 506, the design of which has its origins in the LSWR, although its current appearance is that as modified by the SR. Unfortunately, just 10 days beforehand it was discovered that a small number of firebox stays were defective and needed repairs, necessitating its temporary withdrawal from service to effect repairs. By the first day of the gala, the boiler had been craned out of the frames and had entered the Ropley boilershop for work to start. Having been one of the railway's regular service locomotives over the last few years, while it is out of action some remedial work will also be undertaken on the axleboxes and motion to ensure that it can continue to provide reliable service for the remainder of its boiler ticket.

Good turnout

Regular attendees at galas will normally find that Fridays of such events are quieter, yet it was apparent that the line-up on offer was hugely appealing as many of the trains departed with corridors and vestibules full.

An engaging and interesting timetable kept matters interesting, with stock formations changing throughout each day as required by some of the special services. No. 41312 paid tribute to the anniversary of BR's last steam-hauled branch working, which ran on April 2, 1967, over the Lymington branch with the same locomotive.

Canadian Pacific also evoked scenes of the named trains that it could have once been found allocated to by departing Alresford each afternoon with an eight-coach rake which ran non-stop to Alton. The set was formed by merging two separate five and four-coach consists into one, with the surplus vehicle being coupled to a mixed set for a round trip of the line. The latter formation was also subject to regular changes, with the extra carriage being attached and removed as required, while parcels vans and a cattle wagon also appeared on rotation. Rides aboard the Queen Mary bogie brake van were on offer for those looking for an unusual way to enjoy travel along the line.

The railway's varied collection of freight wagons also featured with a daily outing. With a vast number to choose from but more than can be accommodated in one rake, wagons were removed and reattached at Medstead & Four Marks in the Up direction, while an extended layover at Alton allowed for further changes to be made to the consist, ensuring that each appearance was different. Making its first appearance for some considerable time was Presflo cement hopper No. 29, which stood out from the rest in its vibrant yellow Blue Circle Cement livery, while sole-surviving BR ventilated meat van No. 870067 sported BR crimson.

A railway spokesman said: "Just under 3000 people travelled on trains throughout the three days, which is fantastic, and was 20% up on what we had predicted. Focus now turns to the July 11-13 diesel gala, which also promises to be something really special, with an exciting line-up of locomotives planned. We will be announcing these very soon."

No. 35005 rounds Wanderers Curve with a recreation of the 'Bournemouth Belle,' which ran non-stop from Alresford to Alton each day of the gala. OWEN HAYWARD

Newly-qualified Wensleydale Railway driver George Stephenson with Class 142 DMU No. 142060. WR

George becomes Wensleydale's youngest driver

THE Wensleydale Railway has appointed its youngest train driver.

George Stephens, 21, from Darlington, has passed his driver training and is now qualified to drive the line's Class 142 and Class 143 DMUs. He studied travel and tourism at Darlington College and began working for the railway as a travelling ticket Inspector at the beginning of 2022, progressing to become a qualified guard in 2023. He then became a secondman on the railway's diesel locomotives, a signaller and responsible officer, and started driver training in 2024.

"Learning to drive a train has been an ambition of mine since I was a child," he said.

➜ **The railway is hosting its fourth annual model railway show at Leeming Bar station on May 10/11. Passenger services during the weekend will be operated by the railway's diesels – Class 37 No. 37250, Class 14s D9513 and D9523 and Class 03 No. 03144) – and the new livery of Class 47 No. 47714, which the railway bought last November, will be revealed to the public for the first time.**

Third guest for Minehead event

CLASS 50 No. 50015 *Valiant* has joined the line-up for the West Somerset Railway's June 5-8 summer diesel festival. Loaned by Bury Valiant Group and the East Lancashire Railway, No. 50015, which last visited the line in September 1998, will be joined by fellow guests Class 45 'Peak' No. 45108, Class 52 D1015 *Western Champion* and the home fleet of Class 03 D2133, Class 14 'Teddy Bear' D9526, Class 33s D6566 and D6575 and Class 35 'Hymeks' D7017 & D7018

A two-day cider festival will be held on Minehead Station on the Saturday and Sunday, while the Sunday will be a mixed traction day with both steam and diesel locomotives in action. To book, visit https://westsomersetrailway.digitickets.co.uk/event/23719207

Cromer Lifeboat joins Poppy Line beer festival

By Robin Jones

A LINK to the local Royal National Lifeboat Institution will be celebrated at the North Norfolk Railway's popular Rails & Ales event on June 13-15 when GB Railfrieght's Class 66 No. 66714 *Cromer Lifeboat* will join the line-up and make a very rare appearance on passenger trains.

The blue and yellow-liveried GB Railfreight locomotive was built in Canada before being shipped to the UK, and it entered service in 2003 to regularly haul heavy good trains on the national network.

It was named *Cromer Lifeboat* in honour of the lifeboat station and the close association between the RNLI and GBRf, with a ceremony taking place at Cromer station in 2003.

Local RNLI volunteers will be invited by the heritage line to attend the golden anniversary year event and take a trip behind *Cromer Lifeboat* to celebrate the occasion.

NNR visitor experience and marketing manager Hannah Drury said: "We were delighted to hear that GBRf was able to support this year's Rails & Ales event and are very thankful to be welcoming a locomotive that has not only hauled relatively few passenger trains, but also one with such a local link that is close to many people's hearts."

Class 66 No. 66714 is officially named *Cromer Lifeboat* at Cromer station in 2003. STEVE ALLEN

No. 66714 will join Class 40 D213 *Andania*, appearing courtesy of Locomotive Services Limited, and Waggon und Maschinenbau railbus E79960.

The railbus worked off-peak services at the NNR throughout the 1970s and 1980s, shuttling passengers from Weybourne to Kelling Heath Halt before the full section from Weybourne to Holt was relaid.

It is currently on loan to the Ribble Steam Railway but will return to the NNR for this event as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations.

Home fleet steam and diesel locomotives will be out each day, and each station will showcase a range of local bees and ciders, with the real ale bar and live music at Weybourne station. The railway's popular breakfast train also sees a return for this year's event with visitors able to climb aboard the first round trip of the day: for full details and to book, visit www.nnrailway.co.uk/rails-ales/

Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 3783 of 1953 *Holly Bank No. 3* heads a rake of merry-go-round hopper wagons on April 28 during the Chasewater Railway's industrial gala weekend. MARTIN CREESE

Island Ivatt ready for second mainland holiday

THE Isle of Wight Steam Railway's BR Standard 2MT No. 41313 is set to make its second trip over the Solent this year, having been booked to star at another two galas – including one in East Anglia!

The 2-6-2T will return to star in the Spa Valley Railway's June 13-15 Cuckoo Line gala, commemorating 60 years since the closure of the Tunbridge Wells to Hailsham route. It will run alongside visiting U class 2-6-0 No. 31806 and previously-announced BR Standard 4MT No. 80078, which will run as scrapped classmates.

The Ivatt will then head to Dereham for the Mid-Norfolk Railway's Southern Steam Gala on June 27-29, with SR Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* (currently running as *303 Squadron*) following from Tunbridge Wells West to also appear.

Timetables for both events were still to be confirmed as we went to press.

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Book now for Railway 200 *Inspiration* exhibition train at a station near you

BOOKINGS are now open for visits to the unique exhibition train which will tour the UK as part of the Railway 200 celebrations.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 330, the train, named *Inspiration*, will be launched at Kidderminster Town on the Severn Valley Railway on June 27 at the start of a 12-month journey to 60 locations, showcasing rail's past, present and future in new, fun and engaging ways.

Curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum, *Inspiration* aims to help attract the next generation of pioneering talent to the railway. It will comprise four reconditioned Mk. 3 carriages. Rail's pioneering pedigree will be explored in a Railway Firsts coach, highlighting landmark moments in rail's development. Alongside will be Wonderlab on Wheels, inviting visitors to test their engineering skills with hands-on exhibits. Next is a Your Railway Future carriage, showcasing some of the more hidden roles in rail and encouraging people to join the railway to shape the next 200 years. The final coach is a Partner Zone, offering free and flexible exhibition space. The carriages are being fitted out, aided by a £250,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Tickets are now available to book for visits from June 27 to October 1; the itinerary for the rest of 2025 and first six months of 2026 will be confirmed during this summer.

More than 200,000 people, including many schoolchildren, are expected to visit by prior booking. Admission to the train is free, but normal entry charges to the heritage railways and private sites where it is located will apply.

Bookings are now open for June 27-July 6 (SVR); July 8-10 (Birmingham Moor Street station); July 12-15 (Euston); July 18/19 (Waterloo); July 20/21 (Margate); July 23-29 (Bluebell Railway); August 7-10 (Norwich station); and August 11-14 (Lowestoft station). For more details about the train and to book, visit https://railway200.co.uk/inspiration/

Bookings will open in the coming weeks for August 16-17 (Freightliner Doncaster Railport) and August 25-31 (NRM, York).

Inspiration will visit the North East in September, rail's 200th anniversary month, as part of S&DR200, a nine-month international festival inspired by the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825, and can be visited on September 10-17 (Darlington station) and September 20-October 1 (Locomotion, Shildon).

As previously reported in *Heritage Railway*, *Inspiration* is also visiting The Greatest Gathering at Alstom's Litchurch Lane site in Derby from August 1-3. This event has already sold out.

No passengers will be carried on the train as it travels to its exhibition sites.

Booked visits will take place between 10am and 5pm, with the on-train experience expected to last up to an hour. A virtual tour of the exhibition experience is planned for those who are unable to visit in person.

Preview peek inside Manchester museum's redesigned Power Hall ahead of reopening

IMAGES of how Manchester's Science and Industry Museum's reimagined Power Hall: The Law Family Gallery may look when it reopens this summer have been released.

Created by award-winning designers Studio MUTT, the computer-generated images give an idea of what visitors can expect to see in advance of the reopening of the hall, which was closed to the public for urgent repairs in 2019.

The museum has collaborated with architect and lead designer Carmody Groake to reimagine and improve the Power Hall experience and conserve the building's history, and with Studio MUTT to create an engaging interpretation of the historic collection through the exhibition design. This reimagined space will allow visitors to rediscover their favourite objects from fresh perspectives and uncover the stories behind those who powered and continue to power Manchester's industry. The Power Hall will explore the building blocks of the relationship between humans and engine that was born in Manchester and endures to this day.

Alongside these new experiences, the much-loved exhibits and atmosphere that visitors will recall from before 2019 will be retained. The intention is to provide a sensory

A computer-generated visualisation of visitors exploring the newly restored Power Hall. MOSI

experience through the sounds, smells and sights of Manchester's past and present industry and be a lively, working gallery full of engines and rail vehicles.

Three main themes will guide visitors through the hall. Connecting Places will examine how people used locomotives to connect communities around the world.

Starting at the site of the museum, the Manchester terminus of the pioneering Liverpool & Manchester Railway in 1830, it will explore the factors that sparked a transport revolution.

Secondly, Making More will explore how engines helped people to make more, faster – featuring the steam engines that factory and mill owners eagerly installed to boost their productivity and profits from the 1800s onwards, but at a cost to people and the environment.

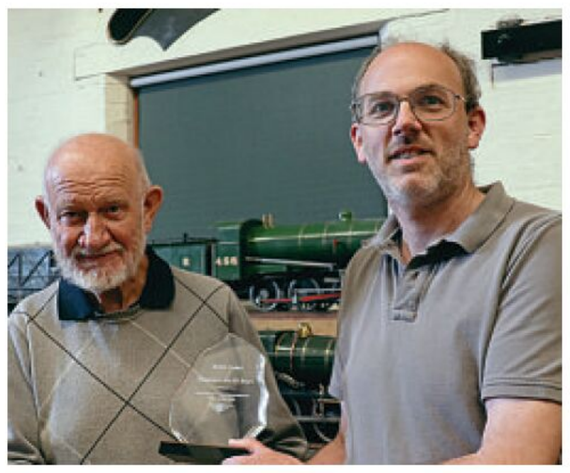
Thirdly, Powering Lives examines how engines power today's electricity network and look how scientists and engineers are developing greener methods.

The museum's interpretation and content manager, Kate Chatfield, said: "This will be a must-see Manchester experience – a living gallery that showcases a unique collection of historic 19th and early 20th century working engines to tell the story of Manchester as an epicentre for the engine-driven ideas and industry that shaped the world as we know it today."

The work to reimagine the hall is part of a multi-million-pound regeneration project taking place in the museum, conserving its historic buildings and revealing new spaces for all visitors to enjoy, play and learn in.

Since 2019 the hall has undergone crucial restoration works to futureproof it for years to come, including urgent roof and timber repairs, new windows and doors, and wider building conservation.

The Power Hall sits at the heart of the museum's vision to deliver a sector-leading programme of decarbonisation that places zero carbon technologies at the centre of the visitor experience and creating a sustainable museum for the future.



Robin Jones (left) is presented by his successor, Ben Shaw, with a plaque commemorating 60 years as treasurer. NIGEL CRIPPS

Locomotive trust treasurer completes 60 years in role

THE Warwickshire Industrial Locomotive Preservation Trust's treasurer, Robin Jones, stepped down at the organisation's annual general meeting after a marathon 60 years of service.

Robin, who had held the post since the organisation began in 1965, said: "I've been asked how I was persuaded to take on the role. The organisation was formed by a group of friends and needed a treasurer. They suggested that I could do the job, but carefully avoided mentioning for how long! I had no idea what was involved, but I learnt quickly how to organise a paper leger system before taking on the complexity of VAT and Gift Aid."

The packed meeting on April 13 saw Robin presented with a commemorative plaque. Robin has agreed to continue as a trustee to help his successor in the role.

New treasurer Ben Shaw said: "I had not been born when Robin became treasurer, but I must warn members that it is extremely unlikely that I will hold the post for 60 years!"

The charitable trust's Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 2047 of 1926 *Warwickshire* is in the middle of a complete rebuild at Bewdley on the Severn Valley Railway. The trust grew out of the Warwickshire Railway Society in response to Rugby Portland Cement Ltd looking for a good home for the redundant locomotive that was the last built by Manning, Wardle before the firm closed. The trust's second locomotive, Hunslet 0-6-0T No. 686 of 1898, is also based on the SVR.

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Severn Valley signals green light for landslip repairs

By Robin Jones

THE Severn Valley Railway is pressing ahead with repairs to the landslip it suffered at Mor Brook bridge after its insurer agreed to settle its claim regarding the incident which severed the line between Eardington and Hampton Loade stations on January 29, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 329.

The insurer will pay for the full reinstatement of the bridge's wing wall and stone arch, as well as the embankment itself. The railway said that the final costs will be significantly more than £500,000.

SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "We are delighted with this decision by our insurer, which means we can now move ahead with fixing things. Nevertheless, the SVR is still going to be responsible for funding a substantial excess as part of the settlement.

"We are still in negotiation with the insurer about the exact amount, but thanks to the generous donations that supporters have made to the SVR Resilience Fund and the SVR Charitable Trust since the landslip, we are confident that we will be able to cover this.

"What's important here is that our insurance company's acceptance of the claim means we will not have to launch a full-scale appeal for the landslip repairs, which would have meant further delays before we could put things right."

Severn Valley volunteers clearing vegetation on the embankment near the landslip. GARY ESSEX/SVR

"This has been a highly complex situation to resolve, and it was important to move carefully and slowly to ensure a proper and long-lasting solution."

In conjunction with its insurer, the SVR has appointed civil engineering contractor CML to carry out all the works required at Mor Brook to reinstate the line. The railway's infrastructure management and permanent way teams will work with CML to provide logistical support and carry out work related to the track.

Some hopes have been expressed that an imminent start to repairs might see the affected stretch of line reopen in time for the September 18-21 Autumn Steam Gala.

The SVR's head of infrastructure, Chris Bond, said: "Our own permanent way team will remove track in preparation for the main contract works to commence.

'Timescales are still subject to the production of a final programme of works. Clearly, at this stage it is impossible to pin down a finish date. "This will depend on many variables, such as the weather, procurement of materials, and gaining statutory approvals. It is unlikely to be completed before the middle of the summer, and it could be later, depending on these variables."

Gus added: "I would like to pay tribute to both Antony Bartlam, our consultant civil and structural engineer and SVR volunteer, and Chris Bond for the dedication and hard work they have already put in to get us to this important stage.

"This has been a highly-complex situation to resolve, and it was important to move carefully and slowly to ensure a proper and long-lasting solution, rather than rushing in to attempt a quick fix.

"Once again, on behalf of the railway, I want to thank everyone who has donated to help us."

➜ **Two more guest locomotives have been added to the line's May 15-18 Spring Diesel Festival, which will feature an intensive timetable between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade. Locomotive Services Limited will send Class 57 No. 57003 for all four days and a Class 69 from GB Railfreight will appear on the Saturday and Sunday. Colas is sending two Class 56s, and a pair of High Speed Train power cars from Rail Adventure will appear, plus Freightliner Class 66 and Class 70 locomotives, while the home fleet will run examples of Classes 17, 20, 33, 37, 40, 42, 46, 50 and 52.**

➜ **Double spring success for Severn Valley: see feature, pages 46-51.**

Rolling stock damaged as vandals attack four heritage lines in recent weeks

HERITAGE railways have been hit by vandal attacks in recent weeks.

On April 20, the Spa Valley's Class 207 DEMU No. 1317 was attacked, leaving both the motor and trailer carriages covered in graffiti.

The only surviving original unrefurbished three-car Class 207 left in the world, No. 1317 formed the last public shuttle service from Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West when the line closed on July 6, 1985, and was obtained by the railway in 2004. The entire unit will now have to be repainted, diverting vital funds from other SpVR projects.

More than 28 windows were smashed in coaches and in a privately-owned DMU currently undergoing renovation at the East Lancashire Railway's Baron Street engineering workshop in Bury on April 12/13. Three carriages were broken into and severely damaged, with fixtures ripped apart, leaving a repair bill of more than £5000 covering glass replacement and labour alone. Evidence of attempted arson was also discovered.

Public support

After the ELR issued an SOS appeal for funds to rectify the damage, chairman Mike Kelly said: "We have been truly overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from our community.

"Amid this adversity, your generosity has shone brightly. Donations have been pouring in and countless individuals have offered their time and skills to assist in the restoration efforts. Your support reaffirms our mission and fuels our determination to continue preserving the rich history of our railway for future generations. Together, we will overcome this setback and emerge stronger."

Elsewhere, West Mercia Police launched an investigation after windows were smashed by stones thrown at several stationary Severn Valley Railway carriages located near the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre in Kidderminster. The attack took place on April 6 between 6pm and 5pm the next day and followed an incident on April 6 at 2.10pm in which two teenage youths were seen throwing stones at a passing train from an embankment. One window was smashed by a stone, which hit a passenger.

Signal smashed

The Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust at Midsomer Norton South has been hit by trespass and vandalism. A banner repeater signal was damaged between April 9 and 14, apparently by being struck with a fencing rod. The glass was smashed and extensive damage caused to the internal parts.

Youths are believed to have been gathering on stretches of the railway; empty drinks cans have been left scattered and a piece of wood placed on a track.

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On shed (left to right) are *Sir Berkeley*, *Swordfish* and *Clyde* as preparations get underway for services on April 21. LAWRIE ROSE

Three makes for Middy success as carriage shed plans announced

By Owen Hayward

SUPPORT from the local community and a trio of locomotives in steam helped cement the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway's April 20/21 Easter steam-up as the line's best ever gala to date – with the onsite bar needing to replenish supplies before a train had even run!

While the trains took centre stage on Easter Sunday and bank holiday Monday, the railway threw open its doors on Good Friday and saw the residents of Wetheringsett almost fully deplete stocks, with volunteers having to race to nearby breweries on Saturday to restock before trains started running the following day.

Once the public began arriving on April 20, such was the patronage of the bar and refreshment room that stocks of draught beer were soon completely out once again, with the tea room also reporting its most successful single day of trading since the heritage line opened.

Services were operated in rotation by one of three steam locomotives, with Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1210 *Sir Berkeley* headlining the occasion. Built in 1891 for engineering contractor Lord Hemingway, *Sir Berkeley* was saved from scrap in 1964 and moved to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, where it was later bought by the Vintage Carriages Trust.

Being underpowered for the KWVR's services, it has toured several heritage lines and latterly has been operating at the Middleton Railway.

Ideal locomotive

Also making its Suffolk debut was Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2315 *Clyde*, which arrived from the Spa Valley at the start of April. In January 2024 it returned to service following a prolonged overhaul in Kent but was advertised for sale by its then owner as the SpVR had grown considerably since the locomotive was last operational in the mid-2000s, the result being it was now no longer suited to services there.

The new owner has transferred it to the MSLR, where it is expected to be based for the foreseeable future, proving an ideal size for the current 550-yard route.

Rounding off the line-up was another Barclay. 0-6-0ST, No. 2138 *Swordfish*, which is privately owned and based at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre but is on loan to the MSLR for the 2025 operating season.

The combination of locomotives, good weather and recent news of the granting of the Transport & Works Act Order for the 550-yard extension set the stage for a hugely successful gala.

MSLR marketing manager John Reeve said: "Entry sales at the ticket office for the two days was just short of £7500, which excluded advance sales online. Altogether, it more than made up for not being able to open on New Year's Day when services were cancelled due to storms forecast.

"For the first public opening of 2025, things could hardly have gone better. Opening the Middy Bar for the locals on the evening of Good Friday brought in a record of more than £1000 turnover, so much so that supplies had to be replenished on Saturday, and all before the first train had turned a wheel."

Shed talk

With the opening of the extension set to take place during the August bank holiday weekend this summer, the MSLR has already turned its attention to the next major project – the construction of a carriage shed at Dovebrook Halt.

With its rolling stock comprising three wooden-bodied four-wheelers, covered accommodation is vital to ensuring their longevity, not least because among those vehicles is No. 140, a first class smoking coach which was built at Stratford in 1863, and which is believed to be the oldest-surviving GER carriage in operational use.

The provision of a new shed in which to store these vehicles will prolong not just their lives, but also those of some of the other vehicles on the railway, including GER brake third No. 12 and compartment third No. 13, all of which are similar in design to carriages that would have once been found running on the 'Middy.' The railway is also home to GER No. 180, which is the oldest-known surviving horsebox wagon, dating back to 1869.

"We must raise £100,000 to install a new siding and construct the carriage storage shed, which will stable these historic vehicles and other rolling stock needing protection now and in the future," said John.

"Our principle aim is to preserve the uniqueness of this Edwardian light railway which served rural mid-Suffolk for nearly 50 years."

The project will involve relaying and realigning the current siding at Dovebrook to allow for the installation of the second track. Groundworks and the final erection of the shed will then take place, with MSLR permanent way manager Terry Siermers saying it was "vital that it is started as soon as possible" to prevent further damage to the carriages, with a target of starting work as soon as January.

➜ For more information and to donate to the shed appeal, visit www.mslr.org.uk/dovebrook-carriage-shed-appeal/

***Sir Berkeley* prepares to depart Brockford station with the final train of the gala.** OWEN HAYWARD

The MSLR has announced plans for a new carriage shed at Dovebrook halt to protect its vintage rolling stock. A new line will be laid alongside the existing siding, with the new structure planned to cover both tracks, but £100,000 must be raised to achieve this. OWEN HAYWARD

Vale of Rheidol donates *Conqueror* to Welshpool

By Robin Jones

THE Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway has received a locomotive donated by one of the other Great Little Trains of Wales.

Former Bowaters Paper Mill 2ft 6in gauge Bagnall 0-6-2T No. 2192 of 1922 *Conqueror* was one of four locomotives acquired by Sir William McAlpine for a new circular line he built at Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire. *Conqueror* hauled the first train on the complete line in 1973 with Princess Margaret as a passenger.

It operated on the Whipsnade line until 1983, when it was withdrawn for overhaul and stored alongside the shed. In 1994 it was acquired by enthusiast Peter Rampton and joined his large collection of locomotives from around the world stored privately at premises in Surrey.

Following Peter's death in 2019, responsibility for the collection passed to the Vale of Rheidol Railway and some items have since found homes in the railway's new museum at Aberystwyth. Others have been passed to new owners in circumstances when VoR directors considered they could be more useful, and so *Conqueror* has been donated to the WLLR.

VoR board chairman Patrick Keef said: "As part of a long-term plan to consolidate and focus the VoR's collection of historic locomotives, the railway is very pleased to have agreed the gift of *Conqueror* to the WLLR Preservation Co Ltd. Being of the wrong gauge to run on the VoR, it was felt appropriate that the loco should move to a railway of the correct gauge, with a long-term potential for restoration and return to service."

Conqueror is not in working order and initially will become an exhibit in the display shed at Welshpool, where it will be reunited with another former Bowaters locomotive, the Bagnall 0-4-4-T No. 6 *Monarch*, which was the first steam locomotive acquired by the preservation company in 1966.

WLLR chairman Steve Clews said: "We are very pleased to be able to offer a home to *Conqueror* as part of our ongoing commitment to the preservation of 2ft 6in gauge vehicles.

"This is a powerful locomotive that should be suited to our line. Though there are currently no plans to get it operational, the acquisition gives us more alternatives for the future and storage under cover will ensure that it is protected until that day comes."

Meanwhile, the WLLR's £150,000 appeal to restore Beyer Peacock 0-6-0T No. 823 *Countess* to steam in 2027 in time for its 125th birthday and that of its sister original locomotive, the currently operational No. 822 *The Earl*, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 328, has reached its halfway target.

Work on the 10-year overhaul of *Countess* accordingly began during the winter. To donate to the appeal, visit https://wllr.org.uk/support/donations-appeals/

One for the future: Bagnall 0-6-2T *Conqueror* is the latest addition to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway locomotive fleet. WLLR

GWR prairie No. 4144, on loan from Didcot Railway Centre to the Nene Valley Railway until September, catches the sunrise in Wansford yard on Good Friday. PAUL ROE/NVR

Mid-Hants textile magic embarks on its southern journey

A UNIQUE piece of artwork has started a year-long tour of Hampshire, telling the history of rail travel through a series of metre-tall embroidered panels.

Brought about through a collaboration between the Mid-Hants Railway and almost 200 contributors, the vibrant celebration of 200 years of the modern railway is depicted through the mediums of textiles, sewing and embroidery. Those who have helped to create this unique masterpiece have included local artists, students, and members of community groups.

Each of the panes, which all stand at a metre in height, have been intricately designed and embroidered, capturing two centuries of the story of rail in a piece entitled 200 Community Textile Timeline of Train Travel. Participants have been meeting each month at the MHR's Ropley station and remotely online since May 2024.

Each of the panels carries themes of innovation, nostalgia, and the enduring connection between railways and local communities. At the end of March, it commenced a year-long tour which will see the artwork displayed at numerous venues throughout the region before it concludes next June at Medstead & Four Marks station.

MHR CEO Rebecca Dalley said: "We are incredibly proud of this inspiring project which has brought together so many creative individuals in a shared celebration of our railway's rich history. The textile timeline is a testament to the dedication and artistic talent of our community.

The multi-panelled textile timeline of rail history will be touring venues in the south throughout 2025 and into 2026. It was created by 200 individuals who have worked on the piece since May 2024. MHR

"We are delighted to take it on tour, giving even more people the opportunity to experience its beauty and significance first-hand."

Updates on the textile timeline's travels will be shared on the MHR's website and social media channels, with planned stops including Micheldever station for its own Railway 200 celebrations during May 17/18, Basingstoke station (August 1-29), and Farnham station (October 8) prior to returning to the MHR on June 1, 2026.

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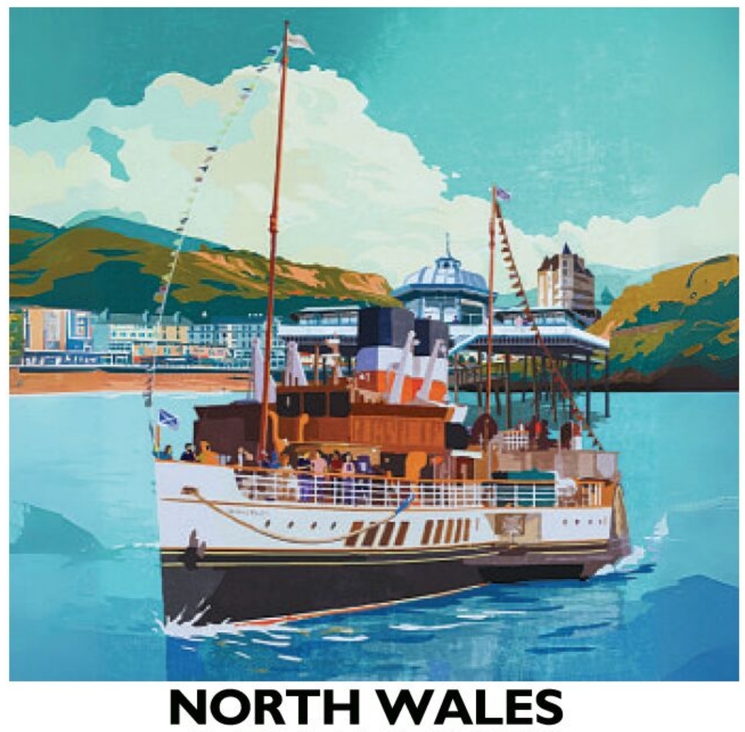

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BRISTOL CHANNEL & SOUTH WEST WALES
2 to 25 June

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27 June to 25 August

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Help choose the country's favourite railway painting!

200 Years of Train Travel 1825–2025

by Robin Jones

THE public has been invited to help choose Britain's favourite rail artwork as part pf the Railway 200 celebratory programme.

Art education charity Art UK has joined up with the Railway 200 campaign for the vote, and together with its museum partners has assembled 200 artworks dating from the 1830s to the 21st century from 94 public collections to select from.

The 20 best-loved railway artworks in the UK were unveiled on April 15, World Art Day, following a global vote in which nearly 4000 were cast. Art lovers and rail enthusiasts are now invited to choose an outright winner, which will be announced on June 9, the birthday of 'Father of the Railways' George Stephenson.

Artistic choices

The shortlist of 20 highlights work by 14 artists including JMW Turner and Eric Ravilious, along with six works by renowned painter Terence Cuneo and two by Norman Wilkinson, whose works are featured in popular travel posters.

Paintings on the shortlist have been drawn from 11 public collections, including the National Railway Museum, Hopetown Darlington and The Postal Museum.

Art UK is hosting an online exhibition of all 200 paintings at https://artuk.org/discover/curations/railway-200-celebrating-200-years-of-rail-travel-18252025 and also a gallery of the shortlist of 20 at https://artuk.org/discover/curations/railway-200-vote-for-the-worlds-favourite-uk-railway-artwork

Alan Hyde, from Railway 200, said: "The railway has always been a source of inspiration for artists, helping to enrich our cultural lives. We hope that in rail's bicentenary year, art lovers will travel by train to enjoy the best of railway-inspired art at first-hand and help to choose the nation's favourite."

Heritage Minister Baroness Twycross said: "For two centuries our railways have carried passengers and freight, as well as inspiring artistic creativity around Britain. This remarkable collection showcases how deeply trains are woven into our cultural fabric.

"I am delighted to see such diversity in the shortlist and encourage everyone to celebrate this bicentenary by viewing these wonderful artworks and voting for their favourite."

Andrew Ellis, chief executive of Art UK, added: "There are so many terrific artworks of trains and the railway in the UK national collection and on Art UK. The first public vote has narrowed this down to 20 artworks from which a winner must now be chosen.

"Given the shortlist, this will be quite a challenge, and I cannot wait to see which one is chosen as the 'world's favourite UK railway artwork!'"

➜ **Anyone can register for the final vote at https://railway200.artuk.org. The poll will close at midnight on Sunday, June 1.**

Among the 20 shortlisted paintings is Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway, by Jospeh Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844. The painting shows one of the Firefly 2-2-2s of 1841, capable of reaching 60mph, racing through torrential rain as it crosses Maidenhead Bridge, with the widest and flattest arches ever built at that time, supporting what was then the fastest railway of all. In the introduction to his book The Condition of the Working Class in England, the German philosopher Friedrich Engels wrote in 1845: "The railway profoundly transformed perceptions of distance, speed, and time. With its expanding network, it brought places closer together, enabling unprecedented mobility. The introduction of Greenwich Mean Time replaced regional time zones, standardising schedules across the country. These radical changes were captured by JMW Turner in this groundbreaking oil painting." THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Left: Also in the shortlist is The Coronation Scot Ascending Shap Fell, Cumbria, LMS poster artwork by Norman Wilkinson (1878-1971). NRM/SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY

New Wakefield market mural highlights local rail heritage

A NEW mural reflecting local railway heritage has been unveiled at the newly-refurbished Normanton Market in Wakefield.

It is the work of West Yorkshire artist Harriet Colours, who throughout last September worked extensively with the local community to engage them in her design process. She attended coffee mornings at the library, went along to heritage talks, and engaged young people at the market site to find out how locals feel about the place where they live and what is important to them.

She also ran creative workshops with Normanton All Saints Church of England Infant School, during which the children helped create tapestries which were then displayed at Normanton Library for three months.

In total, 228 people helped create the artwork, including the schoolchildren and people attending The Well Youth, Normanton Baptist Church coffee mornings, and the Friends of Normanton Library.

The final design highlights the vital role of the local colliery, with its iconic cooling and ash towers, and the town's unique place in history as home to the North of England's first postal office, made possible by the station's critical link between Scotland and London. The foreground features exaggerated lupins, a nod to the wildflowers that once thrived along the railway sidings, symbolising nature's harmony with the town's industrial past.

The artwork, one of a series in the council's Crossings and Gateways mural programme, has been painted using graphenstone lime-based paints which absorb carbon dioxide, helping to improve air quality and which will reduce the building's carbon footprint over time.

Harriet said: "It has been an honour to get to know so many people within the community of Normanton, to create this mural, and learn from their stories and values, and a pleasure to bring their voices to life on this wall, turning a shared space into a meaningful celebration of the town's important rail history."

Harriet Colours in front of her railway mural at Normanton Market. WAKEFIELD COUNCIL

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Greatest Gathering's new artist in residence

ALSTOM has appointed Nottinghamshire-based painter, author and tutor Tim O'Brien as the official artist in residence for The Greatest Gathering, Britain's biggest-ever grouping of historic rail vehicles, to be staged at the firm's Litchurch Lane plant in Derby on August 1-3 as one the primary events of Railway 200.

Visitors to the sold-out event will get to see Tim painting outdoors as he captures the rolling stock, atmosphere, and architecture on show.

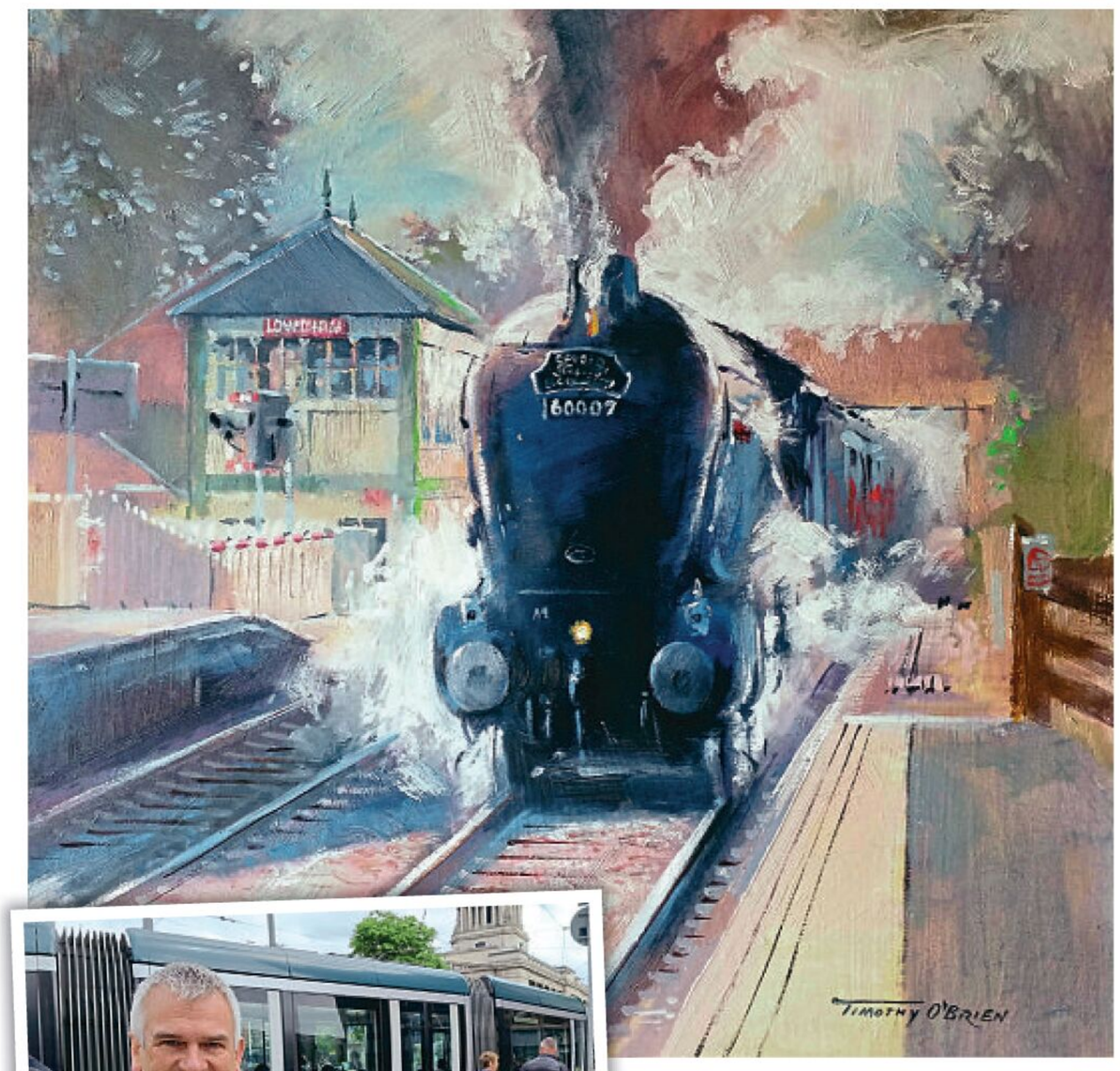
He said: "I feel very privileged and honoured to be invited by Alstom to be their official artist in residence and capture this bicentennial celebration in art. I have always been a fan of Terence Cuneo's railway art and as a child I practiced drawing using my Hornby OO gauge steam engines as subjects, so this opportunity is off the scale.

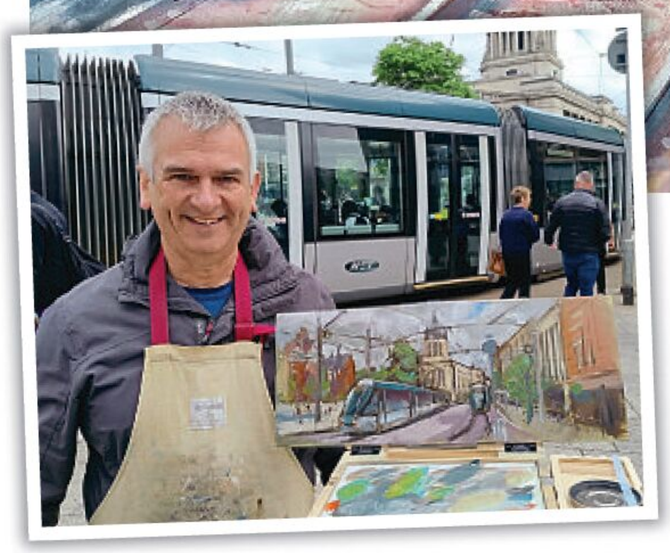
"One of the biggest challenges for plein air artists is not to become overwhelmed by the vast array of topics in front of me at an event like this and attempt to depict too much on a single canvas. I will have to quickly focus on a view and simplify it so it becomes a study of colour and atmosphere."

Tim started his 40-year art career as an advertising illustrator before he focused solely on fine art in the mid-1990s. The 55-year-old has worked on a wide variety of subject matter that has embraced military history, public occasions, rail, maritime and automotive topics.

Over the years he has worked with both the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. This collaboration gave Tim opportunities to go flying with the RAF and spend several days at sea with the Navy on board aircraft carriers, gathering reference for his art.

His paintings have been exhibited at venues such as the Mall Galleries in London and Patchings Art Centre in Nottinghamshire. He held his first solo exhibition at the Royal Air Force Club in London in 2015, which led to him being commissioned to paint 25 paintings for permanent display in its dining room overlooking Green Park.





Above: A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* passing through Lowdham, as portrayed by Tim O'Brien. ALSTOM

Left: Tim O'Brien at work painting in Nottingham. ALSTOM

➜ **Recently announced for The Greatest Gathering event are Class 17 D8568, Class 42 D821, Class 44 No. 44004, Class 46 No. 46045, Class 47 No. 47715 and Class 52s D1015 *Western Champion* and D1062 *Western Courier.***

Cambrian HQ's first phase of restoration is unveiled

COMPLETED restoration work has been unveiled at the Grade II-listed Cambrian Railway headquarters at Oswestry station as part of a £900,000 project.

Funded by Shropshire Council and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the work completed by craftsmen from local building conservation specialist Phillips and Curry Ltd has included fixing and restoring the building's exterior to prevent falling masonry, removing dangerous asbestos tiles and replacing them with Welsh slate, and painting windows and doors in Cambrian Railway colours. The scaffolding was removed in time for Easter.

Nesting boxes for swifts and roosting tiles for bats have also been installed at the station, which is used by the Cambrian Heritage Railway.

The council's senior project management office, Peter Gilbertson, said: "This building holds significant cultural value and these essential repairs ensure that it remains safe and usable for future generations."

Further work on the interior of the building was being planned for 2025, subject to grant funding being available.

Museum commissions new cultural Underground posters

LONDON Transport Museum has commissioned a new series of posters for the Underground to celebrate iconic cultural venues.

Created by award-winning artist Eliza Southwood, the series marks the return of contemporary artists being commissioned to create Transport for London travel posters for the first time since 2020, continuing the tradition of commissioning talented artists to create inspiring poster artworks that promote attractions in the capital.

Part of the museum's Transported by Culture initiative to bring more art, music and theatre programming to its visitors, Eliza's four posters depict Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Royal Albert Hall, London Zoo and LTM itself.

In 2019, Eliza won the Poster Prize for Illustration, a competition hosted LTM in partnership with the Association of Illustrators, for her artwork London Is The Place For Me, a depiction of the arrival of the *HMT Empire Windrush* at Tilbury Docks in 1948.

The new poster series continues a long tradition begun by Frank Pick, who in his roles as publicity officer at The Underground Group and later as the first chief executive of London Transport, is widely considered as the brains behind London Transport's iconic design style and identity. From 1908 onwards, he revolutionised poster design, commissioning leading contemporary artists and designers to create posters to promote the numerous music venues, theatres, museums and attractions that could be reached using London's public transport.

LTM director and CEO Elizabeth McKay said: "We are excited to continue Frank Pick's brilliant design legacy and get posters by contemporary artists back into Underground stations. His pioneering approach made great art accessible to everyone and helped to shape London's transport network into a much-envied global icon, as it remains to this day.

The four new Underground posters. LTM

"We are thrilled that Eliza Southwood's vibrant designs capture the energy of some of London's most beloved cultural sites – all easily reached by the tube."

The first of the series went on display in Underground stations from April 4. First edition posters and artwork prints will be available for purchase, including limited-edition prints exclusive to LTM, via ltmuseumshop.co.uk or in person from the Covent Garden museum's store.

Twin Peaks steal the show at joint Derbyshire gala weekend

Modern livery goes heritage: EWS may be considered modern by some, but the branding has vanished from the national network in the years following the company's buyout by DB Cargo UK in 2007. Newly outshopped in the livery, Class 09 No. 09001 arrives at Darley Dale with a freight train on April 12. CHRIS GEE

Together again: The sole-surviving Class 44 locomotives, No. 44004 *Great Gable* (left) and D8 *Penyghent*, sit side by side on shed at Peak Rail's Rowsley South shed on April 11. The gala was the first time that two of the class have worked together since withdrawal of the fleet by BR in the 1970s. MARTYN TATTAM

Making its preservation debut, Derby Lightweight trailer No. 79612's restoration has been recently completed, having formerly been an ultrasonic test train unit. It ran coupled to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's Class 122 unit, the formation seen arriving at Shottle. MARTYN TATTAM

By Owen Hayward

THE idea that collaboration is the key to success is something which the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway and Peak Rail have proven first-hand in recent years, and 2025's annual joint diesel gala weekend has outperformed previous events – with a winning combination all round in the line-up.

Undoubtedly for many, the highlight of the April 11/12 Twin Peaks gala was exactly that – the appearance of twin 'Peaks' – with Matlock-based Class 44 D8 *Penyghent* being joined by Midland Railway – Butterley-based sister No. 44004 *Great Gable*, the first time in more than four decades that that two 44s have been seen working together, the pair being the only survivors of a class that numbered only 10.

The 'Peaks' were synonymous with fast expresses in the region, the nickname derived from the English and Welsh mountains after which they took their official names. They were also the precursors to the later Classes 45 and 46 which shared the nickname, although the names allocated to these locomotives came from other sources.

The Peak Rail fleet also saw the Heritage Shunter Trust's Class 09 No. 09001 in service sporting the more modern (yet heritage in its own right) EWS livery, with a Class 108 DMU providing additional seating capacity.

Lightweight debut

In nearby Wirksworth, the EVR had its own accomplishment to boast about as it turned out the first half of the sole-surviving Derby Lightweight two-car DMU. Built at BR's Derby works between 1954 and 1955, the 'Lightweights' were the first units to be constructed en masse as BR sought to replace the ageing steam fleet and reduce operating and maintenance costs.

They employed weight-saving techniques such as light alloy luggage racks and body panelling being welded into one long continuous sheet which was rivetted to the extruded frame.

A total of 217 vehicles were built and employed on two, three and four-car formations. Two were built as single railcars and Driving Motor Brake Second No. 79900 *Iris* survives, having finished its main line career as a test train conversion. Fully refurbished and returned to passenger-carrying condition, it is normally resident at the EVR but is currently on long-term loan to the Great Central Railway. Meanwhile, the restoration of driving trailer composite No. 79612 saw what was once an ultrasonic test train converted vehicle undergo the same treatment, and it made its preservation debut at the gala weekend, painted into BR blue with small yellow panel, and coupled to the EVR's Class 122 'bubble car,' the trailer itself being one of the unpowered examples.

With the first of the two vehicles now complete, focus will shift to complete DMBS No. 79018, which had previously been refurbished in time for the Railcar50 celebrations at the Severn Valley in 2004 but has yet to carry passengers owing to the absence of the accompanying trailer. After standing outdoors idle for many years, it is currently in the EVR's workshops where refurbishment is progressing swiftly, with much of the interior and exterior body work already carried out.

Services between Wirksworth and Duffield were also run by resident Class 47 (D1842) and Class 33 No. 33103 *Swordfish*, which was making a welcome return to traffic following overhaul. Class 08 D3236, on loan from Nemesis Rail, also appeared for the weekend and worked its first passenger trains since 2016.

Huge success

With the two railways running their diesel fleets on the same days, enthusiasts were able to sample both thanks to a connecting bus service, with tickets bought at one line also allowing for travel at the other.

Peak Rail marketing manager Jack Evans said: "The event was very well-attended, with pre-sales being far higher than the previous years.

"Running in conjunction with the EVR gave us the heritage bus service between Matlock and Wirksworth stations, and this service was very well-used, which highlighted how well-received this joint event is within the heritage community.

"We would like to thank everybody who came to visit our Twin Peaks Diesel Gala.

"The star of the show for us was, of course, the visit of *Great Gable*. The atmosphere surrounding both of the surviving Class 44 'Peaks' was amazing, and we have loved seeing all of the photos that people have taken – not just of both Peaks, but also of all the other locomotives that took part at both railways."

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Flying Scotsman the early summer star for West Somerset

By Robin Jones

LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* will be hauling passenger services on the West Somerset metals in late June and July.

Following agreement with the National Railway Museum and Northern Steam Operations, the world's most famous steam locomotive – which, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 330, proved a sell-out attraction during its recent visit to the Nene Valley Railway – will haul trains between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead on June 28-30 and July 1/ 2, 8/9, and 10-12.

It will be on static display at Bishops Lydeard on June 26/27 and July 3-7 and 13/14.

On the days where services behind *Flying Scotsman* are running, the railway will offer excursions behind the A3 for one full-length journey of the line and a return journey behind one of it home fleet locomotives.

Further evening excursions will also be available on June 28/29 and July 2, 8/9, and 11/12 for a full return trip behind *Flying Scotsman* from

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Working a short mixed goods set, No. 52322 skirts the shoreline of the River Leven on the approach to Lakeside station during a photographic charter on April 2. ANTHONY FRNECH

Brief Cumbrian getaway for Lancashire locomotive

THE Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway is one destination that many enthusiasts might overlook, going about its day-to-day services without fuss and rarely bringing in external locomotives for visits, the line focusing on financially viable coach party and seasonal traffic rather than expensive enthusiast gala events. However, the line has made headlines several times in the last 12 months with the visit of LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45690 *Leander* last March and the outshopping of its Class 11 shunter No. 7120 in its Longmoor Military Railway identity of No. 878 *Basra* (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 331).

LYR Class 27 No. 52322 emerges from Haverthwaite East tunnel with a mixed local service on April 3. ANTHONY FRENCH

As our last issue closed for press, the railway had just welcomed Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Class 27 0-6-0 No. 52322 to the sheds at Haverthwaite. Built at Horwich in 1895, the Aspinall-designed locomotive was making a short stopover in the Lake District on its journey southwards, travelling from its usual home at the East Lancashire Railway and bound for the Mid-Hants Railway in readiness for that line's April 25-27 spring steam gala (see News, pages 10/11). Having arrived on the LHR on March 24, and undergoing a gauging run two days later, it starred in two photographic days organised by 30742 Charters on April 2/3.

No example of the class is known to have worked the branch from Ulverston to Lakeside, but the visit was arranged in conjunction with the LHR and locomotive owner Andy Booth and paid for by photographers keen to capture No. 52322 in a different setting, with shots across the River Leven a popular choice during these events. No. 52322 alternated between pulling a short goods rake and mixed passenger set, which featured two BR Mk. 1 carriages in crimson and cream accompanied by two box vans, a working similar to those once common on rural branch lines across the network.

The success of the visit went some way to make up for a similar programme of events planned for last November, for which Caledonian Railway Class 439 0-4-4T No. 419 (carrying its BR guise of No. 55189) was brought down from Bo'ness but had to be withdrawn after leaking tubes were discovered. The locomotive returned to Scotland without operating in Cumbria and has since been repaired. It is currently undergoing transformation into its LMS identity of No. 15189 with lined crimson lake livery.

Following the two days of charters, No. 52322 ran the LHR's first weekend of public services on April 5/6, before the locomotive and tender were split and loaded ready for their onward journey to Hampshire.

Bishops Lydeard to Minehead. Ticket options will include travel only, fish and chips, afternoon teas, or a trip on board the 'Quantock Belle' dining train for a four-course meal.

The static days offer the opportunity to see No. 60103 up close, including an afternoon tea in the station house garden with the locomotive as the backdrop.

Tickets are available online now at www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk/events/view/flying-scotsman-26th-june-14th-july

All WSR stations for the duration of the A3's operating days will be closed to the public. Access to Minehead or Bishops Lydeard will be by ticket only.

WSR general manager Kerry Noble said, "We are extremely excited to welcome back *Flying Scotsman* to the West Somerset Railway this year. It has been a well-kept secret.

"We are more than aware of the cost of living at the moment, so we have tried our best to create many opportunities for everyone to see *Flying Scotsman* to suit all budget types."

The locomotive last ran on the WSR in September 2017.

The A3 carrying at National Railway Museum 50th headboard in the venue's North Shed on April 3. NRM

Class 50s Nos. 50008 *Thunderer* and 50015 *Valiant* approach Bledlow Cricket Club with the 11.20am Princes Risborough to Chinnor service on April 7. RICHARD MCVEIGH

Diesel gala success sees visitor to Chinnor turn into resident

By Owen Hayward

THE return of a diesel gala to the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway saw a healthy footfall sample an impressive locomotive line-up, with one of the event's visitors staying on at the railway as a new resident.

With eight locomotives rostered throughout the four-day event, the railway's resident Class 03 D2069, Class 08 No. 08825 and Class 37 No. 37277 were joined by a quintet of guests that arrived via the main line connection at Princes Risborough.

Usually based at Swanwick Junction on the Midland Railway – Butterley, Class 31 No. 31108 had returned to service only a year beforehand following six years in storage and a subsequent refurbishment, debuting at the Great Central Railway in April 2024, close to where it was built at Brush Works in Loughborough in 1959. It remained on loan there for six months before returning to Derbyshire, and its visit to the C&PRR filled a gap left by the absence of the line's own example of the class, No. 31163, which is undergoing repairs offsite.

Also appearing were Class 45 No. 45108, from the East Lancashire Railway, Class 47 No. 47715, provided by Rail Engineering Solutions, and a pair of Class 50s in a second ELR resident, No. 50015 *Valiant* and main line-registered No. 50008 *Thunderer*. While four of the five visitors represented classes which have worked on the heritage line in preservation, No. 47715 was the first of its type to run there and is now remaining on loan for the foreseeable future.

A railway statement said: "We are delighted to announce that Rail Engineering Solutions and the C&PRR have reached an agreement to base No. 47715 at our railway. We cannot wait to work with RES on the exciting future plans that are in the pipeline for the locomotive, and it won't be long until No. 47715 is regularly hauling our trains."

Left: The laying of the C&PRR's independent line to secure access to the station at Princess Risborough took a step forward in early March when 900 tonnes of ballast arrived by rail and was spread over the relayed tracks. STEVE GROWCOTT/ C&PRR

The recently cleared Bledlow Bridge Halt, complete with new nameboard. JIM HENDERSON/C&PRR

Originally announced as a gala visitor, Class 47 No. 47715 has now taken up residency on the C&PRR and will soon work regular services along the 3 ½-mile line. RICHARD MCVEIGH

The event on April 4-6 saw the full fleet alternate duties along the 3½-mile line. While the former main line fleet took charge of the main passenger services, the two 0-6-0 shunters could be found on brake van rides at times throughout these dates. On April 7, the Class 50 duo took centre stage in a 'Hoover'-centric mileage day, before the convoy of four departing visitors set off for their respective homes.

C&PRR press officer Andy Freeman said that more than 4000 round trips were made during the three main gala days. No. 31108 will also star at the ELR's July 3-6 diesel gala, where it will be joined by No. 50008 and Class 26 No. 5310, the latter of which is usually found on the Llangollen Railway.

Independent progress

Meanwhile, the railway has made significant progress with its independent line project at Princess Risborough, which will allow the heritage line's services to access its platform without relying on use of a Network Rail-owned siding, so it will be able to continue operating services into the station even when that section of track is occupied by NR engineering vehicles.

In March, 900 tonnes of ballast was unloaded on the 875-yard track, all of which was brought in by rail, which Andy said had "saved some 30 full-length articulated tipper lorry movements and removed the challenges of transferring the load into rail wagons for the final move from a road access point to the locations along the railway."

With the ballast now laid, the railway will next hire in a tamper to undertake track alignment, following which rail bonding and wiring for signalling and track circuitry will be carried out. Once the required testing has been completed, the line will be inspected and passed for opening, with hopes that it could carry its first train since 1989, when the line was closed.

Other projects have seen a small team of volunteers refurbish the former Bledlow Bridge Halt, which the heritage line once served in the early days of trains and had recently fallen into disrepair. The ground-level platform has been cleared of weeds and relayed with ash, and project leader Jim Henderson dismantled what remained of the nameboard, which he replaced using the remnants of the original for reference.

Due to the low level of the platform, it will not be served by trains but instead makes a smart and tidy feature on the lineside for people to see during their journey.

Strengthening works have also taken place on some of the bridges along the line ahead of the arrival of USATC 2-8-0 S160 No. 6046, which, as reported last issue, will be the hired-in steam locomotive for the year.

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Lottery £240k grant to boost George Stephenson church as visitor attraction

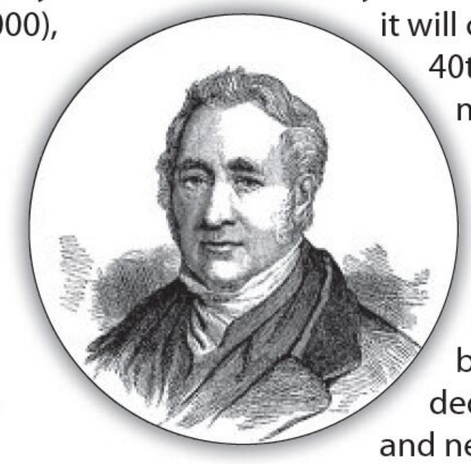
By Robin Jones

A PROECT to honour George Stephenson, the 'Father of the Railways,' is to be launched at his final resting place thanks to a £240,605 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Chesterfield's Grade II-listed Holy Trinity Church, in Newbold Road, which was built in 1837, will honour the legacy of the engineer whose *Locomotion No. 1* made world history on September 27, 1825, with the first steam-hauled passenger train, and will also explore the lasting impact of railway engineering on the town.

The church has long been a site of interest for enthusiasts and local schools, but this project aims to significantly expand its role as a visitor destination and educational hub.

With additional funding support from East Midland Railway (£5000), Cross Country Rail (£5000), Raymond Ross Fund (£25,000), Graysons Solicitors (£1000) and Holy Trinity Church itself (£16,000), the project will enhance visitor facilities, create new interpretation materials, and develop engaging activities for schools, families, and the wider community.



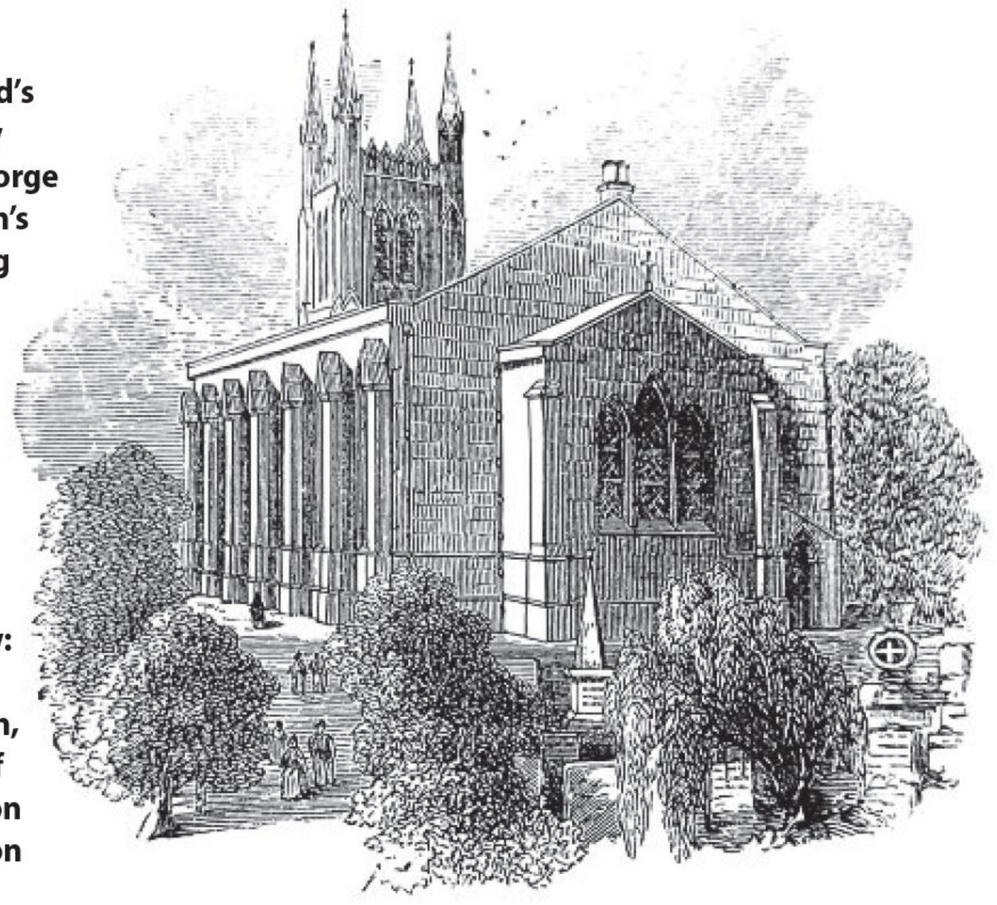
The scheme will also explore the wider industrial history of Chesterfield, focusing on the Victorian-era expansion of the town, the development of the Clay Cross Company, and the town's role in railway and coal mining history. And it will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the miners' strike, reflecting on the changes in industry that shaped the region.

Holy Trinity's community rooms will be transformed into a dedicated visitor facility, and new interpretation materials highlighting Stephenson's influence on Chesterfield and railway engineering will be created.

A series of public events and celebrations marking 200 years of the modern railway will be held, along with educational and engagement activities for schools and visitors, connecting communities with their industrial heritage.

There will be volunteer and learning opportunities to equip people with heritage and research skills, with a focus on sustainable transport and the future of railway engineering, ensuring the project connects the past with the present and future.

The Rev Jilly Hancock, of Holy Trinity Church, said: "Thanks to National Lottery players and our funding partners, we can now ensure that George Stephenson's story and Chesterfield's rich railway heritage are celebrated and shared with future generations."



Right: Chesterfield's Holy Trinity Church, George Stephenson's final resting place.

Inset below: George Stephenson, engineer of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

IN BRIEF

Steam driving – a job for life!

A NEW exhibition at Swindon's STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway explores the career path of railwaymen, starting as an engine cleaner and graduating to a fireman and a driver.

Becoming an engine driver was the dream of many young boys, but only a few made it a reality. Progression through the ranks was a slow and rigorous process, requiring years of dedication, skill, and patience, especially for those who aimed to drive express locomotives.

The new exhibition, A Job For Life, examines the long and challenging journey to the footplate. It focuses on the vital role of mutual improvement classes, giving insight into how railway workers developed their knowledge and skills.

Visitors will also learn about the role of Swindon's Park House, which provided the crucial medical examinations needed for those aspiring to join the footplate.

The exhibition runs until December 31.

Damaged Swanage Railway bridge is reopened

A SWANAGE Railway bridge damaged in a vehicle strike last August has been repaired by specialist contractors at a cost of £90,000 following a five-day road closure.

Before the repair work, trains were unable to use the 1884-built brick and steel structure, which crosses Grange Road between Worgret Junction and Furzebrook.

The railway is applying for another road closure in the autumn for further works to be completed.

Jurassic needs £25k for replacement boiler tubes by 2027

A £25,000 to appeal to keep Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1008 of 1903 *Jurassic* steaming on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway in Skegness has been launched. In 2027, the locomotive will be examined for the replacement of boiler tubes.

Built for Kaye and Company's cement works' quarries at Southam, in Warwickshire (later the Rugby Portland Cement Company), *Jurassic* and three of its sisters were sidelined in 1956 when the firm switched to road transport.

It was bought for £50 in 1961 by the embryonic LCLR, the world's first heritage line to be built on a greenfield site by enthusiasts, for use at its original site in Humberston, and operated intermittently there until the line's closure in 1985.

After a final appearance a year later on the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway, it was stored with other LCLR equipment at Burgh-le-Marsh, moving to the current site of the railway in Skegness Water Leisure Park, in Walls Lane, Ingoldmells, after rebuilding of the line began in 1992. Its ownership was transferred to the LCLR's Historic Vehicles Trust, a registered charity, in recognition of it significance.

A Heritage Lottery Fund grant enabled *Jurassic* to be overhauled and given the statutory 10-year-examination before it returned to service in 2017.

It is hoped that the latest work can be completed during the winter of 2026/27.

Appeal co-ordinator Geoff Hankin said: "There has been a most encouraging start to the appeal – one of the first letters I opened contained a cheque for £1000."

Donations can be made to a specially created account of the LCLR HVT (sort code16-20-28 and a/c number 11154239) by cheque sent to LCLR HVT, Skegness Water Leisure Park, Walls Lane, Ingoldmells, Skegness PE25 1JF, or in person at the railway when it is operating or during working parties on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

***Jurassic* steaming during its 2025 annual boiler examination for its insurance certificate.** CHRIS BATES

On February 22, newly overhauled LBSCR 'Terrier' No. W8 *Freshwater* departs from Ashey Halt. The original station building is just visible, poking up behind the hedges and trees, and has now been bought by the IOWSR, which plans to return the station to its former glory. OWEN HAYWARD

An artist's rendition shows what Ashey could someday look like, although the reinstatement of the passing loop does not form part of the immediate plans. MJ COUSINS/IOWSR

On the 'Wight' track as Ashey station bought by heritage line

By Owen Hayward

AS lines were closed by BR, many former station buildings that survived demolition passed into private ownership for use as homes. Some have seen railway lines rebuilt past them, but now Ashey, on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, is set to serve passengers once more – after the heritage line achieved a long-held ambition and reacquired the building.

Built in 1850 for the Ryde to Newport Railway, Ashey was a small junction with a branch that served the nearby quarry and racecourse station. Ashey station itself once had two platforms, with the Down side taken out of use in 1926 and closed in 1930 when the quarry branch also became disused. The station was fully closed on February 21, 1966, but had been changed considerably by BR before then. Subsidence saw the track realigned in 1953 and a new unmanned halt constructed, and the original building was closed.

The building was sold into private ownership in 1968 and converted into a private residence, which has since disappeared from the view of the railway behind a row of hedges and trees.

The IoWSR's trains began to run through Ashey when the line reopened in 1991, passing the original station buildings and grounds and only stopping at the newer halt.

Unchanged in appearance

Despite their age, the station buildings have remained relatively untouched, with modifications made in private ownership being relatively minor. The hope of acquiring these was set out in the railway's first strategic vision published in 2009.

IoWSR CEO Marc Morgan Huws said: "In February 2024, the time felt right to let the Holbrook family, the owner of the station since 1980, know of our continued interest should they ever decide to sell – which they did!

"We are immensely grateful to the family for their willingness to enter into exclusive negotiations and a sale directly to us. We have acquired the full station grounds, the station buildings, and land to the north. What better way to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our railway?"

The purchase completes the first phase of the project to return the site to its 1926 Southern Railways condition.

It is planned to refurbish the whole building, with rooms including toilets and a waiting room set to be returned to public use, and the signalbox reinstated. The remainder of the house wil be turned into a holiday let, which Marc said would allow the railway to achieve income from this space. The long-demolished Up platform will also be reinstated.

"All of this is now our priority, but we expect phase two to take up to two years, with much research, planning, and statutory approvals required before we can start the renovations. To fully restore the platform and return the buildings to period condition and bring them up to a standard in which they can be utilised, we estimate a cost in the region of a further £550,000.

No loop plans – for now

"Phase two of this project will see the reinstatement of the platform and full renovation of the house to return it to the 1926 period. Near enough everything needs doing to make this possible, including repairs to the roof, new windows, doors, heating, floors, sewage system and electrics."

He added that the reinstatement of the passing loop, which was taken out in the 1930s, may well be a future consideration but "is not part of phase two." Its future inclusion would, however, enable private charter trains or extra services to pass in the section between Havenstreet and Smallbrook Junction, where only one train is currently allowed to work at a time.

GWR line set to be built at Yeovil – 161 years after the trackbed was formed!

THE Yeovil Railway Centre has launched a £100,000 appeal to lay rails along a trackbed created by the GWR in 1864 – but which never had track laid on it.

The centre has for years wanted to reroute and extend its third-of-a-mile demonstration line along the South Chord at Yeovil Junction, creating a new platform.

On June 13, 1864, a broad gauge freight line was opened from the GWR's Wilts, Somerset and Weymouth line up to a new Clifton Maybank goods station located on the south side of the LSWR's Yeovil Junction station so broad and standard gauge wagons could be brought alongside each other to allow goods to be transhipped between them.

The intention was to create a triangle. However, due to an economic downturn, the original track along the proposed chord was never laid.

The transfer shed used for transhipping goods is now the visitor centre.

The scheme's project manager, Neil Coultas, told the BBC that the "unique" project was "very much linking back to the past and very much in line with keeping history alive."

"We are a little bit of the Great GWR living on, which is fantastic," he said. "When I'm working down there, I like to think back to the navvies of 1864, those guys who did all the hard work preparing the trackbed. We are finally, finally putting some track down there – building on their legacy."

The centre has invited donations for a designated fund for the South Chord project with a range of benefits for those giving £50 and above.

To contribute, visit www.yeovilrailway.freeservers.com/south_chord_donations.html

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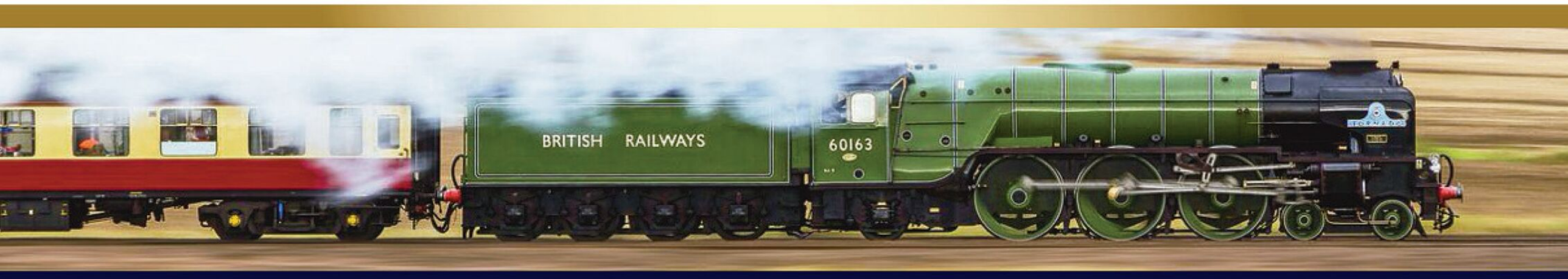

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Railway museum launches season with fresh exhibits

By Geoff Courtney

ONE of the country's smaller regional railway museums has launched its 10th season by unveiling a number of new acquisitions. They were obtained by owner Peter Rooke after a busy winter keeping a close watch on memorabilia coming onto the market.

Peter, a retired civil engineer, opened the West Cumberland Railway Museum in 2016 in the centre of the Cumbrian coastal village of St Bees. A railway enthusiast from a very early age, he launched the museum in the village's former police station to display his large collection of local memorabilia, including nameplates, worksplates, carriage prints, posters, station and platform signs, lamps, and signalbox diagrams.

Although, as its name indicates, the central theme is West Cumberland, Peter also features the extremes of the old Cumbrian lines at Carnforth, Penrith, and Carlisle, and thus includes artefacts from all seven of the county's pre-Grouping standard gauge railways as well as the LMS and BR.

Among the latest acquisitions making their debuts this year are platform totem signs for Arnside and Whitehaven Bransty, an impressive wooden sign from Peter's local station of St Bees, and a nameplate from a Class 31 A1A-A1A diesel.

Busy scene: Ex-LMS No. 45017 draws into Whitehaven Bransty station on April 4, 1957. Two members of the platform staff – one wearing what appears to be a top hat – watch a lady carrying a bulky parcel, as does another railwayman on the far side of the track, while another group stands back as the 4-6-0 passes. On the left is the 1899-built Bransty No. 2 signalbox which is still in operation today, and beyond the station on the right is the chimney and gasometer frame of Whitehaven Gas Works, behind which are sandstone cliffs. Above the Carnforth (11A)-based 'Black Five' is the winding gear and square chimney of the former William Pit, which was sunk in 1804 and had closed two years before the photograph was taken. A totem sign from the station, one of which is partially visible on the top right of the image, is a recent addition to the West Cumberland Railway Museum collection. TRANSPORT TREASURY/HENRY PRIESTLEY

Pre-Grouping signage

Arnside station was opened in August 1858 by the Ulverstone & Lancaster Railway (the old spelling of Ulverston was still used in legal documents at that time) and is open today.

Whitehaven Bransty was opened by the Whitehaven Junction Railway in March 1847, named Whitehaven, was resited in December 1874 and had the Bransty suffix added, and was reverted to its original name by BR in May 1968. It too remains in service today.

The 9ft-long St Bees sign, which is believed to be of Furness Railway origin, was removed by Network Rail earlier this year after it became insecure. This was another station that opened early in the Victorian era, in July 1849, and remains in service today, as does its signalbox, which was opened by the Furness Railway in 1891 and is now Grade II-listed.

The diesel nameplate joining the ranks of newcomers at the museum is *Calder Hall Power Station* from 1959-built D5548, later Class 31 No. 31130, which was named in 1992 and after withdrawal in August 1997 was saved for preservation. It is now resident on the Avon Valley Railway. Calder Hall is a decommissioned nuclear power station in Sellafield, near the Cumbrian coast village of Seascale. The plant was equipped with four nuclear reactors each weighing more than 36,000 tons and was officially opened by the late Queen Elizabeth II in October 1956 as the world's first nuclear power station to produce electricity for domestic use. It closed in 2003.

Week-long openings

As in previous seasons, the museum will open for one week each month up to October with free entry, and groups may be accommodated subject to prior appointment. Also as in previous years, the final session in October will be open to local artists to display their skills.

Peter explained: "This end-of-season session has become a showpiece for local artists, with some of the railwayana displaced by works of art in various forms for display and possible sale.

"It has become a village favourite, with up to a dozen artists displaying their wares, including paintings, woodwork, greeting cards and even jewellery. It also helps that we provide free cake!"

Pole position: Peter Rooke displays station totem signs Whitehaven Bransty and Arnside, two recent acquisitions for his railway museum. KEVIN NEWLAND

Sign of the times: West Cumberland Railway Museum owner Peter Rooke admires one his new attractions, a sign from his local station St Bees. KEVIN NEWLAND

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Carrying a smokebox wreath in respect of late Bluebell Railway president Gordon Pettitt, Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* tops Freshfield bank with the 1pm from Sheffield Park on March 8. NICK GILLIAM

Tribute to Bluebell president Gordon Pettitt

By Robin Jones

THE Bluebell Railway is in mourning for its president, Gordon Pettitt OBE, who has died at the age of 90.

Gordon was the last general manager of BR's Southern Region and managing director of its Provincial sector, which he relaunched as Regional Railways in 1991.

Born on April 12, 1934, and brought up in Hatfield by adoptive parents Charles and Annie Pettitt, Gordon's father drove local LNER trains.

On leaving St Columba's College, St Albans, aged 16, Gordon joined the nationalised railway as a junior clerk at Knebworth station. Before and after his spell of National Service with the Army in Germany, where he met his wife, he worked in operating posts in BR's King's Cross division and was chosen for management training in 1960.

He became BR's Sheffield divisional commercial manager in 1974 and regional freight sales manager in 1977. He was switched to the Western Region the following year as chief passenger manager, just as the Class 125 High Speed Train fleet was introduced.

Returning to his roots

Gordon returned to the Eastern Region in 1979 as divisional manager at Liverpool Street and was heavily involved in planning that station's redevelopment, preparing and presenting BR's argument to select committees of both Houses of Parliament.

With the creation of BR's sectors alongside the regions in 1982, Gordon was appointed as deputy director, London & South East, and deputy general manager of the Southern Region. In 1984, he was promoted to general manager.

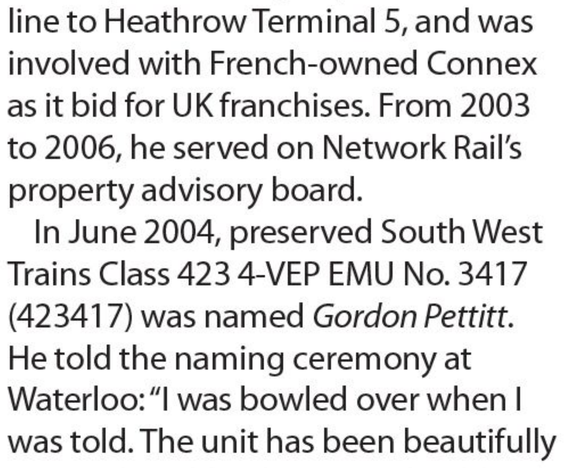
After three Southern Region trains collided near Clapham Junction in 1988, killing 35 people and seriously injuring 69, BR chairman Sir Robert Reid declined Gordon's offer of resignation.

When Gordon collected his OBE from Queen Elizabeth II in 1991, she reportedly said: "By the way, Gordon, my train was late today again."

Feeling that his views on privatisation were not being taken into account, he retired as director of Regional Railways after 42 years in the industry. He continued to work as adviser to the first rail regulator, John Swift QC, contributed to the development of High Speed 1 and the line to Heathrow Terminal 5, and was involved with French-owned Connex as it bid for UK franchises. From 2003 to 2006, he served on Network Rail's property advisory board.

In June 2004, preserved South West Trains Class 423 4-VEP EMU No. 3417 (423417) was named *Gordon Pettitt*. He told the naming ceremony at Waterloo: "I was bowled over when I was told. The unit has been beautifully restored, and for the general public it's a piece of history."

The 4-VEP (picture, Up & Running, page 91) was formally handed over by South West Trains to the Bluebell on January 17, 2009, at East Grinstead. Now in the care of the Southern Electric Traction Group and based at Strawberry Hill Depot, where the group undertook a thorough mechanical restoration, the only preserved and main line-registered EMU was brought back to Waterloo on January 27, 2024, with Gordon and his family in attendance.



Gordon Pettitt alongside 'his' Class 423 4-VEP EMU No. 3417, which was named after him. BR

It was booked the appear at the Swanage Railway's May 9-11 diesel gala and beer festival and Alstom's The Greatest Gathering event at Litchurch Lane in Derby on August 1-3.

Bluebell president

In 2014, Gordon became president of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, having played a key role in securing the heritage line's reconnection to the network at East Grinstead.

He also served as president of the Institution of Railway Operators, a governor of Middlesex Polytechnic, and a trustee of the Woking Homes and Railway Charities. He officially opened the Swanage Railway's Harman's Cross station in 1989.

A private family funeral was to be followed by a railway industry memorial. Gordon is survived by his wife, Ursula, and three daughters.

Writing in the latest edition of the in-house magazine *Bluebell Times*, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society chairman Roy Watts said: "Gordon was of immense help to this railway at a time when it desperately needed to reach the goal of running into East Grinstead.

"Not only that, as president he took a very keen interest in the operation, and in particular its people.

"Becoming custodians of 'his' train was the least we could do for all that he did for the Bluebell, and he maintained his close relationship with 4-VEP No. 3417 right through being a frequent visitor to Strawberry Hill depot and in regular communication with the SETG team. The Bluebell Railway has sadly lost its president to whom we owe a great deal – but the railway world has lost one of its giants."

Left to right are Gareth Morris (award sponsor Folly Farm marketing officer), Stephen Greig and Paul Lewin. FF&WHR

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland: best in Wales!

THE Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways has carried off the Best Attraction prize at the recent National Tourism Awards for Wales ceremony.

Hosted by Visit Wales, the event held at Venue Cymru in Llandudno celebrated the best of the tourism industry throughout the principality.

Last November, the railway was awarded the Go Attraction of the Year award at the Regional Go North Wales Tourism Awards and accordingly qualified for these national awards.

Huge honour

The event was attended by Ff&WHR general manager Paul Lewin and visitor experience manager Stephen Greig. Paul said: "Receiving this award is a huge honour and is testament to the hard work of all our staff and volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work."

Stephen added: "This is a fantastic achievement, and we are very proud that we can display both our Go Attraction of the Year and Best Attraction awards at our stations for our visitors to see. Now the challenge is to build on these achievements during the upcoming season, continuing to provide our passengers with an unforgettable experience; there's no time for complacency."

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The rear view from GWR saloon carriage No. W80974W on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. NYMR

GWR luxury on the Moorsline!

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway has announced its exclusive luxury rail charter experience for 2025, offering passengers the opportunity to hire GWR saloon carriage No. W80974W for a memorable occasion.

Whether for a personal celebration or a business gathering, the unique venue allows up to 18 guests to enjoy a scenic rail journey.

Built by Swindon Carriage Works in 1948 as Western Region Track Inspection Saloon No. W80974W, it was withdrawn in 1972 after 24 years' service.

Carrying chocolate and cream livery, it boasts two luxurious seating areas, fine furnishings and large observation windows.

New for this season, the NYMR is enhancing the experience by expanding the menu options for charter guests. In addition to the classic Signalman's Buffet, guests can now enjoy a selection of freshly prepared side dishes.

There is the option for a fully stocked bar offering a selection of wine, local beers, lagers and soft drinks. Complimentary mineral water is available throughout the journey.

To charter the saloon, including the buffet for 18 people, prices start at £1595. For more details and to book, visit www.nymr.co.uk/charters or email charters@nymr.co.uk or telephone 01751 472508.

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And Eastleigh Lakeside makes it a hat trick!

by Robin Jones

THE operators of the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway and Scarborough's North Bay Railway have added a third line to their portfolio, with the Eastleigh Lakeside Miniature Railway (ELMR) welcoming John Kerr and Peter Bryant as its new owners.

Located in Lakeside Country Park, in Eastleigh, near Southampton, the 7¼ and 10¼in gauge railway, founded in 1992 by Clive Upton, has grown into one of the UK's premier miniature lines, running for 1¼ miles including a 110-yard tunnel, two stations, a turntable and traverser, a café, a wheeldrop, and workshops.

It boasts an impressive fleet of 24 locomotives, including the famous HCS Bullock collection.

John and Peter, who have successfully operated the Cleethorpes line since 2014 and the North Bay Railway since 2021, are eager to build on Clive's legacy as new owners alongside current Eastleigh director Robert Bullock. John previously ran the now closed Kerr's Miniature Railway at Arbroath.

In a statement, the new owners, who have formed Seaside Railway Group Ltd, said: "Eastleigh Lakeside Miniature Railway is a treasured asset for both the town and the wider region.

"Clive has done a phenomenal job in creating and running this fantastic railway.

New owners of Eastleigh Lakeside Miniature Railway, Peter Bryant and John Kerr, with former owner Clive Upton. WAKE SMITH SOLICITORS LTD

"We wish Clive and his wife Doreen a long and happy retirement."

Elsewhere, Angus Council has supported the possible return of Kerr's Miniature Railway. Founded by the late Matthew Kerr in 1935, the legendary half-mile 10¼in gauge line ran alongside the Dundee to Aberdeen line in West Park. However, after years of falling passenger numbers, the miniature line closed indefinitely on October 11, 2020.

John, Matthew's grandson, has held talks with the council about renewing the lease on the Arbroath miniature line, so a future reopening is possible.

On March 11, Angus councillors agreed to support a new 20-year deal for the land at a rent of £1200 a year – provided that John reconstructs the railway at a cost of about £150,000 to replace the track, repair the tunnel and fencing, rebuild the platforms, carriage shed and turntable and reinstate its grounds. Rebuilding the line had been estimated to take between one and two years.

Welcome home, Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes No. 24!

THE Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway is to stage a special event on Saturday, May 24 to mark the homecoming of iconic 2-6-2 No. 24 following a three-year overhaul.

A replica of a 2ft gauge Baldwin engine originally built for the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad in Maine, this 15in gauge locomotive has undergone significant restoration work at John Fowler Engineering, including a boiler retube, the fitting of new driving and tender wheels, a new tender body, and a full chassis rebuild – returning it to as-new condition.

The final phase of the project saw No. 24 transported to the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway over two days in late February. Staff from CCLR, Ravenglass and John Fowler Engineering conducted successful trial runs along the seven-mile line, No. 24 hauling a rake of five carriages.

Replica Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad 2-6-2 No. 24 undergoing test running on the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway on February 28. CCLR

Following these trials, No. 24 then returned to John Fowler Engineering for a full repaint, ahead of its return to Cleethorpes alongside Kerr Stuart 0-4-2+T *Bonnie Dundee*, which will be visiting Ravenglass for its 150th year gala.

To celebrate its return to service, CCLR will host a special event, No. 24's Homecoming, appropriately on Saturday, May 24, coinciding with the railway's popular Folk & Cider Festival. Hauling its public trains since 2021, No. 24 will be joined by other members of the home fleet for double-headed services and special photographic opportunities throughout the day.

CCLR director Peter Bryant said: "No. 24 is the pride of the CCLR fleet, and we have truly missed its presence on the railway.

"John Fowler Engineering has done an outstanding job."

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Positive meetings see Severn Valley moves forward with 'One Railway' merger proposal

THE Severn Valley Railway is to proceed with its 'One Railway' radical organisational restructure announced last December, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 327.

This forward move in the line's 60th anniversary year follows a period of intensive consultation with shareholders of the train operating company, Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) Plc, and with members of the Severn Valley Railway Company Limited, the separate organisation that looks after membership and volunteers.

"We've held a series of face-to-face and online meetings for our stakeholders," said Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, the managing director of SVR (Holdings). "The feedback we got from the many people we spoke to was overwhelmingly positive. People understand why we need to change our structure – in fact, for many people it can't come soon enough!

"We have answered many detailed queries from shareholders and members about the changes, and the overall message we received about our proposal was extremely supportive."

Charitable gains

The 'One Railway' restructure will see the conversion of SVRH into a Charitable Community Benefit Society, followed by an amalgamation with the SVR Company Limited. The third member of the SVR family, the SVR Charitable Trust, is wholly supportive of the plan and the way is open for its involvement in the future, but it cannot currently participate in the process.

"Converting to a CCBS will unlock huge benefits for the SVR," said Charlie Wright, a director of the SVR Company Limited, who has been closely involved with the 'One Railway' project. "We will be able to access new funding streams and make significant cost savings as a result. It's important that we move this plan forward at the earliest opportunity to strengthen the railway's financial position in what continues to be a very uncertain economic environment."

Shareholders will vote on the conversion to a CCBS at the Annual General Meeting of SVRH in June. Then, members will vote on their organisation's amalgamation with the new entity at the SVR Company Limited's AGM in August.

'This is an ambitious timescale and there are challenges," added Gus. "We have instructed and briefed Bates Wells, the specialist law firm helping us on this project, and are working through their due diligence questions.

"We hope to be able to action the changes by the autumn, with the aim of completing these by the end of 2025."

On April 19, with the expiry of its boiler ticket, the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway said goodbye to 1906-built Hunslet 2-6-2T *Russell,* the sole-surviving locomotive of the original Welsh Highland Railway. A week earlier on April12, in addition to working several round trips on the Porthmadog to Beddgelert and Caernarfon line during the last two weekends before its withdrawal, *Russell* was the subject of a photographic evening on its home line, organised by 30742 Charters. At the end of the evening, the attractive Pen-y-Mount station provided the backdrop as the locomotive undertook a series of runpasts. MIKE HEATH

Downpatrick & County Down Railway chairman Robert Gardiner with CO3 Awards host Sarah Travers. DCDR

Two more honours for Downpatrick & County Down Railway team

IN its 40th anniversary year, the Downpatrick & County Down Railway is celebrating yet more awards success – with a double victory after its chairman Robert Gardiner and finance officer John Noble, were honoured at the CO3 (Chief Officers 3rd Sector) Awards, held at Belfast's Europa Hotel on March 27.

Robert Gardiner was named Leader of the Year in the Small Organisation category, while John Noble took home the Trustee of the Year award, recognising their dedication and exceptional contributions to the heritage railway, voluntary sector, and social enterprise sector in Northern Ireland. The ceremony, hosted by former broadcaster Sarah Travers, were part of CO3's 40th anniversary celebrations, recognising outstanding leadership within the sector.

The latest accolades follow the DCDR winning Team Of The Year at the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards on February 8, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 329, following its flood recovery team's works to reopen the 5ft 3in gauge light after the devastating floods in Downpatrick November 2023. For the same reason, it was named joint winner of the new Achievement of the Year category.

The DCLR has also been crowned Northern Ireland Social Enterprise of the Year.

John said: "The railway is a major heritage attraction in Ireland, supported by volunteers, all of whom should share in this recognition."

New trustee sought to join national heritage awards charity board

THE National Railway Heritage Awards is looking for a new trustee after Malcolm Wood decided to retire after many years' service.

Malcom will stand down after the charity's 2026 annual general meeting. His duties have involved procuring and designing the award plaques each autumn and then arranging ceremonies to unveil the plaques with the winners after they are announced in December, as last highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 327.

Fellow trustees would like to have a successor identified by the end of 2025, and Malcolm has offered to work with the new appointee throughout 2026, so they are fully aware of what is involved in the role.

Anyone interested in taking on this role is invited to contact chairman Andy Savage at andy.savage@nrha.org.uk, giving details of why you would like the role and any relevant experience you have. A briefing on the responsibilities and duties as a charity trustee will be given.

The role is voluntary, but the charity meets reasonable expenses.

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR

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Fine spectacle: J Class quartet comprising, from left, Nos. 1236, 1211, 1267 and 1275, provide a fine sight outside the Mainline Steam Heritage Trust's former base in the Auckland suburb of Parnell prior to them being relocated to a new £4.5 million museum in Mercer. Three of the 4-8-2s were built by North British in Glasgow, the exception being No. 1267, which was constructed by New Zealand Railways. MSHT

UK-built express fleet to move into new £4.5-million home

By Geoff Courtney

A £4.5 MILLION working railway museum project that is set to be the new home for a collection of British-built operational express locomotives is gathering pace in New Zealand's North Island.

The museum is being built by the Mainline Steam Heritage Trust on a 15-acre site in Mercer, 36 miles south of Auckland, the country's largest city. Its facilities will include a 70ft turntable, roundhouse, workshop, and engine and carriage sheds, and although it will not be open to the public for an estimated five years and completed by the mid-2030s, the trust expects to use it as a base for running main line railtours within about two years.

Among the trust's stable that will be central to these tours are three operational J class 4-8-2 locomotives built by North British of Glasgow for New Zealand Railways, Nos. 1211 (NBL works No. 24534) and 1236 (works No. 24559), both built in 1939, and No. 1275 (works No. 27104), which was delivered in 1951.
No. 1211 was built streamlined, but this was removed by NZR in 1948 and refitted by the trust in 1988.

Other trust-owned NBL engines are 1949-built Class 24 2-8-4 No. 3620 (works No. 26332) and 1953-built ex-South African Railways Class 25NC 4-8-4 No. 3508 (works No. 27368), but neither is currently operational and will be static exhibits in the roundhouse, as will ex-SAR Class GMAM Garratt 4-8-2+2-8-4 No. 4083, built by Beyer Peacock in 1956 (works No. 7681).

The first stage of the project involving earthworks is currently being carried out, and also the turn-out to the nearby Auckland to Wellington main line, which is an important element of the project in regard to future railtours operated by the trust on the national network.

Stuart Walker, the trust's business development manager, told *Heritage Railway* that the next stage would be the installation of the turntable and the fully-equipped workshop, and this would be followed by the construction of the roundhouse, which he described as the museum's 'showcase.' On the subject of future operations, he said there would be enough main line-certified carriages based at the museum, which when completed will be the country's largest railway museum, to make up a train of six passengers cars and a buffet car.

All but one of the NBL locomotives now owned by the trust were donated by Ian Welch, of whom Stuart said: "He was our main philanthropic benefactor, whose foresight saved them from the scrapper's torch." The exception is No. 1275, which was gifted to the trust on the death of former NZR steam era driver Les Hostick.

New home: A graphic of Mainline Steam Heritage Trust's new £4.5 million working museum in New Zealand's North Island which is due for completion in the mid-2030s. MSHT

Full steam ahead: Preserved North British-built J class 4-8-2 No. 1275 makes its presence felt during a Mainline Steam Heritage Trust railtour. MSHT

Heritage railways are urged to engage young people to survive

By Geoff Courtney

A WARNING that heritage railways are standing at a crossroads and risk fading into irrelevance if they fail to engage the younger generations has been issued by Kent & East Sussex Railway general manager Robin Coombes in a major speech.

Robin highlighted his concerns at a 'youth in heritage' conference held on March 12 at Chatham dockyard by Heritage Watch, a group that includes representatives from Kent police, Historic England, and the security and insurance sectors.

"Heritage railways are not just about nostalgia – they are living, breathing institutions that preserve skills, history and identity, but we stand at a crossroads," he told his audience.

"Our volunteer force is ageing, young people are not engaging in the same numbers as before, and the world we live in today is vastly different from the one in which these railways were first preserved.

"If we fail to engage young people, these institutions, and the stories they hold, risk fading into irrelevance, but if we succeed, heritage railways can become powerful tools, not just for preserving the past, but for educating, inspiring, and supporting the next generation."

Around the UK, he said, are more than 150 heritage railways attracting 13 million visitors a year, contributing more than £500 million annually to the economy, and involving more than 20,000 volunteers.

However, despite their immense cultural and historical value, they face such serious challenges as declining volunteer numbers, rising operating costs, and the younger generation not engaging as before.

"If we do not pass the baton to young people, these railways, despite their proud histories, will struggle to survive into the next century. And that is why youth engagement is not just important – it is essential," Robin said.

Referring to what he said had been described as 'the anxious generation,' he continued: "What young people need most, what they are missing, is exactly what we offer – real-world skills, a break from screens, and a sense of belonging.

Social and skills development

"When a young person gets their hands dirty restoring a locomotive, they are learning confidence through action, when they step onto a platform in uniform, greeting passengers and working as part of a team, they are developing social skills in a structured, supportive environment, and when they engage with older volunteers, they are gaining mentorship.

"And when they do engage, something remarkable happens. They thrive."

Robin told those gathered that he had seen young people arrive at

Left: Rallying call: KESR general manager Robin Coombes addresses his audience at a Heritage Watch 'youth in heritage' conference at Chatham dockyard. ROBIN COOMBES

Right: Vintage departure: LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' No. 2678 *Knowle* departs from Tenterden Town on Kent & East Sussex Railway on April 9 heading a set of vintage coaches with the tower of St. Mildred's church dominating the background. ROBIN COOMBES

GWR 2-8-0T No. 4247 is ready for post-overhaul gala debut at Cranmore

GWR 2-8-0T No. 4247 is planned to star in the East Somerset Railway's May 31/June 1 gala subject to the completion of its overhaul.

Entering the Cranmore workshops in January 2022, the ex-Barry locomotive passed its hydraulic test on March 17 and its out-of-frames steam test on March 28, and the boiler was returned to the frames on April 11.

On the boiler, the copper firebox laps have undergone weld repairs and had patch screws fitted, the large areas of quilting from BR days have been addressed and star cracking welded, 200 copper stays and all foundation ring rivets were renewed, and new tubes and flues fitted, as well as a new smokebox and door.

Ready to roll

New tyres have also been fitted to the driving wheels, all horn guides have been optically aligned, ground, and the axleboxes machined to suit. All bearings were overhauled and valve bores machined, and new valve rings were fitted. The bunker has received new corner pressings, as well as a new coal floor.

The livery to be carried by No. 4247 has not been seen since 1948. After extensive research, it will be outshopped in the Caerphilly Works style of 1948 of black livery, cream lettering in Mono Grotesque Standard, polished safety bonnet and shed plate NPT 76.

The gala will also see GWR prairies Nos. 4110 and 4555 and Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1719 of 1920 *Lady Nan* in action.

Once it has run in on the ESR, 1916-built No. 4247, which was previously based on the Bodmin & Wenford Railway, will, by agreement with owning group 4247 Limited, move to the Dartmouth Steam Railway where it will first undergo a gauging run and empty coaching stock trials at the start of a 20-year loan.

Long service

The four current 4247 Ltd board members have clocked up more than 150 years' service between them. Founder member Neil Powles has served 42 years (after starting the project two years before the locomotive was rescued from

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heritage railways hesitant, unsure, and even withdrawn.

"They have been told for years to be careful, that things will be done for them, that they can always 'Google it' instead of figuring out for themselves," he said. "But when they are given a real task, a real responsibility, and a real outcome they can see and touch, they transform."

Heritage railways, he explained, could offer clear roles and expectations, task-based learning, and a multi-generational environment.

"We need to rebuild pathways for young people into real-world, practical spaces where they can learn skills gain confidence, and find purpose. And heritage railways are the perfect place for this to happen."

Continue to adapt

However, he warned: "But to make that a reality, we must be proactive, not passive, because the truth is, we are not just competing against modern distractions, we are competing against a generational shift in how young people engage with the world. Heritage railways must adapt, not just to attract young people, but also to reignite their curiosity and confidence in hands-on learning."

Summing up, Robin urged heritage railways to have clear safeguarding policies for young volunteers, training for staff and senior volunteers, and mentorship programmes, and concluded: "Do we let our heritage fade away, or do we bring young people in and build something stronger? Because railways have always been about movement and about progress, innovation and connection.

"And if we work together, we can ensure they keep moving forward, driven by a new generation inspired by the past but ready for the future."

Bodiam celebrates a quarter of a century of heritage steam services

By Owen Hayward

WITH its line set to extend to Robertsbridge in the very near future, on April 5 the Kent & East Sussex Railway celebrated 25 years since it reached its current terminus at Bodiam, which is set against the background of the nearby ruins of a 14th century castle.

The KESR's previous terminal point for its services had been at Northiam, which had been opened on May 19, 1990, and remained the end of the line for a full decade.

The extension towards Bodiam was no easy task; the station was closed to passengers by BR in 1954 with freight lingering until 1961. Alhtough it had been purchased by the Tenterden Railway Company (forerunners to the KESR), the station site was overgrown and in a state of disrepair. Following years of hard graft, which included returning the small station building to its 1900s appearance, the first passenger-carrying train ran to Bodiam on April 2, 2000, worked by LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 2678 *Knowle* and a Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST – and exactly a century after the station was first opened by the Rother Valley Railway.

Bodiam once played host to thousands of families from the East End of London who would arrive by train for the summer holidays to pick Hops for the Guinness Brewery which once owned the surrounding hops gardens. Including a recreation of a typical hop-pickers hut, the station is now home to a beautiful flower, vegetable and hop garden, typical of the time, with lighting discreetly modernised but also offering exact reproductions of the original lamps.

Recreating the moment of the opening train 25 years later fell to *Knowle* and the appropriately-numbered Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 25 *Northiam* (works No. 3797 of 1953); whereas in 2000 the 'Terrier' faced Tenterden and the train was double-headed by the two locomotives, *Knowle* has since been turned and now faces Bodiam. The train was therefore worked top-and-tail, with *Northiam* being given the honours of breaking the ceremonial ribbon at 11.37am just as had been done by the 'Terrier' at the opening ceremony 25 years previously.

Bodiam station was suitably dressed up for the occasion, with interpretation boards and a specially-commissioned video running in the waiting room. Representatives from the Rother Valley Railway were also on hand to talk about the KESR extension project to meet the RVR and run trains through to Robertsbridge.

One-hour guided tours of the new station there were arranged for the day, with a shuttle bus operating between Bodiam and Robertsbridge stations; it is hoped that trains could be running along this section as soon as 2028.

*Celebrating the tiny but mighty - KESR gala feature, pages 82-83.

25 for 25: 'Austerity' No. 25 *Northiam* breaks through the ribbon during the 25th anniversary celebrations for Bodiam Station on April 5. STEPSTONE IMAGING/KESR

Left: Dignitaries cut the anniversary cake at Bodiam station; left to right are Coun Richard Thomas (chairman of Rother District Council), Coun Sue Ferguson (mayor of Tenterden), Derrick Bilsby (KESR chairman), and Norman Brice, chairman of the K&ESR Fundraising Working Party and one of the volunteers who helped to bring about Bodiam's reopening 25 years ago. STEPSTONE IMAGING/KESR

Almost ready: No. 4247 looking nearly complete after the boiler was returned to the frames at Cranmore on April 11. LEE THORP/ESR

Woodham Brothers scrapyard in April 1985), Ron Hodges 40 years (both original board members), and Martin Betts (finance director) and Ed Freeman 35 years (Chief Mechanical Engineer). After leaving Barry, No. 4247 was based at the Cholsey & Wallingford and Chinnor & Princess Risborough railways in the late 1990s for restoration but never ran there.

Following an extensive restoration, the engine returned to steam in 2001.

Track screw thieves risked derailment at Tyneside

THIEVES who raided the North Tyneside Steam Railway and stole track components could have caused a major derailment, the operating group said.

Around 1200 metal screws and keys used for securing the track were taken from around 250ft of track in the Mercy Main area while the railway was closed.

It will cost an estimated £2500 to repair the missing items and make the track safe. Volunteers worked round the clock to repair the damage so that the line could reopen for the new season on April 6.

Trustee Michael Darling told the BBC: "The main risk is that we could have suffered a serious derailment."

Security measures include daily random track patrols and CCTV have been stepped up following the thefts while occurred during March. Northumbria Police said inquiries were ongoing into the theft.

The railway opened its newest attraction, the 7¼in gauge North Tyneside Light Railway at Middle Engine Lane over the Easter weekend.

Aln Valley £255k bridge boost as appeal for new shed is launched

By Robin Jones

THE Aln Valley Railway's goal of reaching Alnmouth has taken a major step forward after Northumberland County Council agreed to remove one of the biggest obstacles.

The authority will repair and adopt Greenrigg bridge, which marks the current eastern limit of the heritage line at Greenrigg Halt, running for 1½ miles from Lionheart station at Lionheart Enterprise Park on the eastern outskirts of Alnwick.

The Aln Valley Railway Trust wants to extend its track past the buffer stops before the bridge and beneath it as part of its ultimate aim of reaching Alnmouth, relinking Alnwick by rail to services on the East Coast Main Line.

The Greenrigg bridge arch is one of two structures on the line designed by Robert Stephenson, the other being Cawledge Viaduct, the oldest masonry railway viaduct in the world. The bridge is owned by Historic Railways Estate (part of Highways England) and which up to now would not allow the passage of trains beneath it because it would impose maintenance obligations and costs onto it.

However, the county council, as the highways authority, has now agreed to adopt the bridge, which has an unclassified road running over it, and to repair the structure so it can then give consent to the railway to lay track and ultimately operate underneath.

To bring the masonry arch bridge up to adoptable standards will cost in the region of £255,000. One of the main areas of work required is to install a waterproofing concrete overslab to eliminate the current water ingress. Extensive repointing, together with masonry repair works, are also needed on the bridge arch.

The Historic Railways Estate has agreed to contribute £130,000 and the county council will provide a further £125,000.

A county council spokesman said: "This is a scheme we really wanted to support given the wider economic growth, tourism and leisure benefits the expansion will bring to the town."

As well as the current heritage rail line which departs from it, there is a cafe, a play area and a well-used walking and cycle route that runs parallel to the track.

An AVR statement said: "We are thrilled to see community and council support coming together to preserve the history of the AVR while gearing up for modern improvements. Well done to all involved in making this happen!"

Furthermore, in this, the Railway 200 year, the AVR is planning to make a further significant investment in order to support its aim of restoring the branch by building a maintenance shed.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No 1366 *Renishaw Ironworks No. 6* was bought in 2024 by Adam and Diana Stone to run on the Aln Valley Railway. Built for Appleby Ironworks at Scunthorpe, in February 1952 it was sold to the Renishaw Iron Co Ltd at Renishaw Ironworks in Derbyshire and named *Renishaw Ironworks No 6*. In 1953 it was registered by the Railway Executive in 1953 to run over BR. Bought for preservation in 1969, it was returned to steam at the Lakeside & Haverthwaite in 1972 and later based at Steamtown, Carnforth, and the Tanfield Railway.
MANDY GRANT/AVR

Fit for modern needs

The existing locomotive shed was the first permanent structure at the heritage line and in its early days was used for both locomotive maintenance and coach restoration. As the steam locomotive fleet has grown, all work on other rolling stock must currently be done outside. The new shed will enable the AVR to maintain and restore its rolling stock, including wagons, coaches, locomotives and Pacer DMUs, taking out the current dependence on favourable weather conditions, thus enabling work to be carried out throughout the year.

Its provision will allow the current shed to continue to be used to securely store AVR's steam locomotives and as an all-important indoor space for popular events, such as model railway exhibitions, Christmas and summer fairs and 1940s reenactment weekends.

The new shed will measure 54 metres long and 11 metres wide, large enough to accommodate four Mk.1 coaches on two parallel tracks, with sufficient circulation space to provide for storage, work benches and equipment.

It will be accessed by roller shutter doors at either end of the shed, and inside there will be a maintenance pit and a shallower trench to allow for easy access to the underside of vehicles. The design also allows for roof mounted solar panels to be fitted.

Sponsorship opportunities

The AVR has successfully raised £131,250 including Gift Aid towards the cost from two generous donors and has just launched an appeal to raise the £65,000 needed to complete the maintenance shed project. For larger donations, the AVR is offering the opportunity to sponsor an area of the shed: £54 will sponsor half a square metre of shed and £108 a square metre. All donors sponsoring an area of floor space will receive a certificate and have their names recorded on a commemorative plaque within the shed. Anyone sponsoring at least one square metre will be offered free tour of the facilities and the opportunity to view current projects underway at the time. To donate, visit www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk/carriage-shed-appeal/

The branch, which opened in 1850, was closed by BR in 1968. Its revival began with the formation of the Aln Valley Railway Society in 1995. On December 28, 2017, a public passenger train ran from Lionheart station along a section of the original branch for the first since the line closed.

Hunslet J94-type Austerity 0-6-0ST NCB No. 60, which was built in 1948 with the modified rounded cab to enable it to work down the narrow-bored tunnel to Lambton Drops (coal staithes) at Sunderland, is seen running round at Greenrigg Halt, with Greenrigg bridge in the background.
STEVE KNIGHT/ CREATIVE COMMONS

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- Working drain cocks
- Stainless steel motion
- Safety valves
- 3 cylinders (inside cylinder with Gresley Holcroft conjugating gear)
- Boiler feed by axle pump, injector, hand pump
- Bronze cylinders with stainless steel pistons and valves
- Sprung axle boxes with needle roller bearings
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The damage inside The Bothy, Doon Valley's mess room. DVR

Arsonists hit Doon Valley

VOLUNTEERS turning out for a maintenance day on the Doon Valley Railway on Saturday, March 29 were 'disgusted' to find that their crew room, known as The Bothy, had been entered and deliberately set on fire.

Those responsible broke panes of glass in the room's window in the latest assault by arsonists and vandals on heritage railways around the country.

Police Scotland was following a line of enquiry following the attack and the arson incident is being jointly investigated by the force's forensics officers and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Minimal damage

Thankfully, the damage was confined to the window area and the room was able to be put back into use. Its loss would have meant the line cancelling its first open day of the season on Monday, April 21.

Chairman Archie Thom said: "Our volunteers, who give their time, energy and skills to provide a real community attraction at Dunaskin, were disgusted and quite demoralised by what they found when they arrived to work.

"Thankfully, the damage was not as bad as we first thought, but the annoyance caused by this senseless act remains with us.

"You have to ask yourself why anyone wants to set fire to or damage our railway, or any heritage line – a crime which is despicable and, sadly, far too common around the country.

"We look forward to the culprits being apprehended. I would like to thank the police and fire brigade for their prompt attendance and support following the fire."

SECR O1 class 0-6-0 No. 65 in action at its Bluebell Railway home. JAMES CUMMINS

Bluebell O1 and *257 Squadron* lined up for Cotswold festival

By Robin Jones

SECR O1 class 0-6-0 No. 65 and SR Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34072 *257 Squadron* have been booked for the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's May 24-26 Cotswold Festival of Steam.

Finished in the elaborate and colourful livery of the SECR, it is believed that this is the first occasion in its history that Bluebell Railway-based No. 65 has worked lines outside the South East.

It was one of 122 Class O locomotives designed by James Stirling and built between 1878 and 1999; 58 were rebuilt by his successor, Harry Wainwright, including No. 65, and became the O1 class. Most had been withdrawn by World War Two, but two, including No. 65 (BR No. 31065), lasted until 1961. Bought by a private individual from BR, it was dismantled, eventually arriving in parts at the Bluebell, where it was returned to steam in 1999.

Meanwhile, the previously -booked West Country light Pacific 34092 *City of Wells,* owned by the East Lancashire Railway, is no longer available for the festival for maintenance reasons. However, courtesy of the Swanage Railway and owner Southern Locomotives Limited, *257 Squadron* will instead visit Toddington, also for the first time. The other guest is No. 75069, from the Severn Valley Railway, and the trio will run alongside home-based GWR 2-8-0 No. 2807, SR Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental SN Co*, GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850 and WR 4-6-0 No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall*, all subject to availability.

Comparison of eras

Event organising team chairman Tom Willson said: "No. 65 is an elegant addition to the festival, a remarkable survivor from the days when practical machines were built to look beautiful. It reflects our theme, Celebrating Railway 200, highlighting the development of steam locomotives from the Victorian era to BR days – from No. 65 built in 1896 to No. 75069 which is six decades younger!

"We are sad that *City of Wells* is not going to be with us, and we are grateful to the ELR for giving us sufficient time to organise a replacement. However, we are thrilled that a similar original Bulleid Pacific, *257 Squadron,* will be with us instead.

"This is a great opportunity to introduce youngsters to the extraordinary world of heritage railways because on the Bank Holiday Monday, May 26, up to three young people aged up to 15 can travel free with an adult paying the full entrance free. Our railway relies on about 900 volunteers and just 11 paid staff, and we hope some young people might consider this a worthwhile way to spend their future free time."

Toddington locomotive shed and the carriage and wagon department at Winchcombe will be open for public visits.

A display featuring 100 O gauge models at Winchcombe will illustrate 200 years of locomotive development, and at Toddington, full-size and miniature tractions engines will be in steam. The owners of Gotherington station building are also opening their grounds, giving an opportunity to try a pump trolley on its private siding. Refreshments will be available at all stations except Hayles Abbey Halt.

Access to stations and trains is by entrance ticket only, bookable at a discount in advance at www.gwsr.com

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Flying visit for ex-Barry Standard 4MT as fundraiser launched

UNDER-RESTORATION BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76077 is to make a flying visit to the Cotswold Festival of Steam.

Currently being rebuilt at Locomotive Services Limited at Loughborough, with the boiler under overhaul at the Devon workshop of Leaky Finders, No. 76077 – which has never run in the heritage era – will be brought to Toddington for the event and displayed in the David Page shed.

The locomotive will be presented complete with its recently completed cab, as well as its new smokebox and reverser assembly.

Progress of No. 76077 at Leaky Finders surveyed during boiler inspector visit on April 7. IAN CROWDER

Demonstrating progress

TSLL marketing director Ian Crowder said: "This is a wonderful opportunity to show the public just how advanced the restoration is. We are not too far from having a rolling chassis, and we are very grateful to Andrew Goodman, of Railway Support Services, for sponsoring the transportation of No. 76077 to Toddington and back to Loughborough again afterwards."

In addition, TSLL is launching a match-funding opportunity for both existing and new shareholders investing new money into the project. For three months from the festival weekend until August 31, every investment made will be matched by a generous anonymous benefactor. He has pledged £75,000 to match investments made, so a share application for £100 will be matched with the same amount. This offer also applies to those who pay monthly contributions by standing order.

Vital support

"We are deeply grateful for this very generous offer, as well as for the amazing support that so many people have pledged to date," said Ian.

"Potentially, this will see a further £150,000 added to the restoration effort, and it comes at a time when very large bills are being paid for the work on the boiler."

Boiler No. 1052, which was completed at Darlington in 1952, was subsequently fitted to No. 76012 in 1958 before being fitted to No. 76077 at Eastleigh in 1964.

The overhaul of the boiler has progressed rapidly since it arrived at Leaky Finders in November. Already the front tube plate has been removed, the front barrel section has had all of its rivets burnt out ready for removal, and the new tube plate and barrel have been made ready for refitting.

During non-destructive testing (NDT), it was discovered that the boiler steel had been manufactured with several non-metallic inclusions which formed laminations, and it has been necessary to remove both sides and most of the throat plate to enable new steel to be installed. In the process, most of the stays have been sacrificed.

Do it once, do it right

"This was deeply disappointing," added Ian. "However, it has built longevity into the boiler and will hopefully require little work after its first 10 years in operation.

"The additional repairs have added significantly to the cost of the boiler overhaul (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 330) and much of the money raised through match-funding will be directed to the boiler."

Ian said that while the aspiration was to see the engine steamed for its 70th birthday in December next year, this goal is likely to slip into 2027. "We owe it to our shareholders who have supported this project so well to get their locomotive running as soon as possible, but to the highest possible standards."

After the festival, No. 76077 will stay on for a special evening on June 6 for existing and potential shareholders. For more information and an invitation, email info@standard76077.com

New Severn Beach line faces delay due to planning mix-up

By Robin Jones

THE opening of the new Severn Beach Miniature Railway has been delayed until July following a planning mix-up.

Work on rebuilding the line – active in various forms at the 'lost' coastal resort of Severn Beach from 1936 to 1976 – with the aim of having services running by Easter, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 326, was paused after it was discovered that an application for planning permission was required.

Last October, Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council agreed to take on a lease of Promenade Gardens from South Gloucestershire Council and at the same meeting approved the principle of a sub-lease for the site to allow the miniature railway project to go ahead, subject to necessary approvals. It was assumed that as a railway had run on the site before, there were permitted development rights.

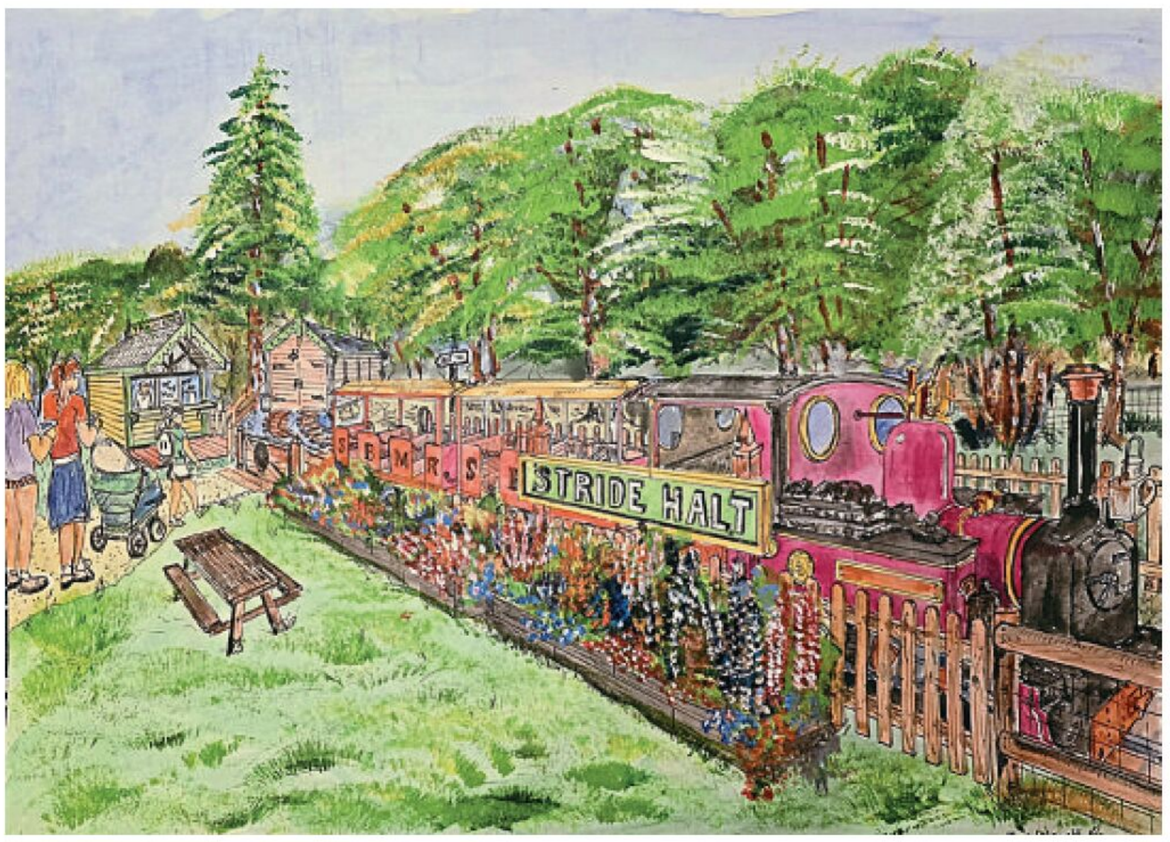
The new Severn Beach Miniature Railway merchandise. JOE NEMETH

However, with the lease between the two councils still being finalised, the parish did not have management control over the land, so a planning application to the South Gloucestershire authority was required before any further development can proceed. Substantial progress has already been made, with off-site work including rolling stock restoration.

The railway engaged the services of a planning consultant to tackle the unforeseen difficulty. At its meeting on April 7, the parish council voted overwhelmingly to submit the planning application for the gardens and railway.

Local resident and railwayana dealer Joe Nemeth, of Joe Nemeth Engineering Ltd, thanked both councils for their handling of the issue. Provided that the green light is given to planning consent in the coming weeks, it is intended that the first phase of the railway will open for the SevernFest 25 live music and crafts event in the gardens on July 12 from 1pm to 10pm.

In the meantime, the railway will be attending the Castle Coombe Steam Rally on May 17/18 and will lay 250ft of track to give rides on both days. The railway has also produced its first merchandise in the form of souvenir mugs, which cost £10 each including postage and packing, with proceeds being used to support the project.



A painting by miniature railway revivalist Joe Nemeth of the proposed Severn Beach Miniature Railway's northern station, Stride Halt.

New volunteers are being invited to join the 21 who are currently involved with the project to date.

Vacancies are available in garden maintenance and grass cutting, trackwork, station duties with tickets and customers, train guards, and locomotive staff from cleaning, preparation of locomotives to driving. Where necessary, full training will be given.

A £6000 appeal to help build the 440-yard railway has so far raised £4250.

The railway has also appealed to solar panel companies which would like to donate a small solar panel array for its locomotive and engine shed, as there is no electricity on site.

Details are at www.severnbeachminiaturerailway.co.uk and on the railway's Facebook page.

Coronation Street star unveils war memorial to public view at Bury

By Robin Jones

A MEMORIAL plaque honouring 117 men who died during the First World War has been unveiled after being permanently moved to Bury Transport Museum, which is operated by the East Lancashire Railway.

The memorial, originally installed at Newton Heath depot shortly after the war ended, pays respect to the employees from the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway carriage and wagon depot. It was unveiled at a special ceremony on Sunday, April 6, attended by civic dignitaries and other invited guests including Coronation Street actor Anthony Cotton MBE.

When the original building in which it was housed closed in 1928, the plaque was moved to Newton Heath Town Hall. However, it was again dismantled when the building closed down and was not rediscovered until the 1990s when a BR employee found it in the undercroft of Manchester Piccadilly station.

With its historical significance recognised, the memorial was put into safe storage for 20 years before being uncovered by ELR members, rededicated, and unveiled at Newton Heath TrainCare Centre in 2019.

Its latest move came about both because of major roof repairs to the centre and a public wish to greater access to it. At the centre, visits to the memorial were possible only via prior arrangement, but the ELR and Northern Trains have announced a new partnership giving permanent viewing access.

Museum chairman Keith Whitmore said: "This is one of the most stunning exhibits that we have ever had in the museum. It is going to be popular for new visitors and in particular for relatives of the fallen, who will be able to see family names on the plaque."

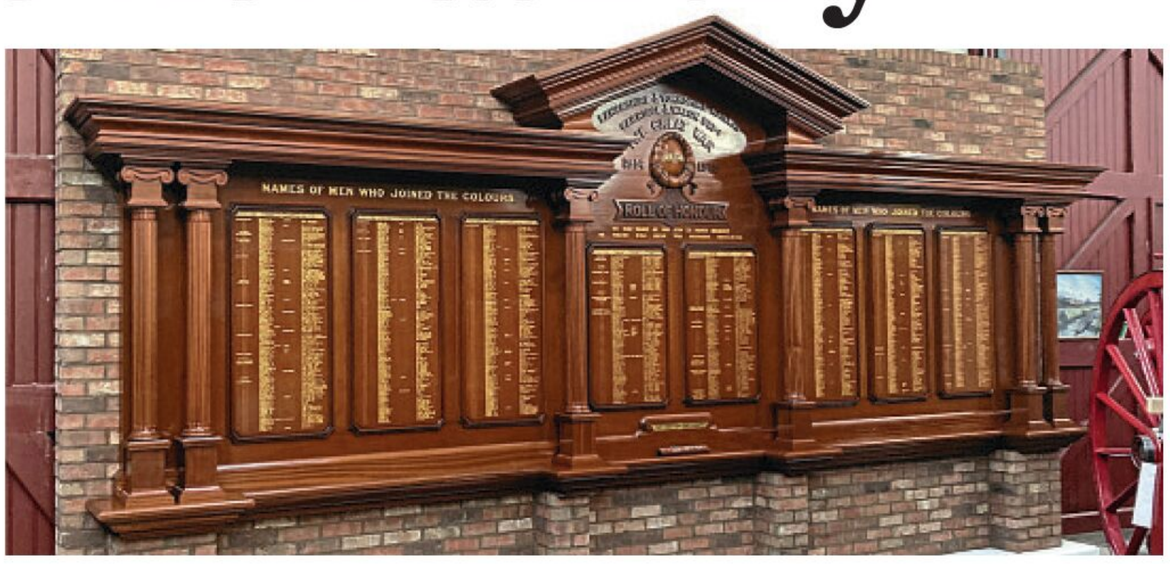
Northern Trains managing director Tricia Williams said: "The memorial is very special to all of us at Northern and has been the focus of our local Remembrance Day commemorations to honour railway workers who gave their lives during the First World War.

"We are delighted that members of the public will now have greater access to view to the memorial and are grateful to the team at ELR for providing a fitting home at Bury Transport Museum."

She and Mr Whitmore gave speeches at the ceremony alongside Tom Power (performance improvement manager, engineering Newton Heath TCC), Cliff Ravenscroft (senior production manager – non-rolling stock, Northern Trains), Neville Dyson (Newton Heath TCC manager), Andy Savage MBE (chairman of the Railway Heritage Trust) and actor Antony Cotton, who is an ambassador of the Armed Forces charity the Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association (SAAFA) and president of the Royal British Legion St James' Branch.

A drumming routine was performed by the Fusilier's drumming band; member Ethan Dalley conducted a solo drum roll as Tricia and Antony, who plays Sean Tully in Coronation Street, cut the ribbon.

The museum is open 10am to 4pm whenever public services are running on the ELR.



The First World War memorial plaque now permanently on display. ELR

Guests at the unveiling the plaque at the museum on April 6 included (from left) Rob Brown, of Northern Rail, actor Antony Cotton, Khalid Hussain, the Mayor of Bury, Northern Trains managing director Tricia Williams and Neville Dyson, Newton Heath TCC manager.

Comfier carriages are offering softer rides for Strathaven passengers

By Hugh Dougherty

PASSENGERS on the 7¼in gauge Strathaven Miniature Railway are enjoying a comfier ride this season thanks to six new carriages receiving cushioned seats, replacing the hard wood of the 35-year-old rolling stock.

The carriages were bought during the line's winter closed season and fitted out with air brakes by society volunteers as an upgrade for the railway, the oldest continually-operating miniature railway in the UK, which marked its 75th year in action last May.

Built by Abbots Model Engineering of Telford, the coaches were fitted with air tanks and brake gear, compatible with the line's locomotives steam, diesel and battery-electric, at Strathaven in time for the new season starting on Mother's Day, Sunday, March 30.

Company secretary Ian Samsom said: "We saved up the £11,000 purchase price over the last three years and our volunteers provided an estimated £1800 of free skilled labour, fitting them out in our own workshop to our specification.

"The older carriages had run thousands of miles in service and carried about 450,000 passengers, roughly 13,000 per year for 35 years.

"They were using up time and resources by needing extra maintenance to keep them going and needed replacing. The new ones are slightly lighter and run more freely, with sealed bearings on each wheelset.

"We tried them out on the public on our Mother's Day specials and had very positive feedback. Passengers of all ages loved the smoother running the extra comfort of the padded seats! It's been a great investment for our future."

Strathaven Miniature Railway is open every Saturday and Sunday and can be found in Strathaven Park, Strathaven, South Lanarkshire.

Further information is available online at www.strathavenminiaturerailway.org

Battery-electric locomotive *Neptune* poses with three of the six new coaches before entering service on the Strathaven Miniature Railway Mother's Day specials. SMR

The old carriages with wooden seats steam off into honourable retirement after 35 years in service behind the line's original steam locomotive, 2-6-0 *Margaret*. HUGH DOUGHERTY

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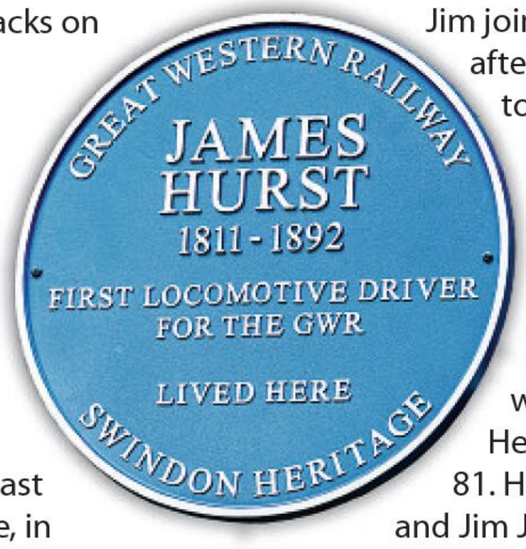
Swindon blue plaque honours first GWR shunter

by Robin Jones

A BLUE plaque honouring the first locomotive driver has been unveiled by Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander as part of the 200th anniversary celebrations of the modern railway.

James 'Jim' Hurst, who worked closely with railway pioneers George Stephenson, Daniel Gooch and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was appointed as the first shunter for the GWR, taking to the tracks on December 28, 1837.

His plaque was unveiled by Heidi Alexander, the MP for Swindon South, in a ceremony hosted by the modern-day GWR. The commemorative inscription sits above the front door of the last place Jim called home, in Taunton Street, Swindon, located in the heart of the Railway Village.



Esteemed career

Born in Lancashire in 1811, Jim began his life in the railway at the age of 14 when he assisted engineer and 'Father of the Railways' George Stephenson in surveying the land that would become the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. Stephenson then employed him at an engine house in Salford as a fireman in 1832, which was followed two years later by a promotion to engine driver.

It was while driving locomotives to the Vulcan foundry of Charles Tayleur & Co in Lancashire that Hurst met and became friends with Daniel Gooch, a young apprentice. Gooch went on to be appointed as the first locomotive superintendent of the GWR by its chief engineer,

Isambard Kingdom Brunel, with Jim joining his friend soon afterwards, relocating to Paddington.

Jim's 38 years of service for GWR eventually brought him to Swindon, where he lived out his days with his wife of 61 years, Ann. He died in 1892 aged 81. His two sons, Edward and Jim Junior, followed in his footsteps, both working for the GWR at Swindon Works and having lifelong careers in the railway. Ultimately, five generations of the Hurst family worked for GWR, totalling more than 1000 years of service between them.

Ms Alexander said: "I am thrilled to unveil James Hurst's blue plaque which not only honours one of the lesser-known pioneers of the railway,

James Hurst. GWR

Inset left: The blue plaque honouring Jim Hurst. GWR **GWR managing director Mark Hopwood, the leader of Swindon Borough Council, Coun Jim Robbins, Heidi Alexander MP, Brunel Institute director Tim Bryan and Bogdan Lupu, Network Rail industry programme director.** GWR

but also celebrates the part that Swindon and its community played in the founding of the railway 200 years ago.

Forgotten contributions

"While names such as Brunel, Stephenson and Gooch are synonymous with the history of the railway, there are many other individuals whose contributions during the past two centuries have played a significant part in making the railway what it is today. James Hurst – a northern lad who became a proud Swindonian – was one of them."

GWR managing director Mark Hopwood said: "All journeys have a first step, and his first ones as a locomotive driver paved the way for thousands of colleagues, spanning three centuries, to make GWR one of the frontrunners of the modern rail industry."

Swindon Borough Council leader Coun Jim Robbins said: "GWR is at the centre of Swindon's heritage, and I can't think of a better way to celebrate that historical significance than with a plaque dedicated to a Swindonian who was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution.

"James Hurst was committed to his work, but also to the community of Swindon. While much of Swindon has changed, Jim's home stands here relatively untouched by time."

Fife facilities expansion given the green light

THE Fife Heritage Railway (FHR) has been granted permission to expand its visitor facilities at Kirkland Yard, Leven.

Fife Council has approved planning permission for the heritage line – which at its Burnmill Road site operates, maintains and restores items previously housed on the former Lochty Private Railway – to reuse one of three temporary construction buildings left behind by Network Rail after the completion of work on the Levenmouth Rail Link.

Levenmouth Area Committee councillors agreed to allocate up to £80,000 from the Community Recovery Fund towards buying the temporary units.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 329, the FHR aims to use the largest building for a reception, cafe, bookshop, museum display area, a model railway exhibition, research and reading space, toilets and staff spaces.

The other buildings will be used by the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust as staff welfare facilities and the Community Trade Hub for its STEM mechanics unit.

"The proposal seeks to make a positive contribution to its immediate environment and provide additional facilities and allow growth of this existing popular visitor attraction," a planning statement said.

Crich temporarily withdraws newly-restored tram following electrical safety concerns

CRICH Tramway Village has halted the commissioning of newly-restored London County Council tram No. 1 'Bluebird' for safety reasons.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 324, 1932-built No. 1 was officially launched on September 13 following the conclusion of a £500,000 restoration project that lasted 10 years.

A statement from the National Tramway Museum said: "As a living heritage attraction, the NTM always prioritises the safety of visitors, staff and volunteers who work here or come to visit us.

"Maintaining these standards involves tramcar commissioning at the start of every season and the monitoring and checking of the state of all our operational fleet at regular intervals throughout the year.

"It was during the commissioning of LCC1 that our team discovered unusual electrical readings from the motors which had not been seen in previous tests. As safety is our number-one priority, the team made the difficult decision to halt commissioning the tram in order to investigate the issue further.

"The engineering work will involve the complex task of removing the motors to allow further testing by our specialists to establish the root cause.

"We are already finding room in the workshop to do this as soon as possible.

"We look to establish the best way forwards and how we plan to get this iconic and unique engineering masterpiece back into service.

"While this is a setback for those who have been involved in this restoration for many years and for everyone who wants to see LCC1 running again, the Tramway Museum will continue to offer our usual service with our other popular trams and welcome everyone along for a great day out."

London County Council No. 1 near Bowes-Lyon bridge at Crich Tramway Village on September 13. NTM

Vale of Berkeley breakthrough!

By Robin Jones

THE Vale of Berkeley Railway Charitable Trust has passed a critical milestone in its aim to run passenger services over the Sharpness branch – after the Office of Rail and Road granted a Mainline Licence Exemption to operate trains at its rapidly developing Oldminster Sidings heritage centre.

The old freight exchange sidings near the docks, abandoned by BR in the 1990s and now cleared of decades of vegetation by trust volunteers, will, with relaid track and purpose-built workshop/rolling stock storage facilities, be the operational base from where the first VoBR trains will run.

VoBR chairman Howard Parker said: "The ORR approval means that in the eyes of this government body, we are now officially a railway. It's the breakthrough we've been working towards, and also the start of many challenges. This includes completing our infrastructure and ensuring that our operational volunteers have all the training needed to ensure they are safe and competent drivers, firemen, guards and shunters.

"The ORR commented that our safety management system was particularly impressive for an embryonic heritage railway. This is a tribute to the outstanding work of our volunteer Phil Macnamara, who sadly died before he could see this day arrive."

"We now need to build a new workshop to restore, maintain and shelter our locomotives and rolling stock. This requires a massive fundraising push, and we ask everyone who wants to see trains running again at Sharpness to donate via our website, www.vobr.org.uk

"Our ongoing construction work means we are not yet open to the public, but you can follow progress on our website, where you will also find links to our social media channels."

Built by the Midland Railway, the four-mile line from Berkeley Road station via Berkeley to Sharpness opened for goods traffic in 1875 and to passengers on August 1, 1876.

Passenger services were withdrawn in November 1964, but the line remained open for freight traffic to and from Sharpness Docks.

The first attempt to reopen the branch as a heritage line was made by Sharpness Berkeley Railway Ltd, which was formed in 2011 and intended on using rolling stock from the Stratford on Avon & Broadway Railway. It planned to use the trading names Berkeley Vale Railway and The Beaver Line.

March 2011 saw site clearance at Sharpness carried out by members of the Proactive Vision community group, which had obtained a lease of part of the line from Network Rail, and tracklaying began in January 2012. However, Sharpness Berkeley Railway Ltd was dissolved on June 12, 2012.

Above: Vale of Berkeley Railway rolling stock being prepared for operating trains. VOBR

Right: Trackwork is being refurbished to operating standards. VOBR

On August 24, 2015, a new group, now known as the Vale of Berkeley Railway Trust, announced its intention to restore the branch as a heritage line and secured a lease on the former diesel shed at Sharpness Docks with the nearby Canal & River Trust. It restored the shed to enable it carry out restorations of its rolling stock and now has a fully functional machine shop, where it undertakes work for the railway project and external contract work for companies such as Bombardier.

All shipshape as maritime museum with rail links is handed over

DAVID Mann, retiring director of the Scottish Maritime Museum, who has been at the helm for the last 13 years, has handed over the wheel to his successor, Matthew Bellhouse Moran. Matthew was formerly senior curator at the museum's Irvine and Dumbarton bases, before moving to the Unicorn Trust in Dundee as museum director of the project to restore 1824-built *HMS Unicorn,* the third oldest-surviving ship in the world.

David, 62, said: "I am delighted to be passing the museum on to Matthew and he plans to continue our work of developing the museum by making it relevant to the whole community by telling the human stories behind our extensive collection. That's something all industrial, maritime and railway museums, including heritage railways, must do increasingly as the generations that saved the artefacts in the first instance pass on and as the number of people who actually worked on and operated steam ships and steam trains, for example, become fewer and fewer.

"We are fortunate in attracting some younger volunteers who are learning skills from older volunteers, and the whole movement needs much more of this approach if it is to survive and flourish in the future."

Salford native Matthew, 33, a graduate of St Andrew's University in ancient history, from where he also holds a post-graduate museum management qualification, said: "I am delighted to return to the Scottish Maritime Museum and plan to develop it further. That includes our maritime art gallery, for which £1.5 million has been set aside as part of the £9 million Harbourside development project, funded by the Scottish Government and North Ayrshire Council. We have developed our art collection as a new way of attracting visitors and telling the stories behind our artefacts.

"Part of that is our unique collection of British Railways Clyde and other Scottish steamer posters, the originals of which are displayed in our boardroom, with high-quality replicas on public show. They always attract great attention from visitors and spark memories of the Clyde railway steamers and the trains that connected with them.

"Our Dumbarton base is home to the Denny test tank, in which models of the hulls of ships were tested before they were built in full-size by Willian Denny, and these included many Clyde railway steamers, as well as BR car ferries. They included the ill-fated *TS Princess Victoria,* sunk in January 1953 by the great gale of that year while en route from Stranraer to Larne, so we do have stories to tell.

"We are very conscious of the rich heritage connecting railways and ships, and of celebrating that at our museum, and we plan to continue to do so."

Departing director David Mann (left) and his successor Matthew Bellhouse Moran with the museum's poster of the *TS Caledonian Princess*, built for British Railway by Denny of Dumbarton in 1961 for the Stranraer-Larne route. HUGH DOUGHERTY

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Help Threlkeld equip its new museum building

THE Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum has launched a £130,000 appeal to fund the second phase of its new museum building project.

Contractor William King Construction Ltd has nearly completed the works on the first stage of the project, getting the building to the stage where it is a wind and weather-tight shell. Outstanding works include fitting external doors and the porch roof.

The first phase has been supported by Cumberland Council, Cumbria Waste Environment Trust, and the UK Mining Conference in Cornwall. The second stage will comprise the internal fit-out of the building with heating, lighting and plumbing, which has been estimated to cost about £130,000. So far, £25,000 has been secured from the Waste Management Environment Trust and £2500 from Hadfield Trust. A further £5000 has recently been awarded by The Headley Trust, one of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts.

Applications have been submitted for additional funding to the Stobart Sustainability Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund.

A further round of 'levelling up' funding is expected, and an application will be made in due course.

Subject to funding, it is anticipated that the next stage of work will begin in August. This is expected to be complete by Christmas, allowing time for the installation of exhibits and refreshed interpretation, with a proposed opening date of April 2026.

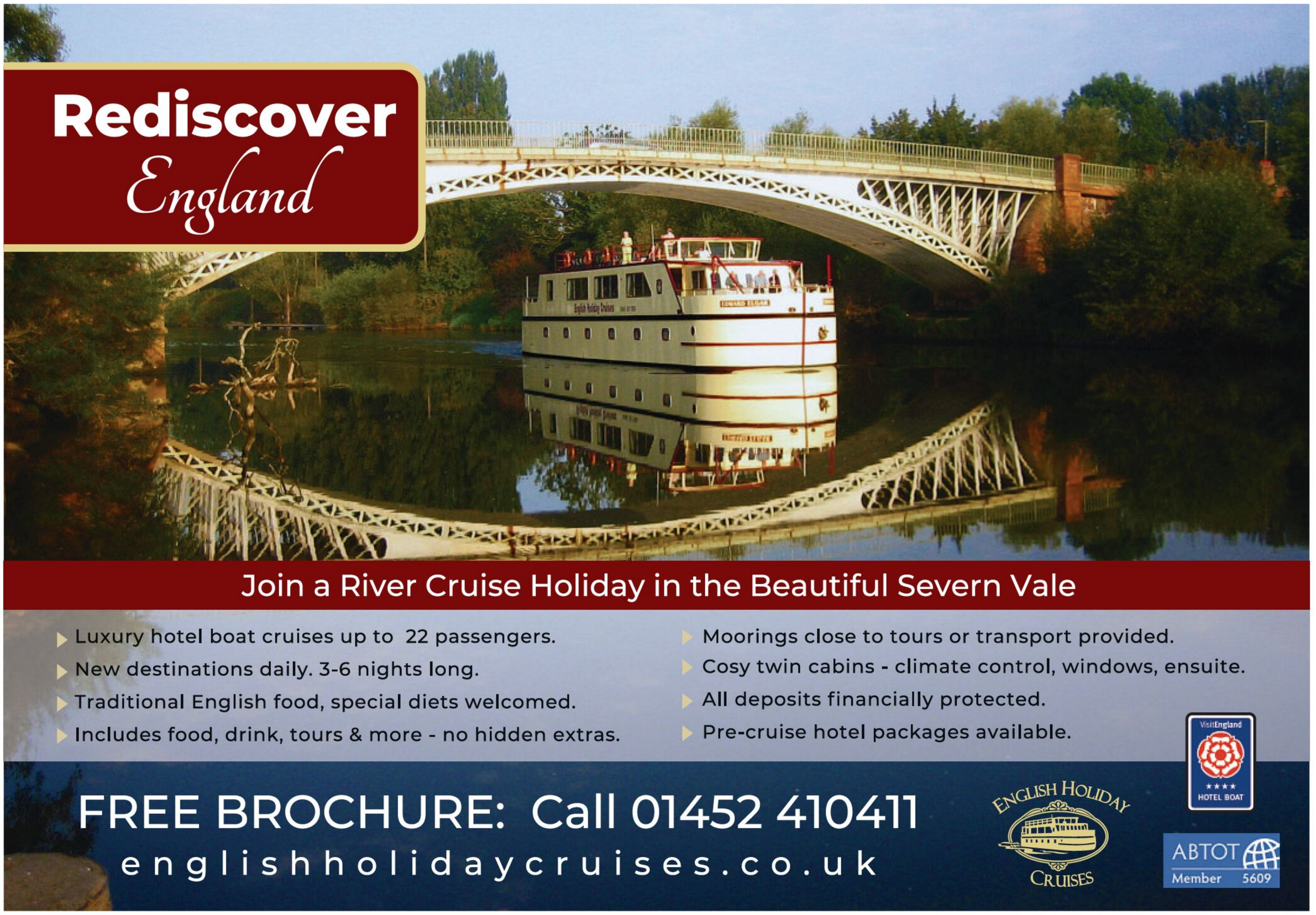
Donations to the project are invited at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/preserving-lakelands-industrial-heritage-1 or by sending a cheque made payable to 'Threlkeld Quarry Museum' to: Threlkeld Quarry Museum, Threlkeld Quarry, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4TT.

Meanwhile, the venue's Ruston 48DL 4wDM No. 242918 of 1947 has receieved some gearbox repairs. Stored since 2019, it is scheduled ed to re-enter service shortly with a refreshed livery of light Brunswick green.

Marking Railway 200, the museum will be having a 'home grown'-style gala on the Bank Holiday Monday, May 26 to mark 15 years of passenger-carrying operations on the 2ft gauge, with all available locomotives in service. The annual steam gala will take place on July 26/27.

Threlkeld Quarry and Mining Museum's 1947-built Ruston 48DL out on a test run. TQMM

The first phase of the new museum building nearly completed. TQMM



Above: Middleton Railway volunteers who were operating Brush/Beyer Peacock D2999 *Alf*, the only diesel-electric at the line, during the Community Day.

Right: Inside the Middleton Railway museum hall, where the community representatives set up their stands.

Heart and soul of the community!

Words and pictures by Sally Clifford

THE Middleton Railway launched its steam season with its annual Community Day – and community spirit was certainly in abundance at the Moor Road site in Hunslet, Leeds, with representatives from the emergency services, including the police and fire service, and local groups profiling their organisations.

Friends of Middleton Park, Middleton Life History Group, Experience Community, Hunslet Rugby League Football Club and their mascot 'Kingy the Lion), Middleton Skaters Group, South Leeds Lakers Running Club, MHA Communities South Leeds, Holbeck Together, Hunslet Rainbow/Brownies Unit, Middleton Elderly Aid, Middleton Park Ranger, The Hunslet Club and Leeds Transport Historical Society were among the many groups attending the popular annual event which has been successfully running for more than a decade.

On song: Leeds People's Choir, which performed a song about the Middleton Railway at the annual Community Day.

Locomotive attractions: Left to right are LMS 0-6-0DM No. 7051 of 1932 *John Alcock*, Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1601 of 1903 *Matthew Murray* and Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1329 of 1921 Manchester Ship Canal No. 67.

Special guest the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Coun Abigail Marshall Katung, was accompanied by Middleton Railway vice-president Ian Smith as she visited the stalls of the participants and the emergency services.

Alf's starring role

She met representatives from the local groups and then embarked on a train ride to Middleton Park in the rake of carriages designed and built by Middleton Railway volunteers and pulled by Brush/Beyer Peacock 0-4-0DE D2999. Built in Gorton by Beyer-Peacock in 1958, it is affectionately known as *Alf* because the name 'Fat Alf' was found painted on it when it first arrived at the railway.

It was the first Brush-Beyer-Peacock locomotive to be constructed and was the first Brush designed diesel-electric not to be built by Bagnalls of Stafford.

During the winter of 2002/3, it was repainted intro BR Brunswick green and numbered D2999, that of its long-scrapped sister which had worked at BR's Stratford Depot.

The Lord Mayor also watched performances by the Leeds Peoples' Choir, including a specially-written song for Middleton Railway that charted some of the history of what is the world's oldest continuously running railway since its inception in 1758.

Choir co-chairman Rachel Proudfoot said that the song was created during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and premiered at the Street Choirs Festival in 2023.

"It has been lovely working with the volunteers at the railway and it has been brilliant bringing the choir to look at the museum. When we did the video, we got a ride on the train," said Rachel, referring to choir's previous visit in July. "It's nice to make a community connection with the railway."

Middleton chairman Charles Milner said that the Community Day was designed to give the emergency services and local organisations the opportunity to connect in an informal setting, enabling them to explain to the public what they offer the locality and hopefully encourage some visitors to join them.

"It is a friendly way of launching the new season on the railway and helps strengthen the bonds between the railway and the community it has served since 1758," he added.

Raising awareness

Free travel is offered for this special day to encourage visitors to meet the organisations taking part in the event.

"Community Day is about raising awareness for the groups who participate, but it is also a way of raising the railway's profile, getting more people to know about us, and getting to see what we offer," said Charles.

Ian added: "The whole day was extremely successful. What we set out to do is to involve community groups The whole point of what we are trying to say to people is this railway is part of the community."

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Swanage opening horn will sound again 140 years on

By Robin Jones

A BRASS horn reputed to have been blown to mark the departure of the first passenger train from Swanage to Wareham in May 1885 is to be sounded again in a 140th anniversary ceremony at Swanage station in the year of Rail 200.

The public is being invited to attend the special event – dressing in Victorian costume if they wish – on Saturday, May 17, from 1pm.

Just as their predecessors did in May 1885, members of the Swanage Town Band will play on the platform to welcome dignitaries and other guests, including the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Michael Dooley, King Charles's representative in the county, the Mayor of Swanage, Coun Tina Foster, and Swanage Railway Trust patron Sir Philip Williams.

Fanfare

After speeches from Swanage Railway Trust chairman Frank Roberts and dignitaries, the horn will be blown to mark the departure at 2pm of an anniversary steam train bound for Herston Halt, Harman's Cross, Corfe Castle and Norden.

With the dignitaries and other guests riding in the line's 1940s 'Devon Belle' Pullman observation carriage, the special will be hauled by 1893-built T3 4-4-0 No. 563, which is a type that ran from London to Swanage from the 1890s to the 1930s.

Public admission to the ceremony at Swanage station is free, but those wishing to travel on the special will need to buy tickets.

Swanage Railway volunteers attending the ceremony – as well as those on duty on day – will be presented with a commemorative badge designed by Swanage Railway Trust director and volunteer Clive Hardy, who is organising the event.

An area transformed

Clive said: "In 1885, the new 25-minute train journey from Swanage to Wareham cost 11 pence, compared with a traditional horse and carriage journey taking one-and-a-half hours at a ticket price of two shillings and sixpence.

"The opening of the Swanage branch line was historic and a seismic change for the Isle of Purbeck, turning Swanage from a fishing and quarrying town into a popular seaside resort and the picturesque village of Corfe Castle into a desirable day-trip destination."

Frank said: "The blowing of the LSWR brass horn 140 years after it was sounded at Swanage station to mark the departure of that first passenger train in 1885 will have great historical resonance and be a stirring link with the past."

Gavin Johns, the chairman of Swanage Railway Company, added: "It is important to mark the 140th anniversary of the Swanage Railway's opening because the branch line nearly disappeared forever after BR ran the last train from Wareham to Corfe Castle and Swanage in 1972 and lifted most of the tracks."

In 2010, the horn was donated to the trust's museum, which is located in the restored goods shed at Corfe Castle.

Swanage Railway Trust director Clive Harby with the brass horn. ANDREW PM WRIGHT

Just what the Doc ordered: Danish State Railways Frichs-built 0-6-0T No. 656, previously unofficially known as 'Tinkerbell,' was formally named *DOC* in a ceremony at Wansford on its Nene Valley Railway home at noon on April 6. The locomotive's first official name are the initials of long-serving NVR engineering department volunteer Dave O'Connell, who led the overhaul of No. 656 during a 20-year period and is pictured here unveiling the new nameplates. HAYDEN SHEPPARD.

Bring your own locos to the Millerback June gala event!

A UNIQUE 'bring your own' gala is to take place in Lakeland on the weekend of June 28/29.

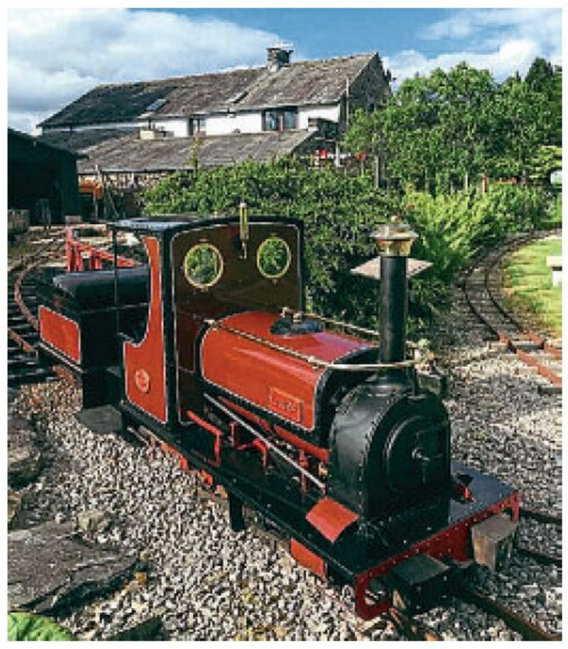
The privately owned mile-long 7¼in gauge Millerbeck Light Railway, in the grounds of Millerbeck House at Staveley-in-Cartmel, Ulverston, a quarter of a mile south of Lake Windermere, is rarely open to the public and often called 'Lakeland's Best Kept Secret.'

It is holding the special event to mark its 40th anniversary, and members of the public are being invited to bring along their own locomotives to take part.

The Saturday will be devoted to private running, while there will be public trains on the Sunday.

Spaces for visiting locomotives are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. For more details, or to visit without bringing a locomotive, contact info@millerbeck.org.uk or 01539 530113, and for details of other public open days, visit www.millerbeck.org.uk

The railway is also looking for new volunteers for running trains, trackwork, gardening, or general maintenance, on Sundays and also on open days and at events.



Hunslet-style 0-4-0T *Laura* running on the Millerbeck Light Railway. MLR

Open day announced for Royal saloon project in Cornish gardens

AWARD-WINNING Cornish company Railholiday will be opening its doors alongside St Germans main line station to visitors on Sunday, June 8, between noon and 6pm as part of a community open gardens event.

It will present a rare opportunity to look at the restoration of a GWR royal saloon built for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee train in 1897. Visitors will also be able to look around a GWR brake third coach adapted as accessible holiday accommodation and enjoy the private garden that occupies the site of the old station cattle yard. Admission to the event costs £5, which includes eight other village gardens.

Renovation of the interior of the GWR royal saloon underway. RAILHOLIDAY

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An extremely rare view of Manors Nos. 7802 and 7812 crossing Victoria Bridge at walking pace, where weight restrictions over the structure prevent normal speed double-heading by tender locomotives. COURTNEY FORDER

DOUBLE SPRING SUCCESS FOR SEVERN VALLEY

Two visiting Brunswick green LMS Jubilees and rare double-heading by home-based GWR Manors, plus the long-awaited appearance of new-build No. 6880 *Betton Grange,* were among the star attractions at the Severn Valley Railway's April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala, as **John Titlow** reports in words and pictures..

Just because an embankment collapses and one of your main terminus stations, shed, and workshop facilities are isolated from the rest of the line, and all your locomotives are stranded on the wrong side of the embankment slip, does not have to mean the cancellation of a major gala.

Undeterred and undefeated in the wake of the January 29 landslip at Mor Brook, the Severn Valley Railway's gala squad sprang into action to produce a completely revised timetable to operate within the open section of the railway between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade.

With Bridgnorth and its servicing facilities out of reach, additional coal had to be delivered to Kidderminster. Capacity here is normally about 40 tons, but this was extended to 70 tons, with three large deliveries arriving the week beforehand.

Yes, it is unusual for an SVR gala to have no Bridgnorth departures, and photographically no Eardington Bank or Oldbury Viaduct.

Leading up to the gala, the recent high pressure, which gave us about two weeks of dry and sunny spring weather at the beginning of the month, started to cause problems because the lineside was tinder-dry, and at the time locomotives were being worked gently to avoid fires. A red warning had been in place down the valley, with welcome rainfall days before the gala helping to dampen lineside vegetation, though not enough to stop fires completely.

Six locomotives, plus the line's DMU, were in use throughout the gala staged between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade. The Erlestoke Manor Fund had recently restored GWR 4-6-0 No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* to working order, and sister No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* joined the festivities too.

The week before the gala, No. 7802 underwent extensive testing, starting with light engine runs on April 3. Loaded test runs then followed on April 7, the WR 4-6-0 hauling five Great Western coaches; three returns from Kidderminster to Hampton Loade were timed, but the last run was cancelled due to lineside fires.

The following day's test runs were cancelled, and a modified spark arrester was fitted,

***Betton Grange* observes the arrival of *Galatea* (masquerading as *Sierra Leone*) at Arley. The gala marked the first time this Jubilee has run on the SVR; it having been stored as a source of spares for another of the class between 1987 and 1994. The Grange also has an SVR connection, as the driving wheels are a spare set from resident GWR Mogul No. 7325.** KENNY FELSTEAD

On April 20, No. 45596 drifts towards Bewdley with the Great Western rake. ADAM ASHFORD

Rare double-headed 4-6-0s on the Severn Valley: GWR No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* pilots sister No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* away from Bewdley South Viaduct on April 21.

clearing the way for further runs the day after. Four return trips to Highley were completed successfully on April 9, with the locomotive running well, and yet it did look austere without its name and numberplates.

Stalwart *Erlestoke Manor* returned from its visit to the Gwili Railway in late March in time for the gala and has since arrived at the West Somerset Railway for a long-term loan.

Visiting for the first time, new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* finally made it onto SVR metals after arriving at Kidderminster by road on April 15. Its tender came on a separate lorry and was reconnected with the locomotive the following day. After being coaled and watered, a warming fire was lit in preparation for its steam test before moving to Bewdley on April 17. The Grange also worked ordinary service trains in the week following the gala.

The other perfect pairing was the two Brunswick green LMS Jubilee 4-6-0s, Nos. 45699 *Galatea* (masquerading as 45627 *Sierra Leone*) and 45699 *Bahamas*, both arriving via the main line connection.

Due to fire risk, No. 45627 was towed by Class 37 No. 37676, plus support coach, departing their home base of Carnforth on April 16 at 10.29am, 10 minutes early, and arriving at Kidderminster at 4.42pm. After a fitness-to-run exam, the Jubilee continued on to its temporary base at Bewdley.

It sported a yellow stripe on the cab side, indicating that it was not permitted to work south of Crewe in pre-1968 BR days due to electrification of the West Coast Main Line. The locomotive returned to Carnforth on April 22, the day after the gala.

On April 17, *Bahamas* started its journey south via the main line from Grosmont on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway at 6.13am, arriving in Kidderminster at 6.18pm, and it departed the week after the gala. While at the SVR, the Jubilees faced in opposite directions.

Home-based BR Standard 4-6-0 No. 75069, a regular SVR locomotive, had been working services after being transferred by road from Bridgnorth. It just made the gala before having its booked annual examination.

Indeed, it was an impressive line-up for any heritage railway.

Timetable tweaks

Roughly half of the trains went to Hampton Loade, while the other half terminated at Highley. The first train departed Kidderminster at 7.55am on all four days, and from Bewdley the first passenger train to Kidderminster left at 8.40am. Trains ran round at Hampton Loade and Highley.

At Hampton Loade, all trains arrived and departed from the Down platform, an unusual move necessitated by the line closure north of the station. Special workings were put in place to allow this to happen as trains cannot pass here at present.

To speed matters up at Bewdley, the main steam services ran into Platform 2 in the

The bluebells are out as the freight gets away from Arley, running to Highley, on April 20.

GWR 0-04-2T No. 1450 with DMU car No. M51941 drifts into Bridgnorth station on April 19.

Up direction and Platform 3 for the Down, enabling passengers to swap trains without having to cross the footbridge. Platform 1 was used mainly for the DMU, which ran between Kidderminster and Highley.

Friday times slipped slightly but there were no serious delays, and on the Saturday most trains were on time. Sunday was going well until lineside fires near Bewdley Tunnel stopped trains for a time while the fire brigade extinguished them. Monday was good for timekeeping.

Late-evening running took place on the Friday and Saturday, with the last trains arriving in Kidderminster at 10.45pm; Sunday and Monday, it was 8.30pm.

Goods trains ran on Sunday and Monday only. Both Manors and the Grange took turns on it over the two days between Kidderminster and Highley. The first goods left Bewdley at 8.10am, heading towards Kidderminster.

On the Saturday the goods train did two returns between Kidderminster and Highley, and on Sunday it was three.

As an added attraction at Kidderminster, footplate visits gave passengers the chance to look around a live locomotive while it was in between duties. With careful planning, it was possible to visit all working locomotives during the gala.

Bridgnorth – marooned, but not quiet!

At Bridgnorth, footplate trips towing recently repainted DMU No. M51941 ran from Platform 2 to the outer starting signal. On the Friday and Monday, these ran with GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714, while on the Saturday and Sunday, GWR 0-4-2T No. 1450 was in use.

No. 1450 was fresh out of the paint shop, resplendent in BR lined green livery with small crest: this was the first time in the heritage era it has carried this livery.

GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* was on display in Platform 1 for people to visit the footplate, guided by friendly volunteers. Booked to appear at the Bodmin Railway's May 16-18 branch line gala, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 331, Nos. 1450 and 7714 will run alongside GWR prairies Nos. 5552 and 5553 there. When Nos. 1450 and 7714 return, they will be taken to Kidderminster. In July, No. 1450 will be coupled to its auto carriages and run between Bewdley and Kidderminster.

Double-headed Manors

To celebrate the return of *Bradley Manor* to traffic, special dispensation and strict instructions were given for one double-headed run by the two Manors, Nos. 7802 and 7812, both owned by the Erlestoke Manor Fund, which ran on Easter Monday. With weight restrictions on the bridges and viaducts along the SVR, it is rare to see double-headed tender locomotives on the line.

A 5mph speed restriction was imposed at Worcester Road Bridge, plus at Falling Sands, Sandbourne, Wribbenhall and Borle viaducts. Approaching Victoria Bridge, where the line crosses the River Severn, the train had to stop short and then proceed at walking pace over the bridge. This measure was taken to ensure that no braking forces were induced on the bridge.

It is 60 years since the Manors were withdrawn from the Cambrian line and this train recreated a 1965 'Festiniog Railway Special,' complete with headboard and

Rare double-headed 4-6-0s on the Severn Valley: GWR No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* pilots sister No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* departing Hampton Loade on April 21.

Above: No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* with the headboard and reporting numbers of the 1985 train that celebrated the GWR's 150th anniversary, seen here approaching Arley on April 20.

Right: No. 6880 takes the last Down train of the gala out of Bewdley to Hampton Loade on April 21.

Left: Jubilee No. 45627 *Sierra Leone* bursts out of the shadows and into the sunshine as it departs Highley on April 21.

reporting code 1X82. The train was formed of seven BR maroon Mk.1 coaches.

Passenger loadings

Though the event was busy, trains were not at the usual level of loading normally witnessed at SVR galas. On Good Friday, the first train to Kidderminster departed Bewdley at 8.40am with only two passengers on board, for example. Despite this, managing director Jonathon 'Gus Dunster' said: "Visitor numbers were somewhat lower than we would have normally expected for a premium event such as this, but given the current circumstances, it was perhaps not surprising. We are still restricted to operating between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade because of the landslip at Mor Brook bridge.

"A real positive was that with the exception of Bridgnorth, which is isolated from the rest of the line, our secondary spend figures were up on last year's event at all locations.

"In true SVR style, we delivered an absolutely top-notch enthusiast event along 12 miles of line, and I think everyone who came would agree that it was well worth their time and money. We are very grateful for their support."

The passing Jubilees and double-headed Manors were the highlights of the event, and much discussion took place at the lineside as to when this last happened – the general conclusion was it had to be in BR steam days.

As a wonderful gesture and showing solidarity with the SVR, the Bahamas Loco Society donated two days of steaming fees towards the repairs for the landslip. It goes to show the good ties between different societies.

Dakota to fly at 1940s event

Meanwhile, a Douglas C-47 aircraft, known as the Dakota, has been booked to fly over the route of the Severn Valley Railway during the Step Back To The 1940s weekends in June.

The 1942-built aircraft, which served with the Royal Canadian Air Force in Canada during the Second World War, will appear on June 8, courtesy of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. The SVR said the best place to see the Dakota will be at The Engine House at Highley.

The 1940s event will run on June 7/8 and 14/15, with a multitude of attractions along the line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade. Evacuation trains will be running, giving visitors the chance to ride all day and visit stations dressed in 1940s attire, while Winston Churchill will greet crowds and spivs will ride on trains.

Kidderminster Town will have a display of wartime vehicles, with a Hellcat tank at the front of the station, an Anderson shelter and living history displays, including shop, lounge, kitchen and wartime police station.

At Bewdley, Joe Thomas will perform as George Formby on the station, Laurel and Hardy will meet and greet visitors, and the waiting room will feature a Home Guard office and store.

Arley will feature a wartime wedding, and there will be many other attractions here and at Arley, Highley and Hampton Loade.

For full details about the event, visit svr.co.uk/event/step-back-to-the-1940s-svr/2025-06-07/ HR

No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* brings the goods up Eyemore Cutting after crossing Victoria Bridge on April 20.

***Erlestoke Manor* climbs past the Safari Park on the approach to Bewldey tunnel with the lengthy Great Western carriage rake.** ROBERT FALCONER

6P
45627
SIERRA LEONE

HERITAGE RAILWAY
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LMS Jubilee 4-6-0s pass at Bewdley: No. 45699 *Galatea* as No. 45627 *Sierra Leone,* with the yellow stripe showing that it was not allowed on the electrified West Coast Main Line south of Crewe, as sister No. 45596 *Bahamas* drifts in with the Great Western set during the Severn Valley Railway Spring Steam Gala on April 20. When was the last time that two Brunswick Green-livered Jubilees passed on the main line?
JOHN TITLOW

'The Greatest Gathering Special' trip from London

UK Railtours is advertising a tour with the chance to visit The Greatest Gathering from London on Saturday, August 2.

From August 1-3, as previously highlighted, Alstom is opening its Litchurch Lane Works in Derby to the public for the largest temporary assembly of railway rolling stock and artifacts in a generation as one of the major Railway 200 events.

'The Greatest Gathering Special Train' will run from Paddington, with a Class 57/3 and a Class 69 expected to be the motive power, via the Great Western Main Line to pick up additional passengers at Slough, Reading and Didcot Parkway, before heading to Oxford for the final passenger pick-up. From Oxford, the tour will run via the Cherwell Valley Line and the Chiltern Main Line to Birmingham, and then on to Derby.

Last chance to attend

A statement from the operator said: "UK Railtours is delighted to be able to offer our tour customers tickets to this already sold-out event.

"Our return route takes us via the Midland Main Line and affords a rare opportunity to experience the recently reopened East/West route from Bletchley through to Oxford."

Tickets are available in first class non-dining and standard class on this tour, with a discount for junior travellers in standard class and a supplement for entry to The Greatest Gathering.

For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

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SCAN ME WITH YOUR PHONE CAMERA!

Tornado makes history after passing Cambrian ETCS tests

By Robin Jones

Making more world history in the year of Railway 200, A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* undergoes European Train Control System testing at Welshpool on the Cambrian line on April 8. NR

NEW-BUILD A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* has successfully completed main line ETCS testing on the Cambrian Line between Shrewsbury and Newtown.

The world's first operational steam locomotive to be fitted with the digital signalling technology, *Tornado* is also the first locomotive in the charter and heritage pathfinder project for the East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP).

The Cambrian line was chosen for the tests as it was an early pilot of ETCS in the UK, completed in 2011. The test trains were operated by West Coast Railways and Govia Thameslink Railway provided expertise, with test train officers involved in each trip.

The scheduled ETCS Level Two testing for *Tornado* was completed on Wednesday, April 16. A Network Rail spokesman said: "During the four nights involved, tests were carried out involving a wide range of operating scenarios. The testing was successful in proving that the locomotive could be fitted and driven safely using the ETCS system in the harsh environment of a steam locomotive footplate.

"The process of dynamic testing is intended to provide learnings, and issues and challenges uncovered by this testing phase will be carefully analysed."

The heritage pathfinder project was set up to enable all parts of the network to share in a digital transformation, and is about the potential for main line steam and heritage diesel operations, to be enjoyed and celebrated by future generations.

Securing the future

The introduction of digital signalling, initially to the ECML, is designed to create a more efficient, more reliable, and even safer railway, with lower emissions.

The fitment of ETCS to *Tornado* is a dynamic collaboration involving Hitachi Rail (onboard equipment), AtkinsRealis (fitment design), the locomotive's owner, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, and Network Rail (integration).

The project has required overcoming significant challenges around electrical supply, managing braking, both directions running, and enabling the human interface in an environment which is noisy and dusty, and sometimes rainy, with vibrations.

Later this year, a first heritage diesel in the form of Class 55 D9000/55022 *Royal Scots Grey* is set to undergo similar ETCS Level Two dynamic testing on the Cambrian. Owned by Locomotive Services Ltd, ETCS has already been installed on the locomotive, and it has undergone its static testing.

Ed Akers, Network Rail's industry partnership director, ECDP, said: "The innovation and expertise delivered through the *Tornado* pathfinder has provided significant learnings for our programme, applicable for fitment across a range of fleets.

"The project reflects the 'whole railway' nature of our collaborative ECDP partnership. This testing is an important stage in a process to determine the technical and commercial feasibility of fitment for heritage and charter fleets."

Andy Bell, vice president, Hitachi Rail UK, said: "*Tornado*'s retro-fit with our ETCS is a world-first that has tested our technology in one of the most complex operating environments. This very special project demonstrates not only the adaptability of Hitachi Rail's system, but also what's possible when we respect the past while designing for what's next, combining engineering expertise with deep, trusted partnerships within the industry.

"The lessons we've learned here have created a valuable blueprint for future projects.

"Carrying forward the relationships, insights, and technical progress from this work will be essential to maintaining momentum, not only for heritage integrations but for wider applications across modern rolling stock as well."

Alejandro Moreno, AtkinsRealis market director – rail & transit, UK & Ireland, said: "Steam locomotives are more than just machines. They are living, breathing monuments to British innovation. We had to find creative solutions to integrate modern technology in an environment which is noisy, dusty, hot, and exposed – all the while preserving *Tornado*'s authentic character and enabling operation on the digital railway. This world-first project will benefit the entire sector, demonstrating how a collaborative approach can solve complex fitment challenges on our evolving railway."

Platform for testing

Rob Morland, electrical engineer, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, said: "We are very pleased that *Tornado* was selected as the world's first operational steam locomotive be fitted with ETCS and have been actively engaged in providing a platform for testing ETCS in this challenging environment.

"We have extended *Tornado*'s already comprehensive electrical system to provide the additional power required. This has included the fitment of a second steam turbogenerator, a new axle-driven alternator, and a third battery bank, dedicated to ETCS. The system is designed to provide a very reliable electrical supply to meet in full the availability requirements of a modern onboard digital signalling system.

"We have also supported the mechanical and design work, undertaking changes to both the tender and engine, and supported the work to install, commission and test the system."

Pre-order Issue 333: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Inside the cab of *Tornado* as it underwent groundbreaking ETCS testing were (left to right): Ben Mason, East Coast Digital Programme charter and heritage lead; Amy Clouston, AtkinsRealis; Raymond Sturton, Hitachi engineer; and Rob Morland, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust. NR

Raymond Sturton with the ETCS screen inside *Tornado's* cab. NR

West Coast Railways driver instructor John Rogers and fireman Graeme Bunker alongside *Tornado* at Newtown. NR

➜ *Tornado* was scheduled to join in the Victory over Europe Day 80th anniversary celebrations at the Nene Valley Railway on May 3/4.

Completing the Newcastle to Peterborough last leg of its booked stint on the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain XVIII' nine-day land cruise, it was scheduled return to Wansford – where it underwent final loaded tests prior to main line recertification, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 330 – late on the afternoon of Saturday, May 3. The following day, it was booked to haul four passenger services, the previous day's timetabled trips being handled by visiting GWR prairie No. 4144 from Didcot Railway Centre, as pictured on page 16.

The celebrations at Wansford included live singing performances by Raw Divas covering 1940s VE songs, vintage trade stalls, pump trolley experiences in the yard and, on the Sunday, miniature railway rides.

Duke of Gloucester planned for summer main line comeback

PLANS for the return of unique BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* to the national network have been announced.

As this issue closed for press, the BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust was set to move its locomotive to the Severn Valley Railway on May 1/2, prior to testing and running-in.

All being well, it will move under its own power from Kidderminster to Crewe – its 1954 birthplace – on May 27.

The locomotive was withdrawn from service in 2012 when its boiler ticket expired. As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 217, the trust has a 10-year agreement with The Royal Scot Locomotive and General Trust Limited for Locomotive Services Limited to run the *Duke* on the main line.

On June 4, it is scheduled to head a private charter for trust members from Crewe to Chester, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Stafford and back to Crewe.

Between June 23 to July 22, the *Duke* will be painted, and on July 30 it is planned to head its first public trip since overhaul, from Carlisle to Edinburgh.

GB Railfreight Class 57 is dedicated to UK Railtours

GB Railfreight has named Class 57 No. 57310 as *UK Railtours* in a ceremony at Southend Central station.

The nameplate was unveiled on Saturday, April 12 by UK Railtours' managing director Liz Morris and former operations director Simon Farrow, the children of the charter company's founder, the late John Farrow, who, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 267, died five years ago aged 70. John's widow, Clare, the owner of UK Railtours, was also in attendance at the ceremony.

The Class 57 rededication was conducted during the layover of the GBRf-operated 'Thames Meanderer' tour, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first rail tour that John organised under the auspices of the Lea Valley Railway Club. He independently established Hertfordshire Railtours in 1978, and it was reformed as the contemporary UK Railtours in 2007. Three locomotives have previously carried the name *Hertfordshire Railtours*, but No. 57310 is the first to appear as *UK Railtours*.

Liz Morris said: "We want to thank GBRf for this wonderful gesture, as well as our loyal customers, industry partners and volunteer stewards, without whom we simply wouldn't be where we are today. We look forward to seeing where this amazing journey takes us over the next 50 years and hope to see No. 57310 *UK Railtours* at the front of many of our special trains."

Kev Adlam, GB Railfreight account manager, added: "In the 50th anniversary year of John Farrow's first train, it is only fitting that GBRf has dedicated a loco to his charter legacy.

"It is also a tribute to the team who have carried that torch forward since his death in 2020. We remain a proud and committed operational partner of UK Railtours."

Simon Farrow, Clare Farrow and Liz Morris, of UK Railtours, with the newly unveiled nameplate on No. 57310. UK RAILTOURS

'The Lochalsh Chopper' to Kyle of Lochalsh

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society is to run a three-day excursion between Saturday, June 21 and Monday, June 23 under the title of 'The Lochalsh Chopper.'

Departing from Crewe, it will pick up passengers at Preston, Lancaster and Carlisle. A scheduled stop at Carlisle for a leg-stretch of about an hour will see the motive power changed to a pair of Class 20s. Leaving Carlisle, the tour heads on to Perth to pick up the final passengers for the tour and for an opportunity for another leg-stretch. Taking the Highland Main Line passing through Pitlochry, Blair Atholl and Aviemore, an overnight stop will be had at Inverness.

The final day will see the tour head towards Aberdeen, passing through Forres, Elgin and Inverurie, before heading south through Montrose to Dundee. Crossing the Tay Bridge, the train will stop at Kirkcaldy to allow passengers from Perth to get home. Continuing south over the Forth Bridge, it will join the Glasgow line towards Linlithgow, heading towards Carlisle, before retracing the outward journey, setting down passengers en route back to Crewe.

Tickets are available in First Class Dining, Club Class, First Class, and Standard Class. For more details and to book, visit www.srpsrailtours.co.uk

A pair of 'Tractors' to Ffestiniog

ON Saturday, July 5, Pathfinder Tours is running 'The Ffestiniog Slater behind two Class 37s to various locations in Wales.

Starting from Swindon, the train will take the Great Western Main Line to Didcot and then divert onto the Cherwell Valley Line to the first passenger pick-up of Oxford. Continuing north, the plan is to pick up at Banbury, before taking the Chiltern Main Line for further passengers to join the train at Warwick Parkway, Dorridge, Birmingham New Street, Wolverhampton and Stafford.

Continuing to Crewe, the train will take the North Wales Main Line via Chester to the first stop of Llandudno Junction prior to reversing to pick up the Conwy Valley Line. Those who decide to stay on the train can alight at Betws-y-Coed or continue to Blaenau Ffestiniog, where passengers will have three hours to look around. For a supplementary fee, passengers can catch the Ffestiniog Railway for a return journey to Tan-y-Bwlch, before the excursion heads home. To book, visit www.pathfindertours.co.uk

'Very dry' April sees diesel replace steam

By Robin Jones

RESTRICTIONS on the use of steam traction were introduced on both the national network and heritage lines after lineside fires broke out during the dry weather spell in April.

Although not entirely unusual for the time of year, the fire risk index, based on an established protocol developed over a long period by steam operators and Network Rail, rose in most areas, meaning, as minimum, some form of diesel assistance was required.

On April 5, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service attended several fires near the Cumbrian Coast Line between St Bees and Nethertown which a spokesman said were believed to be accidental and without malicious intent, adding: "Unfortunately, I think some of these fires may have been started by a steam train moving through the area."

Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* headed the Northern Belle 'Cumbrian Coast Steam Special' along the line from Carlisle to York, with diesel assistance at the rear.

People living near the line in Nethertown, St Bees, Braystones and Coulderton were urged to stay indoors and keep their windows and doors closed, and fire crews worked throughout the night to extinguish the wildfires. No properties were affected.

With diesel assistance at the rear of the train, Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* heads through Seascale with the 'Cumbrian Coast Steam Special' more than an hour late on April 5. DAVE WILSON

With areas of gorse and the cliff face alight in places, the line was blocked as fire crews tackled the blaze throughout the night and the normal Northern services were cancelled or disrupted by up to 45 minutes in both directions. Signalling cables were damaged, with local Network Rail maintenance teams replacing more than 2000 yards. An investigation was launched.

The line closure led to a second steam trip, Saphos Trains' 'The Lakelander,' headed by A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter,* stopped at Wigton before being returned to Carlisle shortly after departure, and then returned to the starting point of Llandudno via the West Coast Main Line.

The first week of West Coast Railways' 'The Jacobite' season on the West Highland Extension from William to Mallaig, starting on April 7, was diesel-hauled throughout.

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway suspended steam haulage of services after a series of lineside fires at various locations in the week commencing April 7.

After steam haulage resumed, a lineside fire on April 19 saw the line between Levisham and Goathland closed, and services resumed behind diesel traction the next morning.

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways decided to replace steam with diesel haulage on April 12 due to the potential fire risk in tinder-dry conditions.

Glenfinnan £3.4 million restoration complete

A TEAM of specialist engineers have completed a year-long £3.4 million restoration project of the West Highland Extension 's Category A Glenfinnan Viaduct.

Network Rail, along with principal contractor AmcoGiffen, assessed the condition of the viaduct, and concrete repairs were carried out on the structure sympathetically, taking care to replicate its heritage appearance. New safety handrails for staff working at height were installed, along with renewing ballast retention systems at the ends of the structure.

Engineers also worked in the fast-flowing River Finnan, protecting the piers from erosion caused by the river. Specially trained rope access technicians descended from the viaduct, reaching and restoring areas that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Glenfinnan Viaduct pictured on July 8, 2024. NR

West Coast Railways commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "Having run 'The Jacobite' for more than three decades, we truly appreciate the historic significance of the viaduct. The recent restoration work has further highlighted its importance not only as a vital piece of railway heritage, but also as a beloved Harry Potter film star, for which we proudly provided 'The Hogwarts Express.'"

Laura Craig, scheme project manager at Network Rail, said: "Every step of the process required meticulous attention to detail and a deep respect for its heritage. It's an honour to look after the Glenfinnan Viaduct, knowing how much it's loved all over the world."

Opened in 1901, the structure is the largest mass concrete viaduct in Scotland. Network Rail is also replacing more than five miles of life-expired boundary fencing nearby.

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WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* heads past the former Kidderminster goods shed (now the Severn Valley Railway's carriage workshop) with Vintage Trains' 'Shakespeare Express' from Worcester Shrub Hill via Birmingham to Stratford-upon-Avon on April 6. JOHN TITLOW

Midland Pullman's HSTs on the 'Cornish Mazey Day Pullman' to Penzance

MIDLAND Pullman is running a trip to various destinations in Cornwall for the Mazey Day celebrations on Saturday, June 28.

The 'Cornish Mazey Day Pullman' will start from Shrewsbury, running along the Welsh Marches Line to pick up additional passengers at Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ludlow, Leominster, Hereford, Abergavenny and Cwmbran, before taking the South Wales Main Line for the final pick-up at Severn Tunnel Junction. From Bristol, the tour will head for Plymouth, crossing into Cornwall on the Royal Albert Bridge before arriving at the first destination of Truro.

Passengers who choose to alight at Truro will have about three-and-a-half hours to explore the city or take a trip to nearby Falmouth. Those who decide to stay on the train may alight at the next stop of St Erth to either look around the local area or take a journey to St Ives. Passengers taking this option have two-and-a-half hours before the return journey.

The final destination of Penzance involved a stop of just over two hours.

The Mazey Day celebrations will be in full swing, with much to see and do in the town.

Collecting passengers who have alighted at St Erth and Truro, the tour will take the same route back to Shrewsbury.

Tickets are available in Pullman Dining or First Class non-dining for this tour. For more details and to book, visit midlandpullman.com

Jubilee and Castle pairing to tackle South Devon Banks

VINTAGE Trains will once again tackle the South Devon Banks with double-headed steam – with WR Castle No. 7029 *Clun Castle* and LMS Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas* unassisted!

Following departure from Birmingham New Street on September 6 behind diesel traction, the 4-6-0s will take over 'The Mayflower' for the run between Bristol Temple Meads and Plymouth, with the train running without any diesel on the rear.

This routing will see *Clun Castle* and *Bahamas* working hard over the challenging gradients of South Devon, as well as thundering along the sea wall at Dawlish.

Alex Knudsen, VT's sales and marketing manager, said: "We are delighted to bring back 'The Mayflower' for a second year following its incredibly successful introduction in 2024.

"Like last year, we are sure this will a highlight for enthusiasts and the public alike, especially with a Castle and Jubilee being paired together. We would like to thank the Bahamas Locomotive Society for allowing us use of its locomotive once again and look forward to another brilliant run on what will be one of its final main line runs in 2025."

To book tickets, visit vintagetrains.co.uk/the-mayflower

Early summer London to Swanage trip with steam

THE Railway Touring Company is to run 'The Swanage Belle' from London Victoria to the Purbeck resort on Wednesday, June 25 from London.

Steam-hauled from Victoria, the tour will head over the Thames at Battersea, before turning west and crossing the river again at Barnes to pass through Feltham for the first passenger pick-up at Staines, next taking the South Western Main Line for a pick-up at Woking. Following a water stop at Winchfield, the final passenger pick-up point is planned to be Basingstoke.

Taking the West of England Line through Andover to Salisbury, the train will head to Southampton for a change of locomotive. Having swapped steam for diesel, the remainder of the journey to Swanage is planned to run along the South West Main Line via Bournemouth to Wareham, taking the reopened link from Worgret Junction to Norden and to Swanage.

Passengers will have just under three hours to explore Swanage before returning to London.

Leaving the Swanage Railway steam-hauled, the train will head via Winchester to Basingstoke, setting down passengers here and at their joining stations on route back to Victoria.

Tickets are available in Premier Dining, First Class and Standard Class, with a discount for junior travellers and family bookings. For more details, visit www.railwaytouring.net

'The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobes' behind Class 20s

A TOUR from England to Wales behind a pair of Class 20s will be run by Intercity Tours under the title of 'The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobes' on Saturday, July 12.

Starting from Crewe and having nothing whatsoever to do with the CS Lewis novel, the train will take the Welsh Marches Line to Shrewsbury and then travel onto Craven Arms to pick up additional passengers.

Taking the Heart of Wales Line, it will head to Llandrindod Wells for a leg-stretch of about 45 minutes. It will then continue through Garth, to Sugar Loaf Summit and through Llandovery, Llandeilo, and Ammanford, before arriving at Hendy Junction, taking the Swansea District Line to avoid the city, and then head to the destination of Cardiff on the South Wales Main Line.

After just over two hours in the capital, the return journey is expected to pick up the Welsh Marches Line north from Newport, arriving at Craven Arms and then Shrewsbury to set down passengers.

Tickets are available in First Class non-dining and Standard class for this tour.

For more details and to book, visit inter-city.co.uk

Keighley station's multi-million showpiece facelift now complete

By Robin Jones

THE completed £9.9 million overhaul of Grade II-listed Keighley station, which Network Rail shares with the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, was officially unveiled on Friday, April 4.

The 1885-built station had been showing signs of age, with parts closed off because of safety concerns. An 18-month overhaul has seen it restored in its classic colours of yellow vanilla and 'Keighley maroon.' Furthermore, the project has included the complete refurbishment of the station forecourt, frontage, waiting room, footbridges, drainage and masonry, repair and renewal of timber in the ramps and roofs at the premises – including stabilising the café's gable end, extensive structural strengthening, work to allow the western elevation link bridge to reopen, and masonry and drainage repairs to the western corner at the Skipton end of the car park

Guests at the official unveiling were treated to a steam train trip along the KWVR pulled by Taff Vale Railway Class 02 0-6-2T No. 85 of 1899, which dates from the era just after when Keighley station was constructed.

The painstaking refurbishment has included installing hand-built timber frames for some of the 100-plus new windowpanes, replacing old cast-iron drainpipes with matching vintage designs made of aluminium, and rebuilding chimneys brick by brick.

Network Rail worked closely with the heritage line, which had significant input in the project, and has also transformed the historical water tower into a visitor centre, as featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 323.

Left: Taff Vale Railway 02 0-6-2T No. 85 at the head of the opening train for the refurbished Keighley station's reopening ceremony on April 4. NR

Strengthening links

The KWVR side of the station has also seen a huge beam added to strengthen the girder on the western bridge to Platforms 3 and 4, allowing this area to reopen. It was decided to leave the beam uncovered to illustrate the 'old meets new' aspect of the project.

The project, supported by a £160,000 Railway Heritage Trust grant, included strengthening the road bridge, relaying the forecourt, reopening the Platform 1 waiting room, and installing a partition between the Northern and KWVR halves of the station.

The ticket office and café have been fully renovated, with steel 'goalposts' added above the café ceiling to strengthen the structure.

A major challenge was dealing with rotten timber in these areas, which was much more extensive than anticipated – but this resulted in a more thorough refurbishment.

KWVR chairman Matthew Stroh said: "The Keighley station project has been a true partnership effort.

"We have worked closely with Network Rail and its contractors, temporarily closing our line to allow them the time and space needed to work effectively – benefiting everyone involved.

"Thanks to their dedication, the station is being restored to its former glory, and we have been able to enhance this by extending the refurbishment to include the canopy over our platform and the ramp connecting our passengers from the forecourt. This work has been long-awaited, but the results speak for themselves – the thorough refurbishment has truly transformed the station, inside and out."

Network Rail lead portfolio manager Jonny Ham said: "Everyone involved in transforming Keighley station has taken great pride and care at every stage, knowing that we are providing passenger benefits now and preserving the heritage for generations to come.

"Keighley caters for everyday visitors and heritage enthusiasts, and we have delivered a station which we are sure will delight them all."

Privileged partnership

AmcoGiffen framework director Chris Pennock said: "It's been a privilege for AmcoGiffen to work on the upgrade of this historic station, delivering essential improvements for the community while preserving its heritage.

"While on site we were able to inspire the next generation by hosting a site tour for 30 construction college students from Keighley College, offering a real-world insight into our industry."

Kerry Peters, regional director for Northern across Yorkshire, said: "The station is looking better than ever and is a transport hub the town can be proud of for many years to come."

And Keighley and Ilkley MP Robbie Moore added: "It is fantastic to see the works to Keighley station finally come to fruition, after years of meetings with Network Rail and lobbying in Parliament.

"This £9.9 million project is the gateway to our town for commuters and tourists alike.

"Combined with the excellent work undertaken by the KWVR to restore the station water tower, it is a great example of levelling up in action."

Guests gather for the official reopening of the refurbished station.

Keighley station's newly restored footbridge. The station has kept its traditional vanilla yellow and maroon paintwork. NR

The station's newly reopened Western bridge. NR

Inside the new Keighley station café. NR

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LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45569 *Bahamas* heads over Docker Viaduct on the East Coast Main Line en route to Carlisle with 'The Shap Mountaineer' on March 29. ROBERT BATTY

Bahamas to head 'The Cathedrals Express' to Swansea

AS detailed in Don Benn's With Full Regulator column on page 60, LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45569 *Bahamas* made a stupendous run with Vintage Trains' 'The Shap Mountaineer' on March 29.

Unassisted, *Bahamas* reached Shap summit at a speed reported by lineside observers to be between 37-40mph, which was the fastest recorded by a class member on this route.

After the trip, the Tyseley-based operator confirmed that *Bahamas* has been booked to head 'The Cathedrals Express' from Birmingham New Street via Chepstow to Swansea on July 5, picking up at Barnt Green, Worcestershire Parkway, Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Originally the main route into Wales from London before the construction of the Severn Tunnel, this train will commemorate the 175th anniversary of the opening of the route between Chepstow and Swansea, connecting it to the wider network, and forms part of the Vintage Trains Railway 200 celebrations.

Dining is available for passengers travelling in both Pullman (featuring a full English breakfast and four-course evening dinner) and First Class (this menu has bacon rolls and pastries, and an afternoon tea served at your seat).

Travellers in Tourist Class will have access to the on-board buffet.

A Vintage Trains spokesman said: "We are delighted to confirm *Bahamas* for 'The Cathedrals Express' to Swansea following its storming run over Shap and the Settle and Carlisle line."

➜ For more details of the trip and to book, visit https://vintagetrains.co.uk/the-cathedrals-express-to-swansea

York Victorian water tower to become music rehearsal room

YORK'S oldest-surviving railway structure is to be restored by Network Rail as a brass band rehearsal space.

The Grade II-listed water tower, with a 5000-gallon tank on its roof, was built in 1839 when the city's first main railway station was under construction. It is now one of the oldest-surviving railway water towers in the world but has fallen into a state of disrepair in recent years.

Approved by City of York Council, Network Rail's plan to restore the structure will create a new base for the York Railway Institute Band and a second unit available to let.

The early Victorian-era building sits within the multi-million-pound York Station Frontage transformation project, a wider scheme which requires the demolition of the band's rehearsal space – just next door – and the provision of an alternative. Mike Stancliffe, Network Rail's principal development manager, said: "This Queen Street site was historically associated with the development of the railways and is now a focus of educational, sporting and recreational activities associated with the York Railway Institute, so this site is well-suited to rehouse the band practice room.

"The water tower is of considerable historical interest. It is currently in a poor condition, but it's a striking building and can still have a big future.

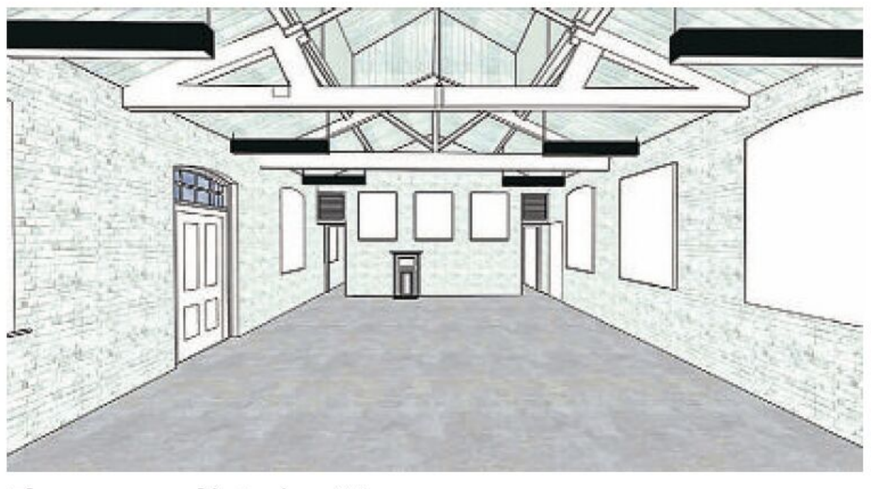
"Providing the band room here means that members won't have to move very far at all, while also preserving an important piece of York's railway heritage."

Chris Smith, trustee of the York Railway Institute charity, said: "Hopefully, we can agree terms for a new lease which will enable the scheme to proceed and breath life back into an important listed building.

"If we can finalise the lease, it will secure the long-term future of the three Railway Institute bands."

The next stages will see the full funding package compiled and a contractor chosen to carry out the work.

York's historic water tower. NR



The proposed interior. NR

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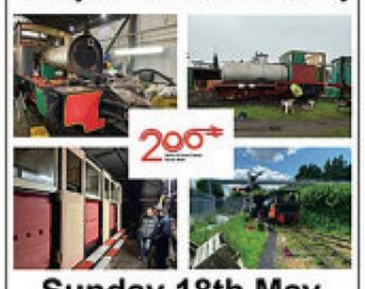
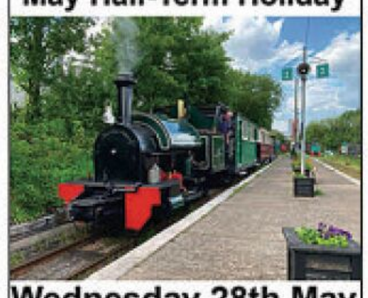
Sittingbourne's Steam Railway

Railway 200 Behind the Scenes Day



Sunday 18th May

May Half-Term Holiday



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31 May/1 June 2025

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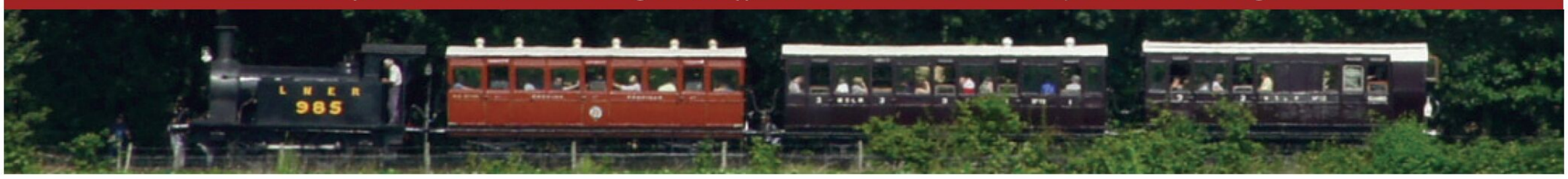

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Peppercorn A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* at the helm of Saphos Trains' April 5 'The Lakelander' near Penrith. As reported in Main Line News, page 54, several substantial lineside fires saw the service rerouted to avoid the Cumbrian coast line and it was subsequently delayed by almost three hours at Carlisle, where the A2 was removed from the train and replaced by Class 40 D213 *Andania* for the journey back to Llandudno Junction. ROBERT BATTY

May

10 'The Blackpool Steam Express'
Euston, Carlisle, return. Steam-hauled between Crewe and Blackpool North.
Loco: Electric: 86529 *Les Ross*.
Steam: TBA. RTC

10 Chester Excurstion
Horsham, Chester and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Horsham.
Loco: 70000 *Britannia*. SD

10 'The Oban Explorer'
Leven, Oban and return.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. SRPS

10 'South Devon Explorer'
Birmingham New Street. Plymouth, Buckfastleigh and return.
Loco: D1015 *Western Champion*. VT

14 'The Golden Arrow'
Norwich, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Canterbury West.
Loco: TBA. ST

16 'The Cambrian Coast Express'
Bristol Temple Meads, Pwllheili and return.
Loco: 1x each of Class 37, 47, 57, 97. PT

17 Bluebell Railway Excursion
Hastings, Sheffield Park and return.
DEMU: 1001. HD

17 'The Buxton Spa Express'
Ealing Broadway, Buxton and return. Steam-hauled between Barrow Hill (outward) and Humberstone Road (return).
Loco: TBA. RTC

17 'The Edinburgh Flyer'
York, Edinburgh Waverley and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

17 'English Riviera Express'
Woking, Kingswear and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.
Loco: TBA. ST

21 'Edinburgh Summer Explorer'
Leeds, Edinburgh Waverley and return. Steam-hauled between Carlisle and Edinburgh.
Loco: TBA. ST

23 'The Positioning Move'
Eastleigh to Kidderminster only.
Loco: 50008 *Thunderer*. BLS

24 'The Hyde Hoover'
Kidderminster to Chester only.
Locos: 50008 *Thunderer* + Class 50 TBA. BLS

24 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Darlington, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

24 'The Tyne Clyde Coaster'
Newcastle, Wemyss Bay and return.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*, 50050 *Fearless*. SRPS

24 'English Riviera Express'
Shrewsbury, Kingswear, return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.
Loco: TBA. ST

25 'Track, Vac and Shack'
Rare tracks tour from Chester.
Loco: 50008 *Thunderer* + Class 50 TBA. BLS

25 'The Royal Duchy'
Bristol Temple Meads, Par and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

26 'The Bank Holiday Bonus'
Chester to Kidderminster only.
Loco: 50008 *Thunderer* + Class 50 TBA. BLS

26 'The Master Cutler'
Leeds, St Pancras and return.
Loco: 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman*. IC

27 'The Repositioning Move'
Kidderminster to Eastleigh only.
Loco: 50008 *Thunderer*. BLS

28 'Welsh Marches Express'
Paignton, Shrewsbury and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. ST

31 Locomotion and Weardale Excursion
King's Cross, Stanhope and return.
Loco: Class 125 HST. UKRT

31 'The Whistling Ghost'
Birmingham New Street, Minehead and return.
Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* or 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

June

1 'The Easterling'
King's Cross, Yarmouth, return. Diesel-hauled from Norwich to Yarmouth.
Loco: TBA. RTC

5 Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

5 'The Dalesman'
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBC. WCR

6 'The Double Gloucester'
Crewe, Gloucester and return.
Locos: D213 *Andania*, Class 20 TBA. IC

7 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Coventry, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

7 'The Tynesider'
King's Cross, Morpeth and return. Steam-hauled between York and Morpeth.
Loco: Electric: 86529 *Les Ross*.
Steam: TBA. RTC

7 'English Riviera Express'
Northampton, Kingswear and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.
Loco: 5029 *Nunney Castle*. ST

7 'The Kent Coaster'
East Midlands Parkway, Faversham and return.
Locos: Class 47 + 2 Class 33s TBA. UKRT

8 'The Shakespeare Express'
Derby, Stratford-upon-Avon and return.
Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* or 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

10 'The Dalesman'
Chester, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBC. WCR

11 'The Fellsman'
Crewe, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Chester and Carlisle.
Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. ST

14 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Leeds, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

14 'The Torbay Coastal Grid'
Derby, Paignton and return.
Loco: Class 56 TBA. PT

14 'The Jolly Fisherman'
King's Cross, Skegness and return. Diesel-hauled from Sleaford to Skegness.
Loco: TBA. RTC

14 'The Lakelander'
Leicester, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Preston and Carslile.
Loco: TBA. ST

15 'The Shakespeare Express'
Birmingham Snow Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon and return.
Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* or 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

18 'Edinburgh Explorer'
Liverpool South Parkway, Edinburgh Waverley and return. Steam-hauled between Carlisle and Edinburgh.
Loco: TBA. ST

19 Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

21 Kingswear excursion
London Victoria, Kingswear and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.
Loco: 5029 *Nunney Castle*. SD

Regular Tours

Daily – 'The Jacobite'
Fort William, Mallaig and return.
Loco: 'Black Five.' WCR

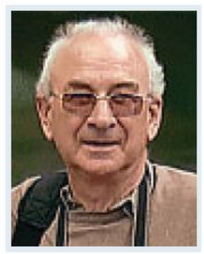
The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
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

WITH FULL REGULATOR

LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



In his latest column, **Don Benn** covers the record-breaking performance of LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* on the Vintage Trains 'Shap Mountaineer' back on March 29. Also covered is a run with double-headed Class 37s on the 'Capital Highlander' and two steam runs from 1965 in Scotland.

VINTAGE Trains ran 'The Shap Mountaineer' from Birmingham on Saturday, March 29 with No. 45596 on 10 coaches, with no diesel assistance involved after Carnforth. My good friend Sandy Smeaton was on the train and he tells the story:

"Vintage Trains was rewarded for organising *Bahamas*' first public tour over Shap in preservation with a full train. Class 47 D1755 worked the first section from Birmingham New Street to Carnforth, arriving about 18 late; here, the diesel exchanged places with the double-chimney 5XP and its support coach. The load was 10 coaches, 352 tons tare and about 385 tons gross.

"The start onto the West Coast Main Line was 7½ minutes late, but there was no rush to get up to milepost 9½ with a cold engine. MP13, the bottom of the 13-mile climb to Grayrigg, was passed at only 58½mph. However, on the rising gradients, speed fell only gradually to a minimum of 42½ at MP26 at Grayrigg. There was obviously no need to ease the engine after the climb as acceleration through the Lune Gorge was immediate, reaching 77½ at MP31½, the start of the climb to Shap. Speed was no lower than 52mph at Scout Green, falling to a minimum of 37½ before the summit and passing the summit sign at 39. The average power outputs between specified mileposts approaching Grayrigg and Shap are given in the table to the right.

"These are excellent power figures and perhaps the best achieved yet by a 5XP. In September 2006, No. 5690 *Leander*, with a lighter load of nine coaches, 314 tare and 345 gross, also on a VT special, achieved a time of 38 minutes 29 seconds from Carnforth loop to MP37½, mainly due to a faster start to Milnthorpe. However, *Leander*'s power outputs approaching both Grayrigg and Shap Summit were slightly less than those of *Bahamas*, presumably the latter benefitting from its double chimney. On the run down to Carlisle, the booked nine-minute pathing stop at Penrith was omitted, converting the 7½-minute late departure from Carnforth into an arrival 11½ early, in the respectable start to stop time of 70m 19s."

Table One shows the detail of this superlative performance, and Table Two shows why it is believed to be a record with a Jubilee. It also shows

TABLE ONE: CARNFORTH TO CARLISLE

Date	Saturday, March 29, 2025
Train	6.50am Birmingham New Street to Carlisle
Loco	LMS Class 5XP No. 45596 *Bahamas*
Load	Ten coaches, 352 tons tare and 385 tons gross
Driver	Alastair Meanley
Fireman	Sam Perry
Recorder	A Smeaton, GPS
Position	Fifth coach
Weather	Dry and overcast

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Carnforth DGL	0.00	0.00	00	00	7½ late
Carnforth	0.26		02	02	17
MP 7	1.01		03	43	32½
MP 8	2.01		05	42	27/26½
MP 9	3.01		07	56	27½
Summit MP	3.51		09	00	30
Burton and Holme	4.76		10	50	51½
MP 13	7.01		13	17	58½
Milnthorpe	7.55		13	50	56½
MP 14½	8.51		14	55	53½
Hincaster Junction	9.51		16	03	51
MP 16	10.51		16	39	51
MP 17	11.01		17	49	53½
MP 18	12.01		18	58	50/47
Oxenholme	13.13	15.30	20	21	48½
MP 20½	14.51		22	07	45
MP 21	15.01		22	46	46½
Hay Fell	16.51		22	44	45½
MP 23½	17.51		26	04	45
Lambrigg	18.26		27	05	44½
Mosedale Hall	19.51		28	48	42½
MP 26	20.01		29	31	42½
Grayrigg RR	20.18	25.00	29	45	43½
MP 27	21.01		30	45	56½
Low Gill	22.01		31	46	61½
MP 29	23.01		32	43	66
Dillicar	24.01		33	34	73½
MP 31½	25.51		34	46	77½
Tebay	26.76	31.30	35	10	75½
MP 32¾	26.76		35	46	71½
Birkbeck Viaduct	27.34		36	16	69½
MP 34	28.01		36	53	62½
MP 34½	28.51		37	23	57½
Scout Green	29.16		38	05	52
MP 36	30.01		39	08	46
MP 37	31.01		40	33	40
MP 37½	31.51		41	20	37½
Summit Sign	31.63	40.00	41	31	39
Shap Old Station	33.74		43	57	66
Harrisons Sidings	35.68	44.00	45	38	72
Thrimby Grange	37.01		46	42	76½/80
MP 44	38.01		47	29	77½/76
MP 45	39.01		48	16	76½
OB 152	40.06		49	05	79
Clifton	41.05		49	51	76/77
Eden Valley Jct	42.01		50	37	75
MP 50	44.01		52	17	70/66½
Penrith	45.26	56/65	53	23	68
MP 53	47.01		54	53	70½
MP 55	49.01		56	31	79½
Plumpton	50.01		57	17	77½
MP 57	51.01		58	04	77
Calthwaite	52.40		59	07	79½
MP 59	53.01		59	36	77
Southwaite	55.76		61	43	78½
MP 63¼	57.26		62	54	76
Wreay	58.20		63	38	77
MP 65½	59.41		64	39	79
Upperby	62.01		67	01	43*
Carlisle	63.11	89½	70	19	11½ early

* brakes or speed restriction

"These are excellent power figures and perhaps the best achieved yet by a 5XP."

Right: Old and new rub shoulders as Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas* sits at Carlise after arriving with the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' on March 29, 2025. SANDY SMEATON

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TABLE TWO: JUBILEE PERFORMANCES ON GRAYRIGG & SHAP (LOADED TO 10 COACHES OR MORE) PRESERVATION

Sandy Smeaton – March 29, 2025

					Speeds				Time		
Log No	Date	Loco	Name	Load	Milnthorpe max	Grayrigg min	Tebay max	Shap Summitmin	Milnthorpe to Summit †	Crew	Comments
4767	29.3.25	45596	*Bahamas*	10/352/385	58½	42½	77½	37½	27m 41s	Meanley/Parr	DC loco
4318	13.7.19	45690	*Leander*	11/404/435	67½	41	71	29	27m 44s	Rawling/Holmes	
4096	17.2.18	45699	*Galatea*	11/405/436	64½	36	72½	28½	29m 01s	Rawling/Holmes	
	4.3.17	45699	"	11/406/435	65½	37	73	27	29m 06s	Chipperfield/Holmes	¶ MP13½ to 37½
4305	18.5.19	45690	*Leander*	11/404/440	65	39	71	27½	29m 26s	Rawling/Holmes	
4104	24.2.18	45699	*Galatea*	11/405/430	64½	29½	72½	28	30m 44s	Blair/Chippendale	Slipped at summit
4090	3.2.18	45699	"	11/405/440	63	35½	71	22¾	31m 13s	Smith/Chippendale	
4115	24.3.18	45690	*Leander*	11/404/435	58½	35	71½	23½	31m 51sΔ	Blair/Holmes	Δ Time Milnthorpe to MP37½
4456	4.9.21	45699	*Galatea*	11/408/436	64	29	70½	28	31m 39s	Blair/Soames	Slipped at summit
4055	30.9.17	45690	*Leander*	11/407/440	59	35	65	26	32m 19s	Rogers/Chipperfield/Holmes	John Rogers driver training
4482	26.2.22	45699	*Galatea*	11/406/435	63	28	70	22½	34m 28s	Blair/Soames	Slipped at summit
4013	15.7.17	45690	*Leander*	12/446/480	57½	28½	63½	21	36m 18s	Kelly/Holmes	
4204	13.10.18	45699	*Galatea*	11/411/440	55½	28	62	22½	37m 11s	Kelly/Chippendale	
3393	8.2.14	45699	"	11/403/440	58½	25	62	15	41m 23s	Smith/ Not known	
3539	4.10.14	45699	"	11/407/440	57	17½ §	69	17½*	44m 01s	Blair/Hansen	§ Stopped in Grayrigg Loop for blow-up. Time shown excludes time in loop.
3352	23.10.13	45699	"	10/362/395	55	25	53½	13*	46m 01s	Rawling/Bullock	*Min at Scout Green; 18 at summit
3385	1.2.14	45699	"	10/364/395	53½	16 #	44	12½*	54m 50s	Hansen/ Not known	

At Lambrigg; *Min at Scout Green, 18½ at summit

AVERAGE POWER OUTPUTS: GRAYRIGG-SHAP

Date			29.3.25	2.9.06
Locomotive			45596	5690
Load			10/352/385	9/314/345
Location	Mileposts	Gradient (1 in) #	Edbhp¶	
Grayrigg	24¼ - 25	109	1390	1170
	25 - 26	109	1370	1200
Shap	34 - 35	76	1630	1550
	35 - 36	76	1600	1510
	36 - 37	76	1540	1500

Source - The Railway Data Centre.
¶ Rounded down to the nearest 10.

***Bahamas* at Carlisle with the stock for the March 29 'Cumbrian Mountain Express.'** SANDY SMEATON

the step change in performance from March 2017, producing runs which were a clear five minutes faster from Grayrigg to Shap than anything recorded in steam days that Sandy has been able to uncover. My own best run was with No. 45699 *Galatea* on 11 coaches on February 17, 2018, third in Sandy's table, and which I regard as one of the best steam runs I have ever recorded. The overall time was 69 minutes 53 seconds, helped by fast running after Shap and the firing of Chris Holmes, who clearly knew exactly how to fire this narrow firebox engine. Remember, Jubilees are only Class 6 locomotives but were performing like Class 8s. No. 45596 also has a double chimney and it shows.

Trespass on the S&C

Table Three shows the return run from Appleby to Hellifield. Sandy continues: "The return down the S&C started five minutes late at 3.13pm. Howe & Co Box was passed at 44mph with a minimum of 40 at the top of the 1-in-132 through Cotehill. The minimum at Baron Wood was 56½. Before Culgaith, there was a slowing to 33 for reasons unknown. The time to Appleby was 44 minutes 39 seconds against the relatively generous allowance of 50 minutes. Twenty minutes were allowed for watering, but we left after only seven to prevent the fire cooling. It was drizzling as we left Appleby, soon deteriorating to rain. The maximum at Ormside was 54mph, falling to 33½ at Griseburn and recovering to 48½ after Crosby Garrett.

"Approaching Kirkby Stephen, signals brought us down to six and 10mph through the station. The reason for the check was the unsafe action of a person on the Down platform, who had jumped down onto the four foot to retrieve a dropped item; the signalman saw this and slowed us as a precaution. To jump onto the track before an approaching train was a reckless and stupid act (all captured on video, as it happens). Recovery from the check was difficult, with some slight slipping, but after Mallerstang speed had recovered to 41½mph, then falling to a minimum of 34½ before Ais Gill Summit. There was little of the Dales to see through the heavy rain as we rolled down to Hellifield, having taken 72 minutes 40 seconds against the 69 minutes allowed, but arriving six early due to the early departure from Appleby. It was a frustrating end to a day which started so well."

Moving to Scotland now, Table Four shows how Class 37 Nos. 37409 *Loch Awe* and 37403 *Isle of Mull* got on working the Perth to Stirling section of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society/Locomotive Services Limited's marathon 'Capital Highlander' from Carlisle to Inverness and return on Saturday February 8. This section was in darkness, so Sandy was timing without the use of mileposts. Comparisons to my run with A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* on Friday, June 4, 1965, with the 7.10am Aberdeen to Glasgow on six coaches for 225 tons show the A4 getting to Stirling in 33 minutes 17 seconds as against the 33m 37s of the two diesels. *Sir Nigel Gresley* passed Hilton Junction in 3m 44s at 56mph, as against 5m 19s at 51mph, the summit at Gleneagles in 17m 24 s at 51mph (17m 23s at 59mph) and Dunblane in 27m 58s (27m 0s). No. 60007 reached 74½mph before Forteviot, climbed the 1-in-100 at 54/55mph, and ran easily afterwards, max 76mph.

Scottish Standards

Staying in Scotland, my visit on October 29/30, 1965, saw me on a variety of trains as usual and produced some notable performances,

BR Standard 5MT No. 73153 near Dunblane with the 2pm from Dundee to Glasgow on July 5, 1965. DON BENN

TABLE THREE: APPLEBY TO HELLIFIELD

Date	Saturday, March 29, 2025
Train	3.08pm Carlisle to Birmingham New Street
Loco	LMS Class 5XP 4-6-0 No. 45596
Load	Ten coaches, 352 tons tare and 385 tons gross
Driver	Alastair Meanley
Fireman	Sam Perry
Recorder	A Smeaton, GPS
Position	Fifth coach
Weather	Rain

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Appleby	0.00	0.00	00	00	10 early
Cross Croft	0.60		02	22	28½
OB 233	1.10		03	15	40½
Ormside Viaduct	1.94		04	19	54
Ormside	2.50		04	57	52
Helm Road	3.51		06	12	43½
Crowhill	4.81		08	13	34½
High Griseburn	5.44		09	18	33½
Soulby	6.36		10	51	39
Crosby Garrrett	7.53		12	32	44
Appleby Gill	8.46		13	48	48½
Smardale	9.34		14	56	42
Waitby Road	9.75		15	32	39/6# sigs
Kirkby Stephen	10.74	18.30	20	31	10*
OB 175	11.95		24	05	25
Birkett Tunnel N	12.78		26	03	25
Moss Bridge	13.94		28	32	36
Sycamore	14.63		29	34	41½
OB 141	16.20		31	58	37½
Ais Gill Viaduct	16.65		32	42	36
OB 136	16.98		33	15	35½/34½
Ais Gill Summit	17.55	29.30	34	13	37
Shotock Hill Tnl	18.83		36	00	51
Lunds	19.44		36	42	54/56
Garsdale	20.63	33.30	37	59	53½
Willans	21.88		39	24	56½/29*
Dent	23.90		42	14	33/53½
Blea Moor Tnl S	27.99		47	20	51
Blea Moor SB	28.81	44.30	48	40	32½*/27*
Ribblehead	30.05	47.30	51	17	32
Selside	32.50		54	27	59½/51
Horton	34.76		56	54	60/63
Arcrow Quarry GF	36.05		58	10	62/56½
Helwith Bridge	36.80		58	56	59/63½/60
Stainforth Tnl	38.63		60	43	56½/59½
Settle	40.80		63	00	47½
Settle Jct	42.78	62.30	65	17	57
Long Preston	44.80		67	47	41
A65 OB	45.30		68	57	14*/9*/12½
Hellifield	45.91	69.00	72	40	6 eaerly

trespassing

* brakes or speed restriction

including the 10am Dundee West to Glasgow, which I picked up at Gleneagles on the 29th. This had BR Standard 5MT No. 73146 on load six for 205 tons and driver Calderwood drove the Standard 5 hard throughout, getting to Glasgow early. I then caught the 1.15pm back to Perth with No. 73153 on seven for 260 tons. A good climb to Kinbuck, minimum 33½mph on the 1-in-88 and a nice dash downhill from Gleneagles saw us in Perth in 36m 20s, nearly two minutes inside schedule. I finished the day on the 5.30pm Glasgow to Aberdeen with another A4, No. 60019 *Bittern*, on eight coaches for 315 tons, which I caught from Stirling. We were 2½ minutes late leaving, and the unknown driver made it all up and a bit more by Perth. The overall time was 33m 8s for the 33.05 miles, minimum Kinbuck 44½mph and no less than 86½ at Dunning.

After a crew change we ran more sedately to Aberdeen, arriving three-and-a-quarter minutes early, including the first two sections in even time, max 75mph. I walked to my digs ready for my start on the 7.10am the next day; this was again hauled by No. 60019 and ran well to Perth, where I decided to wait for the 10am from Dundee knowing that it was likely to be the same loco and driver, which it was. It was a miserable run in the heavy rain to Gleneagles following a freight train and losing nine minutes, but then driver Calderwood got going and we were only a little late into Glasgow. The Dunblane to Stirling time was only 6m 18s for the 4.90 miles, max 76mph with seven on for 265 tons.

I repeated the day before by catching the 1.15pm to Perth, again with No. 73153 on seven for 260 tons, and Table Five shows the detail of the Stirling to Perth section. In heavy rain, the 5MT made a storming start, reaching 55½mph at Cornton, where we were 24 seconds ahead of the previous day and 36 ahead by Donblane, two seconds inside the tight seven-minute schedule. Here the engine started to slip and continued to do so until the top of the

TABLE FOUR: PERTH TO STIRLING

Date	Saturday, February 8, 2025
Train	4.42pm Inverness to Carlisle
Locos	37409 *Loch Awe* + 37403 *Isle of Mull*
Load	Nine coaches, 312 tare and 335 tons gross
Driver	Mike Wylie
Recorder	A Smeaton, GPS
Position	Second coach
Weather	Cold and dry

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Perth	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Friarton FB	0.85		03	34	29½
Hilton Jct	2.00	4.30	05	19	51
Earn Viaduct	3.50		06	49	70
Forteviot LC	6.66		09	16	78½
Inverdunning	7.83		10	10	80½/81
Dunning	9.46		11	23	79
Whitemoss LC	10.91		12	31	73½
Auchterarder	13.65	17.00	14	55	64
Kincardine Viaduct	14.00		15	15	63
Gleneagles	15.59		16	49	59½/59
Summit OB	16.14		17	23	59½
Blackford	1787	21.00	18	57	74
FB	18.40		19	23	77½/82
Greenloaning	21.99		22	05	79½/81
Kinbuck	25.34		24	36	80/81/62
Dunblane	28.01	27.00	27	00	57
Bridge of Allan	30.06		28	55	71½
Cornton SB	31.09		29	49	61½
Stirling	32.93	43.00	33	37	sigs stop

TABLE FIVE: STIRLING TO PERTH

Date	Saturday, October 30, 1965
Train	1.15pm Glasgow Buchanon Street to Dundee West
Engine	BR Standard class 5 4-6-0 No. 73153
Load	Seven coaches, 244 tons tare and 260 tons gross
Crew	St Rollox
Recorder	Don Benn
Position	Second coach of seven
Weather	Rain

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Stirling	0.00	0.00	00	00	r/t
Cornton SB	1.90		03	15	55/55½
Bridge of Allan	2.85		04	26	53
Dunblane	4.90	7.00	06	58	41#
MP 124	5.75		08	12	36#
MP 125	6.75		10	00	33
Kinbuck	7.55		11	31	39
Greenloaning	10.75		15	17	60½
Carsebreck	12.75		17	09	63/64
Blackford	15.00		19	23	58½/60
MP 135	16.75		21	09	57
Gleneagles	17.20	22.00	21	48	63
Auchterarder	19.25		23	35	72½
MP 139	20.75		24	42	80
MP 140	21.75		25	26	82½
Dunning	23.40		26	38	84
Forteviot	26.15		28	44	76
Forgandenny	29.05		31	12	68
Hilton Jct	30.95	34.00	33	04	54*
Perth	33.05	38.00	36	23	

* brakes or speed restriction

slipping

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BR Standard Class 7 No. 70001 *Lord Hurcomb* climbs the 1-in-88 gradient at Dunblane on July 5, 1965, with the 9.25am from Crewe to Perth. DON BENN

1-in-88, where the minimum was a creditable 33mph compared to 33½ the previous day. We then went easily along to Gleneagles, from where we dashed down the bank with a maximum of 84mph at Dunning, my highest with a Caprotti-fitted Standard 5. The overall time was 36m 23s, almost the same as the previous day.

In July 1965, I spent the best part of a week in Scotland, doing a mixture of linesiding and timing. On Wednesday, July 7, I caught the 8.25pm Perth to Carlisle as part of my plan to catch the 6.35am Perth non-stop 'Mail' to Aberdeen. The 8.25pm was booked with a Class 47 diesel but Britannia 7P Pacific No. 70037 *Hereward the Wake* was instead standing in on a rainy and cool evening and took the train as far as Carstairs. It ran well throughout initially, with seven coaches for 245 tons, and then nine for 325 from Stirling. There was some good hill climbing, firstly on the 1-in-100 up to Gleneagles (min 43mph), then the 1-in-77/88 from Mossend to after Holytown (minimum 28mph), and on the1-in-100/102/99 to Law Junction, minimum 37mph after 50 in the dip. We were 4½ minutes early into Carstairs where three more coaches were added, bringing the tare load to 412 tons including sleepers. This big load was taken onto Carlisle behind Type 2 Class 26 D5330, but apart from remembering some slow running I took no interest, preferring to doze, something I regret to this day. At Carlisle I retired to the all-night buffet for refreshments and watched No. 70009 leave on the 2.19am to Stranraer, before catching Class 40 D260 to Perth for the 'Mail' to Aberdeen behind A4 No. 60006 *Sir Ralph Wedgewood*, which turned out to be a poor run. Maybe more on Scotland in a future column; next time, we will focus on No. 35028 *Clan Line*. HR

On October 30, 1965, 5MT No. 73146 enters Perth with the 10am Dundee to Glasgow service. DON BENN

TABLE SIX: PERTH TO CARSTAIRS

Date	Wednesday, July 7, 1965
Train	8.25pm Perth to Euston
Engine	BR Class 7 4-6-2 No. 70037 *Hereward the Wake*
Load to Stirling	Seven coaches, 232 tons tare and 245 tons gross
From Stirling	Nine coaches, 308 tons tare and 325 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn
Weather	Rain

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Perth	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Hilton Jct	2.10	4.00	04	53	47½
Forgandenny	4.00		06	53	61/64
Forteviot	6.90		09	37	63½
Dunning	9.65		12	14	65½/66
MP 141	10.30		12	55	61
MP 140	11.30		13	57	56
MP 139	12.30		15	05	52½
MP 138	13.30		16	19	47
Auchterarder	14.80		16	50	45½
MP 137	14.30		17	41	44
MP 136	15.30		19	05	43
Gleneagles	15.85	22.00	19	48	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
MP 135	0.45		02	11	23
Blackford	2.20		04	36	53
Carsebreck	4.45		06	56	64
Greenloaning	6.45		08	44	66½/70½
Kinbuck	9.65		11	34	63
MP 124	11.45		13	20	69
Dunblane	12.30	14.00	14	05	63*
Brdge of Allan	14.35		15	57	70½/71½
Cornton SB	15.30		17	14	37*sigs
Stirling	17.20	19.00	20	44	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Polmasie	1.50		03	22	44
Bannockburn	2.40		04	36	43½
Plean	4.15		06	54	41½
Alloa Jct SB	5.90	8.00	08	50	67½/68½
Larbert	8.10	11.00	11	37	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	1 early
Larbert Jct SB	0.60	1.00	01	52	35
Carmuirs SB	1.25		02	42	40
MP 108	2.15		04	13	39½
Greenhill	3.15	6.00	06	35	37
Carslecary SB	5.35		08	44	53½/50
MP 103	7.15		10	53	52½
MP 102	8.15		12	05	49
Cumbernauld	8.95		13	05	48
Madgescroft	10.70		14	42	64
Garnqueen N Jct	13.15	17.00	17	24	60
Gartsherrie S Jct	14.40	19.00	18	39	53*
Coatbridge	15.45	21.00	20	25	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	1¾ early
Wifflet Lower	0.60		01	55	37/47
Mossend	3.39	6.00	05	48	30*
Holytown	4.54	10.00	08	06	33/28
MP 89¼	5.09		09	32	28½
MP 88	6.34		11	20	50
MP 86	8,34		14	03	41
MP 85	9.34		15	35	37
Law Jct	10.11	22.00	17	40	19*
Carluke	12.46		21	27	38½
Braidwood	13.55		23	34	35
Craigenhill SB	15.86		27	03	39
Gleghorn	17.95		29	33	60
Lanark Jct	18.48	36.00	30	06	60
			sigs stop		
MP 74	19.34		33	15	0*
			34	46	
Carstairs	20.88	40.00	37	21	4¼ early

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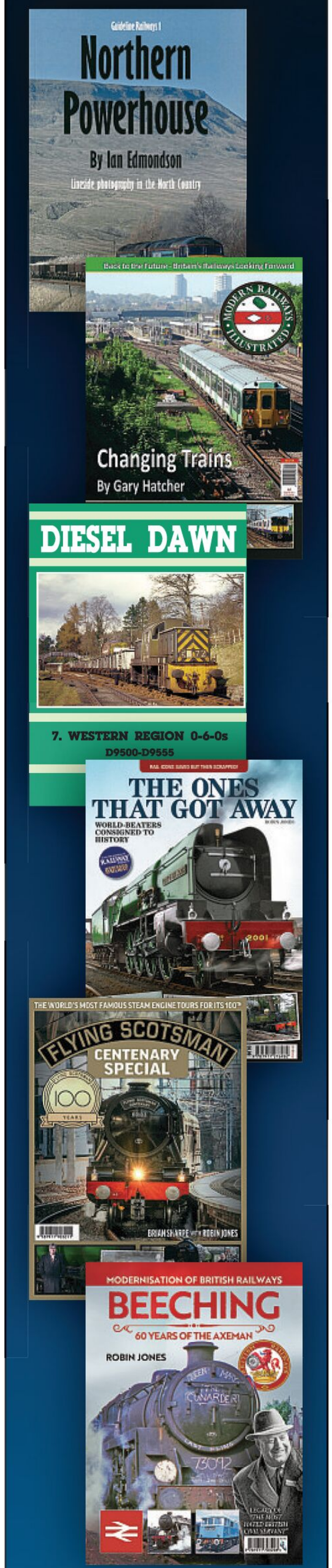

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WELCOME HOME:
BETTON GRANGE RETURNS TO THE DEE VALLEY

More than a quarter of a century after the new-build project was launched in Wales, the 81st member of the GWR Grange class fulfilled an ambition held by many when it finally returned to where that story began – the Llangollen Railway. **Owen Hayward** followed the crowds to Denbighshire to witness this gala success story unfold, and which started off the line's 50th anniversary year with a bang.

From a summer holiday on the Norfolk coast in Great Eastern territory through to taking up a new residency at Toddington on former GWR metals, No. 6880 *Betton Grange* has been in high demand throughout its first 12 months of service – and continues to be so, with further appearances booked throughout the year ahead.

A significant visit on the weekend of April 11-13 saw the new-build 4-6-0 cross over the Welsh border for the first time since completion, returning to the Llangollen Railway to star at the line's branch line gala. It was a significant moment in numerous ways, for not only was it at Llangollen where the project began back in 1998, but it is also that line's 50th anniversary of the commencement of heritage operations. Yet the brief visit of No. 6880 was more important than some might have realised – and helped attract more than 1500 passengers to the LR's services that weekend.

Mending bridges

Up until 2018, when it relocated to Tyseley Locomotive Works in Birmingham, construction of the Grange largely took place within the workshops at Llangollen, where a contract engineering firm had been established and at the time was also working on projects. This operation was wound up prior to the railway being placed into receivership in March 2021, and all the external jobs either went to other contractors or returned to their home railways.

Since then, the LR has rebuilt with new management and a viable business model, though the engineering firm is no more and there are currently no plans to revive it. As those projects departed, many questioned whether the likes of *Betton Grange* would ever return to run there.

The announcement earlier this year that it had indeed been lined up to attend was hugely welcomed, and the visit has put any suggestions of ambiguity between the two organisations to bed.

Paul Evans is one of the LR's volunteers who helped work on the construction of No. 6880 prior to its departure. A fireman within the steam locomotive department, he expressed his delight in seeing run on the railway. "I wasn't involved from the very start but joined later in the project. We would put things together and take them apart again, fettle and re-fit until it was right, often working until idnight on Saturdays and Sundays.

"A number of us were very disappointed to lose the engine so close to its completion.

Prior to the April 11-13 branch line gala, *Betton Grange* starred in two days of photographic charters. On April 8, No. 6880 approaches the Glyndyfrdwy outer distant signal at Garth-Y-Dwr. ROBERT FALCONER

The two Llangollen Railway Trust-owned locomotives pass at Glyndyfrdwy on April 12, with No. 7754 bound for Corwen, while *Austin No. 1* arrives from that very same station with a terminating brake van trip. OWEN HAYWARD

Wearing a headboard for the 'Cathedrals Express,' *Betton Grange* approaches Corwen with a non-stop service from Llangollen on April 12. OWEN HAYWARD

Many Llangollen people believed in it enough to put money into it.

"I tried to keep involved with both groups, but that just wasn't possible, and the Llangollen Railway held a family connection with my father John H Evans firing out of Croes Newydd, Wrexham, for the Western Region until the end of steam. In general conversations, the subject would come up and then pass again as the finished engine travelled the heritage circuit. With all the stars aligned and some fantastic people in both organisations wanting it to happen, it did!

"I was lucky enough to be the first fireman to take it off shed when it arrived and the last fireman to bring it back on shed, the latter with driver Dave Owen, our former Chief Mechanical Engineer who began the build in the works.

"Many people have played a huge part, and the locomotive is a credit to those who contributed in whatever way they could. For me, pleased would certainly be an understatement – I've smiled and smiled."

Although examples of the Granges did work in Wales, none ever actually worked on the route between Barmouth and Ruabon, which was a blue classification for locomotive weight, the Granges being a heavier red classification. The known closest was to the junction at Ruabon, making the visit of No. 6880 even more of an historic moment as it ran between the iconic station at Llangollen, situated on the shore of the River Dee, and the terminus at Corwen, where the entirely new station was completed in 2023. With the original town station no longer accessible, the railway's volunteers and local contractors spent more than a decade building up the embankment to cater for the new platform, loop line and subway access, going on to win the Heritage Railway Association's Infrastructure Award in February 2024.

Rather aptly, the first day of the branch line gala was also exactly 12 months after the Grange made its first ever movements under its own power at Tyseley. From shuffling around a workshop yard to romping through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that is the Dee Valley, the stage was set for the LR to incorporate No. 6880 in what was a highly successful gala.

Great Western celebrations

Betton Grange was in a five-strong line-up, joining the resident steam fleet of 5700 0-6-0PT No.7754 (which carries the BR transitional era livery with British Railways lettering on the tank in GWR-style Egyptian font), Collett 2884 class 2-8-0 No. 3802, and Kitson Works 0-6-0ST No. 5459 *Austin No. 1*, the LR's first steam locomotive to work trains in 1981. A fifth locomotive came in the shape of Class 14 0-6-0DH D9525. The 'Teddy Bears,' as they were nicknamed, were all allocated to the Western Region when new, though some did move eastwards and then eventually into colliery use. D9525 was one of those examples, being based at Bath Bristol Road depot when it entered traffic in 1965, before moving to Hull Dairycoates in 1967. With the work for which the class had been intended fast disappearing, their BR careers were short-lived, and like many, D9525 was sold into industrial use with the National Coal Board, spending nearly 20 years working the Durham coalfields. Nineteen of the class survive in preservation and two examples – D9500 and D9502 – were once resident at Llangollen in the early preservation years, though neither ever ran there. At intervals throughout the weekend, D9525 paid tribute to these two former residents by carrying their identities on one side of its cab.

Whereas the Grange was working its first trains at the place where its story began, D9525 worked its first public services in numerous decades. Withdrawn some years ago with a seized power unit, in 2021 it was bought by D9525 Ltd and moved to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, where it was made operational once more last November. Although it worked some of that line's Santa specials the following month, until this gala it had yet to work a normal public service train and thus proved another attractive lure, appealing to the diesel enthusiast market.

With Wales being GWR country, the final day of the gala saw tributes paid to its southern end. Replica GWR 'TARGET' (trip as required goods engine turn) boards were made up and carried by some of the locomotives.

BR class 14 D9525 gets up to speed along Bonwm Straight on April 11 as it departs Corwen. OWEN HAYWARD

Pannier tank No. 7754 approaches Deeside with a pair of suburban carriages bound for Corwen. OWEN HAYWARD

Above: Kitson-build 0-6-0ST No. 5459 coasts pasts Fisherman's Crossing with the brake van service to Glyndyfrdwy. KENNY FELSTEAD

Above: GWR 2884 class 2-8-0 No. 3802 departs Berwyn on April 12, with the River Dee and chain bridge crossing it in the valley below. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Left: *Betton Grange* glides through Carrog on April 13, carrying a headboard and train reporting number for the 'Capitals United Express' which once ran between Paddington and Cardiff. OWEN HAYWARD

These were a method of train identification in addition to regular lamp or route discs right through to nationalisation. Circular or triangular in shape, they carried letters, numbers, or a combination of both, the first character telling signallers where the working had originated and the second denoting the diagram it was working as outlined in the timetables of the period. They were primarily used in areas where there were many similar looking coal trains, but were also employed on other local and banking duties.

Meanwhile, *Betton Grange* carried train reporting numbers on its smokebox door on each service, with the number shown corresponding with the headboard it carried, recreating high-profile express services that once ran to the region, including the 'Capitals United Express' (which ran between Paddington and Cardiff from 1956 to 1965), 'Pembroke Coast Express'(Paddington-Pembroke Dock, 1953-1963) and 'The Red Dragon' (Carmarthen-Paddington, 1950-1965).

Five passenger-carrying rakes were in use throughout the event; two comprised Mk. 1 carriages, while another pair utilised the Mk. 1 suburban compartment vehicles. The final set was made up of five brake vans plus LNER pigeon van No. 6854, which has been converted into a wheelchair-accessible passenger-carrying vehicle. As a result, every train operating at the event offered disabled access space.

With a successful timetable format taken from last year's event, a mix of services kept things interesting, varying between full line runs and short journeys from each end to the intermediate stations at Glyndyfrdwy and Carrog. In addition to shed tours, visitors were also able to enjoy footplate rides aboard *Austin No. 1*, which ran between the shed and goods junction for several hours each day before attaching to the rear of an afternoon service to Carrog. There it collected the brake vans (which had travelled up behind the pannier or Teddy Bear earlier in the day) and ran a trip to Corwen and Glyndyfrdwy, before finally returning to Llangollen once again.

LR trust manager Tom Taylor said: "As we celebrate our milestone 50th year in preservation, this is a fabulous prelude to what will undoubtedly be a special year for us all, for which we should take encouragement from. Together, we are not just maintaining and operating a railway – we are creating cherished memories and experiences for our visitors, and that is something I feel we should all be incredibly proud of.

"Passenger numbers saw 1510 people paying to travel on our services this year – an increase of 10% on 2024 – and we anticipate we had many more visitors who simply chose to enjoy the atmosphere and frequent our platforms with a cup of tea or a beer.

"Secondary spend also doubled on 2024, due in part to the reconfiguration of our retail offer at Llangollen, but also thanks to the extended catering offers throughout all our stations.

"Even after the costs of bringing in a guest locomotive, the event turned a higher profit, and I am immensley proud of all who helped make it such a huge success." HR

Unique look planned for former Royal prairie

AS REPORTED last issue, small prairie No. 5532 was brought out of the shed for static display each day, showcasing decades of progress to bring what is a former 'Royal Train' locomotive into service for the first time in preservation. The boiler is currently at Tyseley for contract work to be carried out, while the rolling chassis (complete with smokebox, cab and tanks fitted) remains at Llangollen, patiently awaiting its return.

On April 13, members of the Llangollen Railway Great Western Locomotive Group, which owns No. 5532, voted in favour of a proposal which will see the small prairie outshopped in unlined black with British Railways lettering on the tanks – a scheme not currently carried by any of the class in preservation.

If the work required is completed to the current schedule, then it is hoped that this 2-6-2T may well make its debut as early as 2027 provided the final £55,000 can be raised to fund everything. In addition to one-off donations, the LRGWLG runs a well-supported 5532 club, members of which make monthly donations of £10 by standing order.

Carrying a board for one of the four Cathays-based autotrain diagrams, No. 5532 sits in the yard at Llangollen on April 13. OWEN HAYWARD

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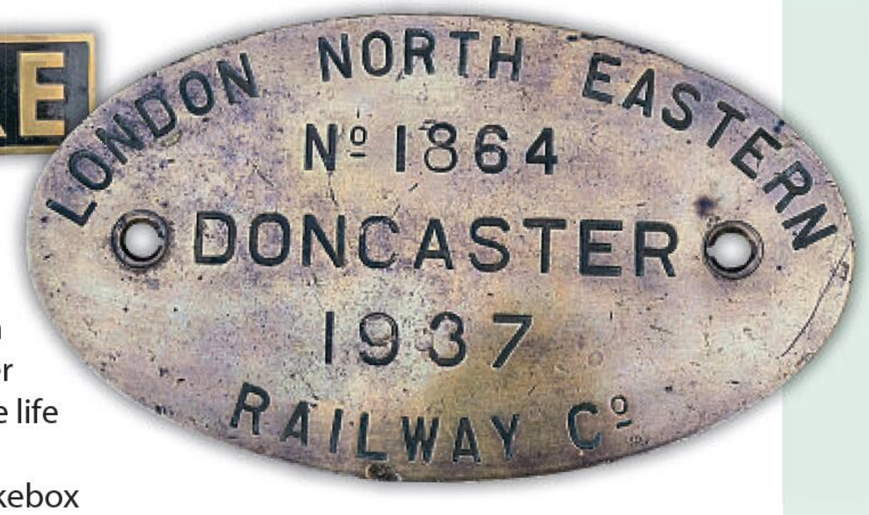


NINE nameplates from three of the post-Grouping 'Big Four' are among the early entrants in GW Railwayana's two-day auction on July 19/20, with five from the GWR, one from the LMS, and three from the LNER.

In chronological order, the GWR contingent is *Skylark* from Bird class 4-4-0 No. 3744/3454, *King Henry VI* from No. 6018, *Hampden* from Castle class No. 5074, *Whorlton Hall* (No. 6929), and *Little Linford Hall* from No. 7912. All were built at Swindon within the GWR era other than the last, which was constructed post-Nationalisation.

Skylark entered traffic in January 1910 and survived into BR stock before being withdrawn from Reading (81D) in November 1951, while No. 6018 was built in June 1928 at a cost with tender of £7397 and after working the last King-hauled BR train was taken out of traffic from Old Oak Common (81A) in December 1962. Preservation efforts to save the 4-6-0, which ran 1,738,387 miles in service, were unsuccessful and the locomotive was cut up at Swindon in October 1963.

No. 5074 was outshopped in July 1938 as *Denbigh Castle* but in January 1941 was renamed after a Second World War Handley Page bomber and its original name was subsequently given to No. 7032. Withdrawal came in May 1964 from Bristol St Philip's Marsh (82B).

The two Halls were built more than eight years apart, No. 6929 in November 1941 and No. 7912 in March 1950, and both ended their careers when allocated to Banbury (2D), the former in October 1963 and No. 7912 two years later, in October 1965.

From Glasgow to Leeds

Early in April the auction's sole LMS entrant was *Alberta*, from Jubilee No. 45562, which was built by North British of Glasgow in August 1934 and, despite being one of the earliest to enter traffic, was one of the last of the 191-strong class to be withdrawn, in September 1967 from Leeds Holbeck (55A), having been in operation for 33 years.

Onward then to the LNER and, again in chronologic order, to *Berwickshire* and *Westmorland* from D49 duo Nos. 62709 and 62735, and *Madge Wildfire* from Arthur Peppercorn-designed, BR-built A1 No. 60135. The D49s were built at Darlington in January 1928 and June 1929 respectively and withdrawn from Edinburgh Haymarket (64B) in January 1960 and Scarborough (50E) in August 1958, and No. 60135 was outshopped by Darlington in November 1948 and withdrawn from Ardsley (56B) in November 1962, resulting in a service life of just 14 years.

This Pacific, whose smokebox numberplate and one of its worksplates (works No. 2054) will also go under the hammer, as separate lots, was named after a character in the 1818 Sir Walter Scott novel The Heart of Midlothian, and that leads us straightaway to a railway link, a King's Cross-Edinburgh express of the same name that ran from 1951-68. I recorded this train on six occasions at a number of East Coast Main line stations between September 1959 and July 1961, variously hauled by A4 No. 60030 *Golden Fleece*, A4 No. 60033 *Seagull*, A3 No. 60049 *Galtee More*, A3 No. 60102 *Sir Frederick Banbury*, A2 No. 60516 *Hycilla*, and English Electric Type 4 (later Class 40) 1Co-Co1 D270.

However, I digress, as ever, so back to the auction, and other locomotive categories. In addition to the worksplate from No. 60135, there will be three Doncaster plates, from A4 No. 60004 *William Whitelaw* (works No. 1864), which started life in December 1937 as *Great Snipe* and was renamed in July 1941, and A3s Nos. 60093 *Coronach* and 60108 *Gay Crusader*, and a Darlington plate from B1 No. 61020 *Gemsbok*. GWR cabsides to feature will include Nos. 5019 and 7013 from classmates *Treago Castle* and *Bristol Castle*, 6012 (*King Edward VI*),and another class pairing, 5953 and 6934 from *Dunley Hall* and *Beachamwell Hall*, and for heritage modern traction collectors there will be cabside E3048, from a 1960-built West Coast Main Line 100mph Class 82 Bo-Bo electric locomotive.

Moving from electric motive power back to steam brings us to smokebox numberplates, and to 5046 and 5092 from Castle classmates *Earl Cawdor* and *Tresco Abbey*, and to LMS 45549 from an unnamed Patriot and 45631 from Jubilee *Tanganyika*. The auction will be live online on both days, starting at 9.30am on July 19 and 10am the following day.

Totems from far and wide are the stars in variety show

STATION totem signs from a variety of BR regions went under the hammer at a collectables online auction held by Cullens of Wallington, Surrey, that ended on March 30. The leading realisation was achieved by BR(W) Reading General at £880, followed by a Scottish Region representative, Dumfries, the location of shed 68B, that went for £660.

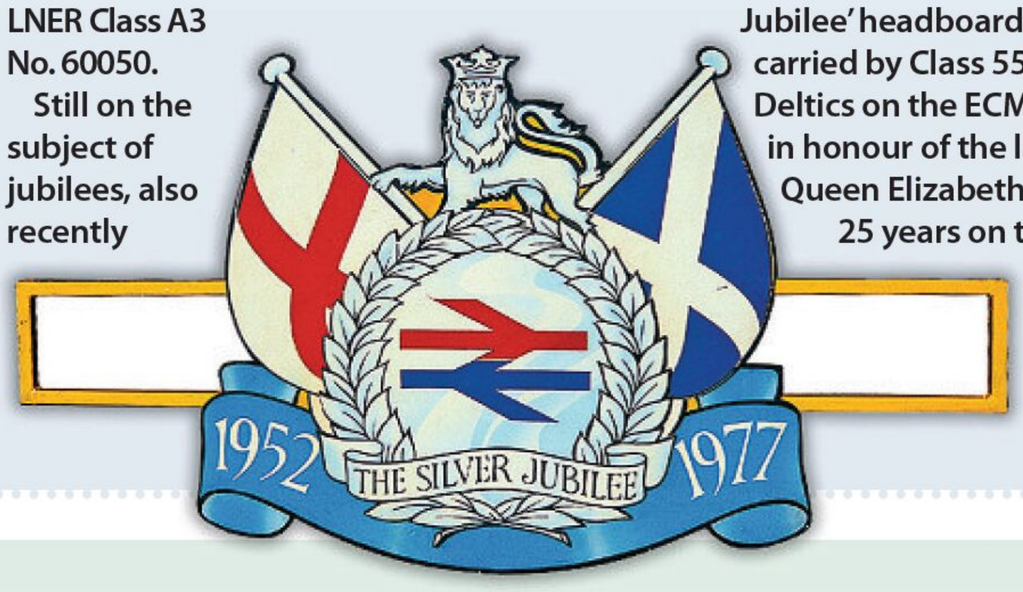
Next in line was BR(E) Becontree, which fetched £620. This former London Tilbury & Southend Line station was opened by the LMS in June 1926 as Gale Street Halt, renamed Becontree in July 1932, and is now on the District Line as part of the London Underground network. Further prices included BR(S) Abbey Wood (£500) and a second Western Region totem, Whitland, which went for £470. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 25% (inc VAT).

Late arrivals check in at TRA sale – with *Repulse* leading the way

THE nameplate selection in Talisman Railwayana's May 17 auction has received a late boost with the addition of a third representative of the LMS Jubilee class, *Repulse* from No. 45725, a September 1936 Crewe product that was withdrawn from Sheffield Darnall (41A) in December 1962. As reported in last month's column, *Trinidad* and *Inflexible* from Nos. 45634 and 45727 were early consignments to the auction, as were *Pyrland Hall* from GWR No. 4961 and *Persimmon* from LNER Class A3 No. 60050.

Still on the subject of jubilees, also recently arrived at Talisman HQ for inclusion in the sale is a 'Silver Jubilee' headboard carried by Class 55 Deltics on the ECML in honour of the late Queen Elizabeth II's 25 years on the throne in 1977. A second headboard is 'Butlins Express,' as carried by LNER and later BR trains taking holidaymakers to such locations as Clacton and Skegness, while another addition is BR(M) totem Dent, a Settle-Carlisle Line station that at 1150ft above sea level is the highest operational main line station in England.

The auction is being held at Newark Showground and starts at 10am.



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Enthusiasts on the launch pad

EARLY June will see the launch of a new railwayana auction house founded by Edward Bird and Steve Walker-Manuell, who between them have a collecting span of 45 years. As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 329, the enthusiasts will operate under the name Main Line Railwayana, and their debut online 500-lot sale running from June 2-8 shows a leaning towards totems, allied to a selection of such familiar categories as signalling, worksplates, handlamps, cast-iron, enamels, and seatbacks.

Top of the list is nameplate *Saint Aidan* from Class 47 Co-Co No. 47535, which was outshopped by Crewe in January 1965 as D1649 and withdrawn in February 1999. There are also worksplates from such heritage modern traction as Class 31, 37, and 47 diesels, the smokebox numberplate from LMS 2-6-4T No. 42641, a cabside from GWR 2-8-0 No. 2851, and London Underground 1938 Tube stock destination plates.

This stock was a familiar means of conveyance for we London steam era trainspotters darting from one terminus to another, and such was their longevity that 10 sets survived until 2021, operating as BR Class 483 on the Isle of Wight's Ryde Pier Head to Shanklin line.

Signalling includes the complete set of shelf instruments and the diagram from Scout Green signalbox, which was located on the WCML between Shap and Tebay and opened by the LNWR in 1871, and closed in 1972, and within the single line keys/tablets selection are Barnstaple Jc-Fremington and Ravenscar-Fyling Hall.

Travelling further north, we arrive at the category B-listed station of Nairn, on the Aberdeen to Inverness line, which was opened in 1855, is still operational, and from which a totem sign and running-in board will be going under the hammer.

Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **May 17**
  Talisman Railwayana
- **May 19-26**
  JustaClickago *(photographs, slides and negatives)*
- **May 29/30**
  Vectis *(model trains)*
- **Ends May 30**
  Paddington Ticket Auctions
- **June 2-8**
  Main Line Railwayana
- **June 7**
  Great Central Railwayana

GWR 2-8-0 is an overnight success

ONE of the cabside numberplates from GWR 'Night Owl' 2-8-0 No. 4706 sold for £3000 (exc buyer's premium of 22½% + VAT) at a vintage toys and model trains sale held by Excalibur Auctions of Kings Langley, near Hemel Hempstead, on March 29.

This engine was one of nine in a class introduced in 1919 for mainly overnight fast freight operations – hence their nickname – but were also occasionally rostered for passenger trains during busy summer Saturdays, in which role I logged Nos. 4708 on the Down 'Royal Duchy' and 4704 on a Down Weston-Super-Mare express at Reading General on August 30, 1958.

Jubilees come up trumps for Great Northern

SIR Wiliam Stanier's LMS Jubilee class turned up trumps in Great Northern's March 27-April 5 online auction when nameplate *Perseverance* from No. 45731 celebrated its auction debut by going under the metaphorical hammer for £4700, while the smokebox numberplate from classmate No. 45581 *Bihar* and *Orissa* joined in the fun with a realisation of £3000.

Lower down the nameplate order came *St. Dunstan* from a colliery 0-6-0ST built by Avonside Engine Co of Bristol in 1927, whose price of £1220 was matched by a pair of safety valves from an unknown locomotive.

Just below the four-figure barrier at £980 was a 1920 LNER/Kitson & Co of Leeds works numberplate from K2 class 2-6-0 No. 61792, and for £620 the smokebox numberplate from LMS Class 4F 0-6-0 No. 44000 found a new home.

The station totem signs category was inevitably there or thereabouts, headed by BR(NE) Halifax Town at £3150, followed by London Midland Region trio Ambergate at £1300, Rawstenstall (£1250), and Marsh Lane and Strand Road (£1070), and Western Region Henley-on-Thames (£1000).

Another category winner with a realisation of £910 was North Eastern Railway signalbox nameboard Tyne Dock Bottom from the Consett-Tyne Dock route. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15%.

Post-sale, Great Northern's Dave Robinson described prices as "all over the place at the moment," adding: "New collectors are coming to the fore, but younger people aren't interested in steam. Our hobby is nostalgia-driven, and with steam, only special items will keep their money."

Wrenn model flies to the top

Wartime black may not have been the most flattering livery for express steam locomotives, but a Wrenn OO-gauge model of LMS streamlined Princess Coronation Pacific No. 6237 *City of Bristol* in this guise caught the eye at a Vectis railwayana and model trains sale on March 27 by achieving the top realisation of £900. Behind at £440 was another Wrenn OO-gauge model of a streamlined Pacific, SR West Country class No. 34004 *Yeovil*.

The live online auction was held over two days, and on March 26 a 16mm scale live steam 0-6-0ST constructed from Roundhouse Engineering of Doncaster components achieved the highest realisation of £540. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

➜ A pre-First World War O-gauge model of Great Northern Railway C1 class 4-4-2 No. 1442 made by Carette of Germany took top spot in a model trains sale held by Special Auction Services of Newbury on March 25/26 with a realisation of £500 (exc buyer's premium of 20% + VAT).

Charity mission accomplished as prized King sells for £40k

MISSION accomplished was the message on April 9 from the Elmdon Model Engineering Society after a 7¼in gauge live steam model of GWR No. 6011 *King James I* sold in a closed auction for £40,000, with every penny being donated to Alzheimer's Research UK.

The model was built over a period of nine years by society member and retired BR steam driver Dennis Herbert, who decided to put it up for auction in memory of his wife Iris and several colleagues who had succumbed to Alzheimer's.

Denis Chick, a trustee of Transport Museum Wythall near Birmingham, where the society is based and operates a miniature railway, said the successful bidder was a member of the society. "Dennis was very keen to ensure the model would raise a significant amount for the charity, but also that it would go to a good home where it would be both used and cherished, not stuffed and mounted.

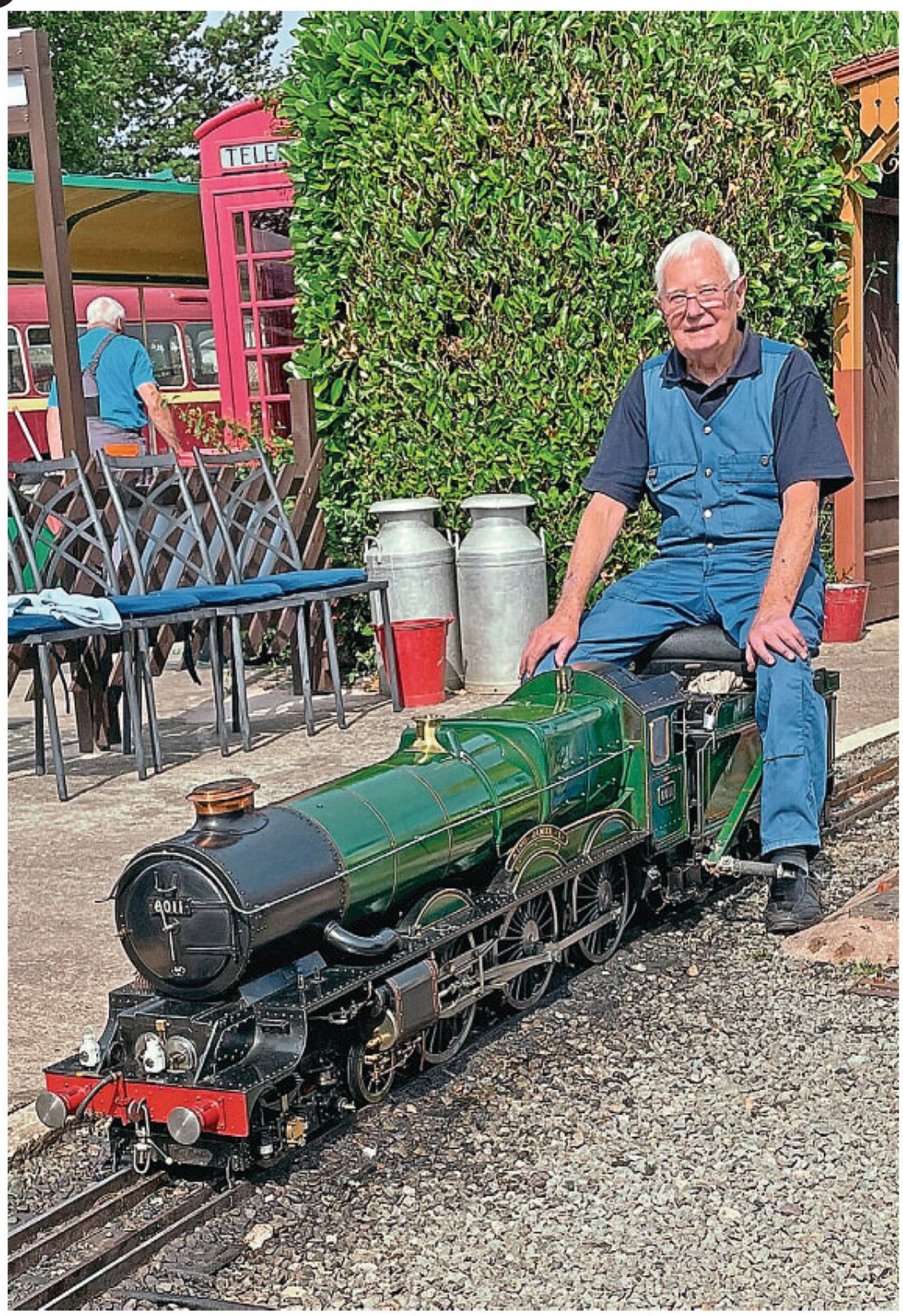
"We are pleased to announce that the bidder is a member of the society, which will ensure that the locomotive will remain running on the society's miniature railway in tribute to Dennis and his support of the society during almost 35 years."

Reece Greenstreet, the society's chairman, supported Denis Chick's enthusiasm for the outcome of the auction. "We are delighted the new owner is in our midst," he told *Heritage Railway*. "The auction has raised a significant amount for Alzheimer's Research, Dennis's wish throughout the process, but the result means we can all see and ride behind this majestic machine for years to come.

"He has always been a huge influence on the railway, encouraging and mentoring our members young and old, in the art of miniature engineering, and his legacy will live on in both the locomotive and his unstinting contribution to the society."

During his BR career Birmingham-born Dennis, who is 90, drove many GWR-designed locomotives, including the King class on the Wolverhampton to Paddington service, and a self-taught model engineer who has also built clocks.

Sadly, he has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, which led him to seek the society's support in putting his affairs in order, including the sale of the model of No. 6011.



Majestic King: Dennis Herbert with his self-built 7¼in gauge live steam No. 6011 *King James I* which he has sold for £40,000 in aid of Alzheimer's Research UK. ELMDON MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Images of a widely-travelled diplomat

A COLLECTION of 131 locomotive images in five continents will be one of the highlights in the quarterly online sale being held by railway photographs, negatives and slides specialist JustaClickAgo from May 19-26.

They were taken by American Richard Pennoyer, an Anglophile diplomat who was number two at the US embassy in London during the First World War.

Pennoyer, who married the Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury in 1917 and died in London in November 1968 at the age of 82, photographed steam in Europe, South Africa, Asia, Australia and North America, featuring locomotives built between the 1860s and the 1950s.

Another collection going under the hammer comprises 33 glass plate black-and-white negatives of mainly GWR steam taken by CG Oldham in the 1940s, while a second glass plate negatives collection consists of 78 images of GNR, NER, GCR and GWR representatives captured around the turn of the 20th century at such locations as King's Cross top shed, Plaistow depot, and Acton, Aberdovey, Blisworth, Doncaster and York stations.

LNWR adds weight to 'Bloxham' sale

AN LNWR office brass paperweight engraved 'Loco.Works.Manager.' was the top seller with a price of £1000 in Great Central's 'Bloxham'-style sale of general railwayana held on March 13/14, while two ex-military railway artefacts, a Railway Signal Co signalbox hand generator and bell, and a Railway Signal Co miniature staff machine key configuration 'A' No. 12845, went under the hammer for £980 and £680 respectively.

Between this pair at £740 was a Great North Eastern Railway presentation brass carriage crest. The GNER was a post-privatisation train operating company owned by Sea Containers that held the ECML franchise from 1996 to 2007. The prices quoted exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

These GCRA general railwayana sales originated pre-Covid as fast-flowing 'no frills' auctions that do not take telephone bidding and were originally held in Bloxham prior to going live online. Such sales are now a popular and expanding feature of the railwayana scene that have been taken up by most of the specialist auction houses.

Pre-order Issue 333: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Visiting Class 55 Deltic No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* passes Swithland Sidings with the 10am Loughborough to Leicester North service on April 6 during the Reunification Open Weekend. GRAHAM NUTTALL

NOW FOR 'RAILWAY 200 PLUS' – GREAT CENTRAL REUNIFICATION!

A final decision on planning permission for the ground-breaking scheme to link the two Great Central heritage railways at Loughborough is anticipated imminently, and both lines held a joint gala weekend to highlight the enormous potential benefits, reports **Robin Jones**.

In this, the Railway 200 year, we are proudly celebrating Britain's landmark achievements which reshaped the course of world transport history. Our volunteer-led heritage sector has over the past three-quarters of a century already become a monument to the successes of the past 200 years and longer, and once the bicentenary celebrations are over, it will continue to push forward with that clear aim in sight, most likely fuelled by renewed public interest in the rail sector.

The next 'mission impossible' to be deservedly turned into reality may well be the long-standing scheme to reunify the two halves of the Great Central Railway – one in Leicestershire, the other in Nottinghamshire – to create in effect a 'living' equivalent of a national museum in the heart of England.

The GCR at Loughborough, Britain's only double-track heritage main line, together with its Mountsorrel freight branch, will be able to run over its northern counterpart the GCR (Nottingham), accessing the expanding multi-faceted Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre at Ruddington. Not only that, the unified line will have a main line connection for use by incoming and outgoing charter trains, bringing the potential to greatly boost the appeal of Loughborough as a major tourist destination, with the railway also serving the edge of two major cities and within easy access of the country's motorway and major roads network.

The Reunification Open Weekend bus link between the two halves of the heritage era GCR standing next to BR Standard 9F No. 92214 at Quorn & Woodhouse station on April 6. TOM INGALL

On April 5/6, both lines pooled resources to hold a Reunification Open Weekend to showcase the immense potential of the scheme to the wider public, with diesel services on the GCR(N) and both steam and diesel-hauled trains on the GCR with a vintage rail replacement bus service transporting travellers across the 'missing' section of track.

Many attractions taking place along the line included railway journalist Tom Ingall delivering reunification talks, and those keen to explore the developing connection – the key part of the scheme now to be tackled is the replacement of 550 yards of embankment taken away by BR in the Seventies between Loughborough locomotive shed and the new bridge crossing the Midland Main Line – joined a guided trackbed tour highlighting its route.

About 1500 visitors attended the weekend, which followed much of the format of the joint gala held in March 2024 (featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 318) to mark the 125th anniversary of the London Extension, when both heritage lines were also linked by vintage buses.

Above and below: Two of the computer animations of the proposed reunifying link between the two Great Central heritage railways. GCR(N)

A lever and a vintage-style stove in Hotchley Hill signalbox. TOM INGALL

"This is an unusual piece of railway history and it's wonderful to see it coming back to life."

BR Standard 5MT4-6-0 No. 73156 heads the 8.30am Loughborough to Leicester North empty coaching stock past Swithland Sidings on April 6. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Andy Fillingham, of the GCR(N), said: "Our shared Reunification Open Weekend is the first time both halves of the railway have run connecting trains, with visitors needing only one ticket.

"In the heart of the country, we are creating a national centre for railway heritage – a unique legacy for generations to come."

He added that it showed off "the exciting potential of the rebuilt railway as a linear museum through the heart of the East Midlands."

The reunification project is in many ways a 21st-centry parallel to one of the biggest feats of engineering undertaken on any heritage railway, the Llyn Ystradau deviation on the Ffestiniog Railway, made necessary by the Central Electricity Generating Board flooding part of the line below Tanygrisiau in 1957, as part of a scheme involving a new hydroelectric power station and lake on land compulsorily purchased the year before. Following eight years of surveys and planning by the FR revivalists, it was decided that a deviation with a spiral loop unique in the UK was the solution, and digging began on January 2, 1965.

Over 14 years, two-and-a-half miles of all-new railway formation was created, including embankments, cuttings, long hillside rock shelves, bridges and culverts. The new railway finally reached Tanygrisiau station in 1978, and the first heritage era passenger trains arrived on June 24. It took another four years to restore the one-and-a-half miles to Blaenau Ffestiniog, the first FR service arriving there on May 25, 1982, and the whole project showing big time that the preservation movement encapsulates the art of the possible. Now, history seems all set to repeat itself over the border between Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire.

BR's final passenger services over the Great Central route between Nottingham Arkwright Street and Rugby Central lasted until May 3, 1969, and the heritage GCR ran its first services in Loughborough in 1973. In the years that followed, BR lifted the track north of the town and in 1980 removed the key bridge over the Midland Main Line, the link to the surviving freight-only section to Ruddington.

Revivalists have made steady progress in their long-term reunification goal, the bridge over the MML being replaced in 2017, the one crossing the Grand Union Canal to the north of Loughborough shed in 2019, and the original Bridge 236 over the A60 near the Brush Works in Loughborough in 2022.

Reunification supporters with the GCR(N)'s DMU at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre at Ruddington on April 6. TOM INGALL

Class 20 D8154 leads a short train past Hotchley Hill signalbox on April 6. JAMES KIRK

At the Reunification Open Weekend, a new computer animation of the reunified line made its debut. The highly detailed animation featuring a passing train over the completed scheme was on public display for the first time.

Malcolm said: "This animation gives everyone the best look yet at the finished project. Not only does it show how all the parts of the project link together, it's also going to help us raise funds during the next few years. We're all but shovel-ready now, just needing the funds to deliver this really important project for the local economy."

The full animation can be viewed at www.youtube.com/gcrofficial

To date, nearly £5 million has been deployed on the reunification project, with a final decision of the application for planning permission expected from Charnwood Borough Council before further work can take place. Some money is available to continue with design and building work, but substantial fundraising will clearly be required to finish the project.

The miniature railway built and run by the Nottingham Society of Model & Experimental Engineers at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre which would be one of multiple visitor draws along a reunified Great Central Railway. KEN SIMMS

Your chance to help

Meanwhile, an appeal has been launched to restore Hotchley Hill signalbox on the GCR(N). The 1946-built LNER 'box will be connected to mains power for the first time thanks to an £8500 grant from Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Community Fund, which will fund half the cost of running power cables to the 'box, so the GCR(N) has launched an appeal for the same amount to complete the job.

Situated 200 yards north of Rushcliffe Halt, the structure was built to handle additional trains running to the British Gypsum plant opposite. The plant survives today, but after the Great Central Railway was closed, the signalbox was eventually abandoned and became a deteriorating brick shell.

However, when the GCR(N) is linked to the Leicestershire section as part of the reunification project, the building will be a key place where trains will pass and is being restored to control heritage services. It will control a long passing loop and separate goods loop, while derelict signals, also abandoned after the railway closed, will be reused in the new scheme.

Following thousands of hours of volunteer effort and fundraising, the signalbox is once again watertight, the flat roof has been re-felted, and extensive concrete repairs have been completed. A new floor has been installed, along with a lever frame and a signalling scheme designed to allow trains to cross or terminate with locomotives running round. Connecting the mains to the signalbox will also allow future work on the station to provide platform lights and power to the two station shelters.

The GCR(N)'s Andy Fillingham said: "We are very grateful for the grant. It unlocks further restoration work on the 'box itself and the scheme to re-signal the area to control trains. Volunteers who have done so much to restore the building are now preparing for the power connection; our contractors are standing by, but we need some donations please to finish the job. This is an unusual piece of railway history, and it's wonderful to see it coming back to life.

"The more we raise with this appeal, the more we can do, potentially getting Rushcliffe Halt connected too. It's another important step forward in the revival of the GCR in Nottinghamshire and the reunification scheme."

Donations to the signalbox project can be made via www.lnergctrust.org

A guided tour on April 5 of the site of the proposed embankment between Loughborough and the new bridge over the Midland Main Line. KEN SIMMS

A guided tour party gathers at the restored railway bridge over the Grand Union Canal at Loughborough. KEN SIMMS

And there's more...

Another joint event involving both heritage era GCRs will take place on July 5/6 in the form of the Railway 200 Open Weekend, with both lines linked by a classic rail replacement bus service.

Before then, however, the GCR in Leicestershire will again highlight its role as an accomplished stage setting for major historical reenactments with a special edition of its popular 1940s weekend on May 31-June 1.

Eighty years on from the end of the Second World War, Celebrate Blighty will look back at a nation on the cusp of peace – still recovering, still rationed, but full of hope for the future. With the line's stations dressed for the occasion, and steam trains running, all along the line from Loughborough to Leicester North, scenes from the Home Front will be vividly brought to life. Period re-enactors will take part, from Merchant Navy sailors and Land Army girls to civilians 'doing their bit' for the war effort.

A traditional street party will bring a burst of colour and joy, with bunting, dancing, and old-fashioned singalongs.

Regular live entertainment favourites Jane Darling and Johnny Victory will be returning with their popular wartime sets, alongside the Ashby Big Band Sound, DJ Woody, and others keeping the music going at the stations. Dance lessons will run throughout the weekend, and the ever-popular Shirls Girls fashion show is back, offering a charming look at wartime style, with plenty of humour and storytelling thrown in. There will also be a visit from comedy duo Royal Air Face.

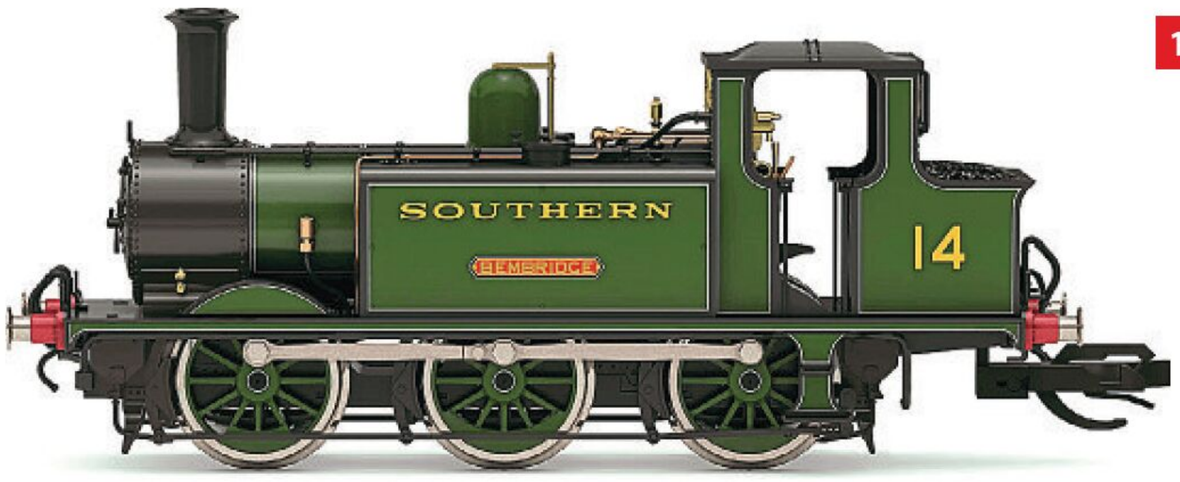
Rothley will be the place to find vintage stalls, offering everything from period clothing and homeware to retro collectables. Dotted along the line will be historic vehicles, including military trucks, classic cars and wartime commercials.

This year's event will also reflect on the social changes of the time, from the winding down of rationing to Churchill's shock election defeat to how communities adjusted to a new world. There will also be thought-provoking exhibits and moments to pause and reflect.

For tickets and more details, visit www.gcrailway.co.uk

So, imagine the day when such high-profile events will straddle the entire reunified link from Ruddington to Leicester North, becoming a must-go attraction for visitors from all around the country, who will arrive from far and wide by train, car, coach, or bus – not to mention an unrivalled educational facility too. HR

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



1

Southern and Midland Regions dominate expansion of Hornby's TT120 range

THE revival of the TT:120 scale in 2022 has seemingly gone down a storm with modellers looking for a happy medium between the size OO and fidelity of N gauge models. Hornby has become a major player within this scale, with an already impressive range of locomotives and rolling stock now being expanded further as new models were announced on April 9.

2

1: LBSCR 'Terrier'

With its recent newly-tooled version of these Stroudley 0-6-0Ts having raised the bar on its previous offerings of these popular locomotives, they are now set for miniaturisation, with three examples leading the way – all of which are preserved identities.

The first is *Bembridge*, now running as No. 2678 *Knowle* on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. Sporting SR olive green, the model depicts the locomotive in its Isle of Wight condition and carrying the number 14, which it was allocated during its years working the IoW lines.

The second, No. 55 *Stepney*, is perhaps one of the most famous examples of the class, which is resident on the Bluebell Railway. The first locomotive acquired by the heritage line in 1960, it gained further notoriety in 1963 when the Rev Wilbert Awdry incorporated it into his Railway Series books, introducing the locomotive to a whole new generation of potential enthusiasts. Hornby's TT120 model depicts it in BR condition as No. 32655 with late crest.

The third 'Terrier is No. 40 *Brighton* and is represent'ed in the condition in which it won the gold medal for workmanship at the Paris Exhibition of 1978. Nowadays, it can be found carrying the identity of W11 *Newport* on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway.

2: LMS Duchess

Stanier's Coronation class is no stranger to the scale, with other examples already having been released. This latest announcement brought with it the news that preserved example No. 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* would soon be available, sporting the iconic LMS crimson lake livery and presented without smoke deflectors.

3: Four-wheel carriages

With the 'Terrier' tooling being scaled down, it was only right that some suitable rolling stock joined it. To that end, the popular LBSCR Stroudley four-wheel carriages are also to be released as part of the TT:120 range. Four different designs (including first and third class brake, baggage and full compartment types) will be available, with three different liveries applied to each. The LBSCR era is covered by the company's mahogany brown with red-shadowed gold lettering, while SR's olive green and BR crimson cover later variations.

4: Further models

These include a new Class 08 shunter (No. 08817 *Thornaby*), High Speed Trainss, Pullman carriages (including the Bluebell Railway's recently restored brake third parlour *Car No. 54*), hopper and tank wagons and more, catering for both heritage and modern era modellers. A new train set also introduces the LSWR B4-inspired starter locomotive to the scale as a basic offering for younger modellers starting out, with No. 96 *Normandy* the featured identity.

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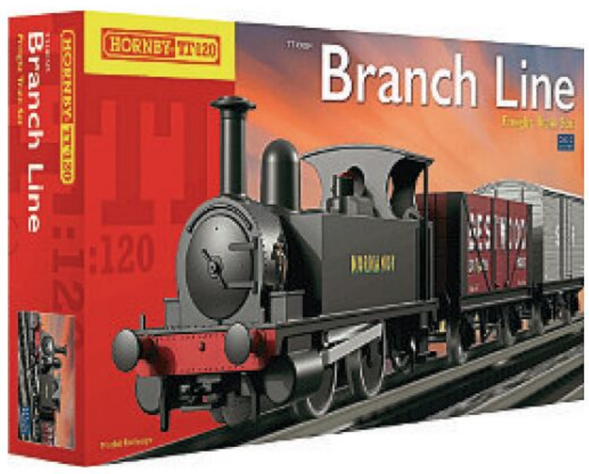

Midlands Model Engineering marvels

THE Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition will take place on October 16-19 at the Warwickshire Event Centre and will feature a diverse array of models, including a 10 ¼in gauge Class 60 diesel electric locomotive, a unique high-tech model that has taken 30 years to build, weighs 1.5 tonnes, and measures 13.5 feet in length.

There will be talks from experts and live demonstrations, and more than 30 clubs and societies with hundreds of exhibits. For full details, head online and visit **www.midlandsmodelengineering.co.uk**

It's all Wight: EFE's exclusive models for island's heritage line

1

THE Isle of Wight Steam Railway and Bachmann Europe have joined forces to offer a trio of exclusive models for retail in the heritage line's shop based on locomotives, stock and buildings that can be found based there.

1: W24 *Calbourne*

Following a sell-out of its previous commission of LSWR O2 0-4-4 W24 *Calbourne*, a second batch of these locomotives from the EFE range has made it available once again, depicting the locomotive in its currently Malachite green livery with SR sunshine lettering on the tanks. The first locomotive to be acquired by the island's preservationists in 1967, the OO scale model is priced at £174.95.

2: Bogie coaches

Following EFE's announcement earlier in the year that it would be producing suitable IOW passenger rolling stock, which utilised pre-grouping era vehicles that were converted for the island network's air-braked operations, two former LBSCR carriages that can be found running on the heritage line today will be immortalised in miniature as a twin pack. Nine compartment third No. 2416 was part of the final steam working on the island's railways on December 31, 1966, while eight compartment composite No. 6439 had once been earmarked for preservation elsewhere but came to the IOWSR when that other project fell through. Both carry SR Malachite green livery, and it will be in this condition which the models are presented, with the twin packs available to order for £134.95; delivery is expected to take place in the final months of 2025.

3: Havenstreet station

A first for the scale, the original station building found at Havenstreet will be produced through Bachmann's Scenecraft range. The building has been the headquarters of the heritage line since services began in 1971 and it houses the station's signalbox, a waiting room and toilets. A perfect accompaniment to the models of Calbourne and the carriages, it is available for £79.95 and depicts the building as it currently appears in late SR style.

2

3

Planning an exhibition or modelling event?

Tell us about it! Send your details to **ohayward@mortons.co.uk** to see it included here.

E for excellence: Rapido showcases latest decorated samples

THE hotly-anticipated LBSCR E1 0-6-0Ts took a step closer to hitting the shelves when Rapido proudly showed off the decorated production samples it had received at its main offices in Kent.

DELIVERY is due within the next few months, and all models have already sold out at the manufacturer, with some retailers still offering a small number for advance order.

An impressive 16 models are being produced for general release in the first batch, covering lesser seen liveries such as LBSCR lined black and British Railways-lettered Malachite green, for which the RRP starts at £164.95 for DCC-ready models.

An exclusive edition of the preserved example, No. 110 *Burgundy*, will be available through the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's shop and represents it as W2 *Yarmouth*, the identity it will carry upon completion of its restoration in the coming years. This comes with a set price of £164.95 plus P&P and remained available to order at time of going to press.

Economical, versatile, handsome: BR's Standard 3MTs

With new O gauge models raising the bar for models in the scale, and work progressing on the construction of a new example of this long-lost class of locomotives, **Daniel Long** delves into history to find what made them so successful.

MY first encounter with the Standard Class 3s was as a young man ogling a Bachmann model in BR lined green. I fell in love on sight, with the purposeful proportions and general size of the model making it look like it would sit in pretty much anywhere. I never did buy the Bachmann model, although I continued to covet it from a distance. Little did I realise that I was not the only one who considered the universal potential of these locomotives. A little research brought me to the plans of the 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust and its efforts to revive a type of locomotive long extinct. But to understand why the trust would choose this particular class, it's worth looking at its history.

Origin story

When Britain's railways were nationalised in 1948, one of the biggest problems was the range of engines operating. Many dated back to the Grouping of 1923, and few could be used in other regions. Clearly, something had to be done.

The story of tBR Standard classes reflects the slow decline of steam on the UK's railways. Designed when the intention was to complete electrification of the national network, it soon became apparent that many were made quickly redundant, and all would be superseded by diesel power much more rapidly than originally thought. The intention was that these engines would last for 40 years in service, but some were withdrawn after only seven years.

Engineers from all the constituent railways were brought together, their efforts were led by Robert Riddles, of the LMS. Although this meant there was a natural bias in the development of the designs, the team were driven more so by practical needs. The engines needed to be able to operate the length and breadth of the UK, with the ability to be easily maintained and repaired. Standard parts would be shared throughout the classes, often in a way which was fully interchangeable between various types. Nine tender engines were developed, ranging from Class 2 to Class 9, and three tank engine types covering Classes 2, 3, and 4MT.

The Class 3 locomotives were drawn up to resolve the issue of axle loadings. There were many bridges with 16-ton axle load restrictions, meaning that the Class 4s could not run on them, but which required more power than could be mustered by a Class 2, which, along with the 4MTs, drew on Ivatt designs from the LMS. The 3MT 2-6-2Ts, however, drew on the Swindon No. 4 boiler, as used on the GWR 5100s and 8100s, as well as the 5600s. Fittings matched those used on the other Standard classes, including the 16-element superheater element.

Working lives

All 45 members of the tank engine variants were constructed at Swindon Works, with the first being assigned to Tyseley Depot. Others followed, and the class began life in the Birmingham area before eventually being sent to South Wales. Designed to work on mixed-traffic duties, they ended up finding use the length and breadth of Britain's railways, with duties ranging from acting as station pilot in Aberystwyth to Sunday Scenic excursions between Scarborough and Whitby.

On test runs, the class proved capable running at speeds of 75mph, but this was far in excess of the usual runs on rural branch lines and slower secondary routes. It was these which would be the regular stomping grounds. On the Western Region, the class was seen working around Wolverhampton, as well as Shrewsbury. Although many were sent to South Wales, DMUs soon took over their work here.

The Cambrian line, branching into Mid-Wales, also saw examples making themselves useful, often operating between Machynlleth and Pwllheli. The speed limit of 55mph, combined with regular stops at halts and stations, made conditions ideal for these 2-6-2Ts, where they handled

Crossing the estuary at Portmadoc in October 1964, No. 82005 was allocated to Machynlleth depot at the time. The following May it was transferred to Nine Elms on the Southern Region, where it was withdrawn just four months after. COLOUR RAIL

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Proving the class's versatility, No. 82040 brings 'The Merchant Venturer' into Bristol Temple Meads on August 2, 1958, with the first leg of the journey from Weston-super-Mare. A GWR Castle class would take over the train here for the onward journey to Paddington. BEN BROOKSBANK/CREATIVE COMMONS

No. 82044 arrives at Lawrence Hill station with the 3pm from Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach via Avonmouth service.
BEN BROOKSBANK/CREATIVE COMMONS

both freight and passengers. Another task undertaken by the 3MTs was banking on the formidable Talerddig climb, where they replaced the elderly Dukedogs and 4500 small prairies. Eventually, however, DMUs took their work here too and in 1965 all members of the entire fleet were either moved to the Southern Region or sold for scrap.

Around the regions

On the Southern Region, the 3MTs really proved their mettle, shown most ably by No. 82017 taking charge of an express run from Plymouth Friary to Exeter Central. Although West Country Pacifics were usually assigned, the Class 3 lost only 10 minutes on the journey and other members of the class would be called upon to provide their assistance. In 1962, No. 82025 worked the Bude portion of the famous 'Atlantic Coast Express.'

The Class 3s proved equally adept on goods workings. Although their responsibilities on the Southern Region were often passengers, the class was noted for sterling work on the Fawley branch. Goods trains of 50 wagons made for a stirring sight when two locomotives were assigned to double-head. Even when diesels began to intrude on their territory, the 3MTs could still be seen piloting services. While other regions moved their locomotives about as required, the Southern Region made clear homes for its own. They were based, for the most part, at Eastleigh, Exmouth Junction and Nine Elms.

In the North East, the class distinguished itself on local services, a massive improvement on the ex-LNER J21s it replaced. Based at Malton sheds, it proved particularly popular, with the easy acceleration of the class much appreciated on the hilly climbs around Goathland. Still a formidable part of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, the Class 3s managed to haul a three-coach train from Levisham to Goathland in a little over 11 minutes.

Of course, accidents do happen. Despite clear competency, the class did get into trouble on occasion. On October 16, 1961, No. 82028, recently transferred from Scarborough to Malton, ran away between Hawsker and Robin Hood's Bay. It was diverted into a siding where it destroyed the bufferstops. It was repaired and put back into service, remaining in use until being withdrawn in 1966.

The Class 3s were never intended to run on the London Midland Region, but their versatility meant a couple of the class soon found homes there, first on loan and then as permanent residents. Based out of Nuneaton, Nos. 82020 and 82021 operated regular passenger duties from Nuneaton, Coventry, and Leamington Spa. These were the only regular examples on the region until near the end of steam, when a number were assigned to Bangor and Patricroft. These locomotives had little work and were swiftly moved on or sold for scrap. An exception was when 17 DMUs were taken out of service and No. 82029 was drafted in to work trains.

Because of the broad range of operation, the class could be seen in a host of liveries. All started life in the standard BR lined black with the lion and wheel emblem. Those which stayed in black saw that replaced by the BR totem later on, with No. 82044 having the last major variation, the number being placed under the cab window.

Those on the Western Region, however, saw repaints in green as early as 1957 as members of the class passed through Swindon for overhauls. Some of the class were fitted with larger versions of the crest and, latterly, the totem. Others were lined, and some carried the yellow route availability disc as required by the Western Region.

Out of time

There were plans to build a further 18 of the class for use on the Western Region and North Eastern Region, but these batches were never constructed. The death knell for the class, like so many of the BR standards, was the removal of the branch lines and secondary routes for which they were built, along with the move towards dieselisation. Although built to last for more than 40 years, some members of the class lasted just over eight, and the longest-lived worked for only 14. Even when run down and slated to be withdrawn, they proved themselves worthy operators on the network.

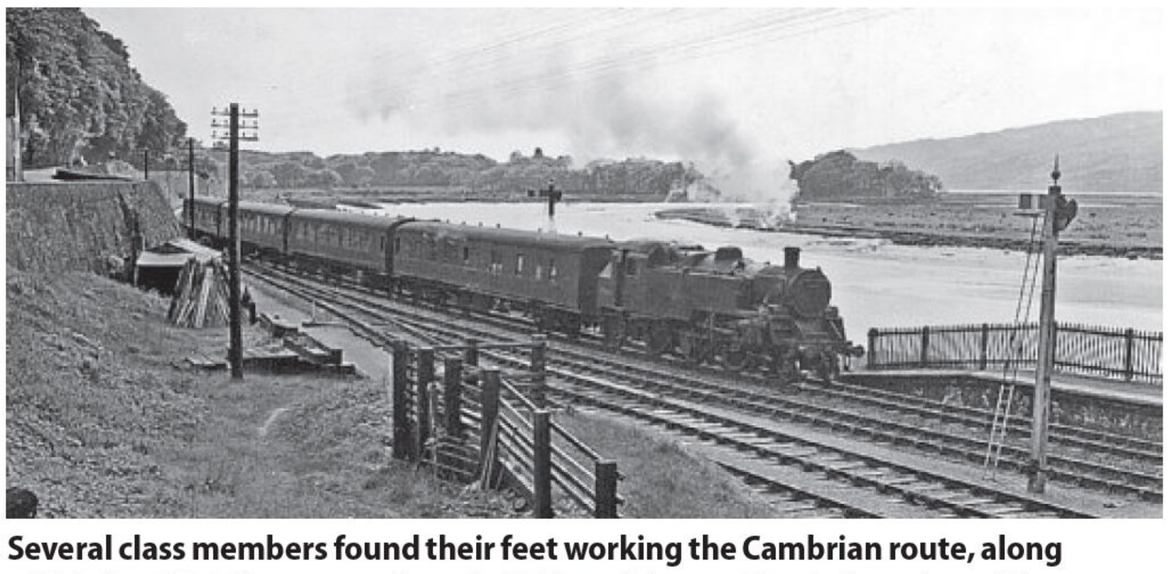
Withdrawals began in 1964, but the class stuck it out on the Southern Region until July 1967 when all steam operations ended. Some went out of service in spectacular fashion. In 1966, No. 82023 ran into an empty 2-HAL electric unit between Waterloo and Vauxhall. Although the engine was able to make its own way home to Nine Elms Depot, a fractured steam pipe on the right-hand front end meant it was condemned in short order. None were preserved, with the last cut up at Cashmore's scrapyard in 1968.

New build

It was not the end of the Class 3s, however. In the late 1990s, it became clear that even the more modern engines were reaching the end of what should have been their service lives. It was also clear that the needs of preservation were not the same as those on the main line. There was a need for a branch line engine, ideally a 2-6-2T with modern facilities to allow for ease of use. Although a new design was possible, one which was already proven would be much easier to make a business case for. The 3MT was waiting for revival.

The team behind the 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust have been working for nearly 30 years on its engine. No. 82045 takes its number from the unbuilt lot which was planned for 1956. Based at the Severn Valley Railway, the engine will someday soon be seen working there, a location that is ideal for the talents of the class. With a rolling chassis and boiler now ready for work, it's hoped the engine will be running in the near future.

There are very few designs more suited to the needs of today's



Several class members found their feet working the Cambrian route, along which No. 82006 is seen on June 2, 1962, arriving at Glandyfi station with an Aberystwyth-Machynlleth service. BEN BROOKSBANK/CREATIVE COMMONS

New-build 3MT No.82045 is under construction at Bridgnorth on the Severn Valley, pictured in a semi-assembled state on April 6, 2024, during a railway open weekend. CHRIS ALLEN/ CREATIVE COMMONS

heritage railways, being economical to run, handsome to look at, and highly versatile in their uses – perhaps this new-build will showcase the important place that the Class 3s should have held in the history of our railways.

In miniature

The announcement from Lionheart Trains that it was working on the 3MT 2-6-2Ts was of particular interest to me. The challenge of building an equivalent kit, complete with shaping the complex curves of the prototype, and constructing the intricate valve gear, was one I wasn't quite willing to face.

Compared to the smaller tank engines released RTR, this would be a big engine that could still fit in on smaller layouts. Lionheart Trains has a reputation for excellent quality in O gauge, and these models follow in that tradition.

From the off, it's clear that this model has weight. The diecast body and chassis provide heft both to appearance and hauling power. A smooth five-pole motor turns the tapered wheels, with power provided from pick-ups on every wheel – even the pony trucks. The centre driving wheel is also sprung to provide reliable contact no matter what the state of the track. Whether you have a small inside layout or one based in the garden, the 3MT should be able to acquit itself comfortably.

The depiction of Walschaerts valve gear is lovely, with pivoted coupling and connecting rods. Features which are slightly trickier to incorporate in smaller scales include the removable cab roof, along with opening cab doors to allow for precise placement of crews.

A look inside the cab only confirms the quality of this excellent model, with backhead details picked out and a flickering firebox glow. Of course, to appreciate all the features of this high-end model, it's worth finding an example with DCC sound. The opportunity is there to really control how this engine works and run it so it looks and sounds as good as the prototype. While not for all, the possibilities opened by DCC are fully taken advantage of here.

With so many potential livery variations on offer for the class, it's little wonder there are a host of different options, both numbered and unnumbered, with lamp irons fitted as appropriate for Southern examples. Versions which reflect every significant variation have been produced, allowing customers to match the engine to their specific needs. It's the attention to detail which really makes this model one to take a closer look at.

The 3MT is one of the biggest tank engines available ready-to-run in O gauge and comes with a price tag to match; it is clear in this case that the price is well worth it. The finish is immaculate, matching the prototype perfectly. It miniaturises the qualities that made this versatile powerhouse such an icon of later BR steam. Useful in a host of different environments, I'm sure that this marvellous model will distinguish itself on numerous layouts for many years to come. **HR**

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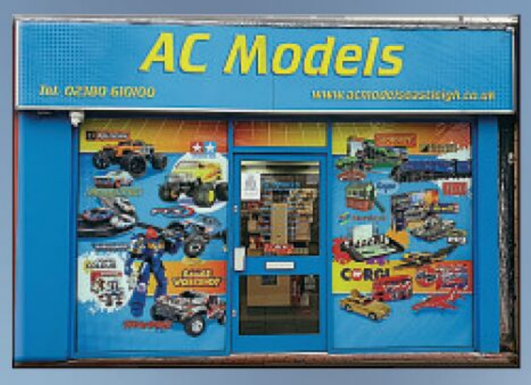

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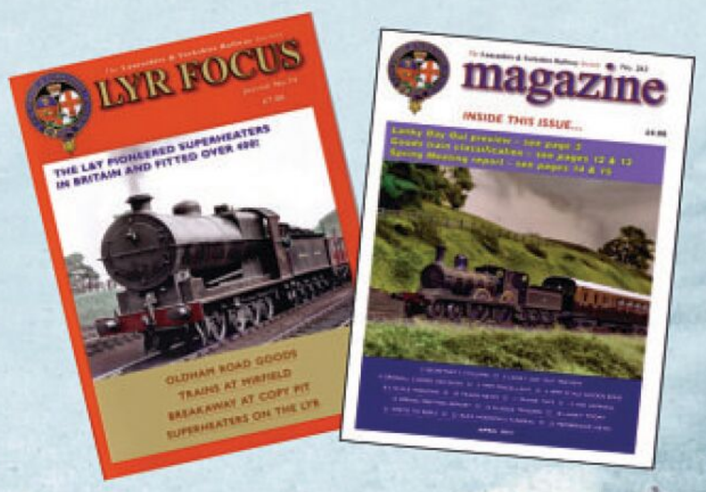

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CELEBRATING THE TINY BUT MIGHTY

The big named express locomotives might win out in terms of literal pulling power, but even the smallest of industrial can attract the crowds. **Owen Hayward** went to the Kent & East Sussex Railway find out more about this unique event.

Gala planners are always faced with the challenge of finding innovative ways of doing something different that will firmly put their event on the to-do list of as many people as possible. While some rely on doubled-up Manors and Jubilees, and others bring pre-Grouping veterans together, the Kent & East Sussex Railway went big by going small at its Dwarves of Steam gala, celebrating the importance of some of the smallest of standard gauge steam locomotives.

During the weekend of April 26/27, a quint of small engines could be found hard at work between Tenterden Town and Wittersham Road stations, these often-overlooked gems of the steam world taking centre stage on services, with the entire event sponsored by model railway manufacturer Rapido Trains UK.

Resident Peckett 0-4-0T No. 12 *Marcia* is normally the smallest locomotive to be found on the railway, but with visiting Port of Par Bagnall 0-4-0ST No. 2572 *Judy* coming in at just 90 inches in height, it was a close-run thing for claiming that accolade. Indeed, *Judy*'s cab roof sits only marginally higher than *Marcia*'s smokebox, with their lengths closely matched too. The Peckett is also owned by Rapido Trains UK and its general manager Andy Hardy, having been purchased in June 2024.

For a final variation on the 0-4-0 wheel arrangement, well tank No. 3063 *Willy* completed the scene, with the trio making for a visually eclectic sight in both design and liveries.

Finally, Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 15 *Hastings* and LBSCR 0-6-0T A1 'Terrier' No. 2678 *Knowle* were also put through their paces.

Martime links

It is perhaps somewhat rare for a gala to only call upon one ex-BR locomotive, with *Knowle* being the only such member of the line-up. Furthermore, it is unusual for the majority to have all been employed in a similar field of industry, with all five locomotives having been connected by the maritime world in some form.

Built in 1888, *Hastings* was delivered to TA Walker, the contractor who was constructing the Manchester Ship Canal. It also spent a number of years working at Immingham Docks. *Knowle*, meanwhile, was allocated to Newhaven Harbour following closure of the Hayling Island branch in 1961, until being withdrawn in 1963.

Bodmin Railway resident *Judy* is of course most well-known for its low height – a feature necessitated by the low bridges it had to clear around the Port of Par in Cornwall, where it worked with currently under overhaul shedmate No. 3058 *Alfred*. *Willy*, meanwhile, was built in 1918 by Kerr Stuart & Co for the National Shipyard at Chepstow, where it worked until the shipbuilding firms there were dismantled. Finally, *Marcia* was briefly owned by the West of Scotland Shipbreaking Co at Troon in Ayrshire. Now owned by Bil Parker of the Flour Mill Workshops at Bream, it is normally to be fwund working at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway.

The three 0-4-0s were to be found working in rotation on a set comprising of three vintage four-wheeled coaches, which comprised Metropolitan District Railway first No. 100, LMS brake third No. 27687, and London Transport Museum-owned 'Jubilee' first No. 353; *Hastings* and *Knowle* could be found alternating on a set formed of two BR Mk. 1 carriages.

Short journeys

Mindful of their low water capacity of the smallest locomotives, and that like many industrials there were designed to get heavy

The trio of 0-4-0s put on an impressive display as they storm the 1-in-50 gradient between Orpins Curve and Cranbrook Road with the final train of the weekend. NATHAN SPENCE

'Terrier' No. 2678 *Knowle* passes *Judy* at Rolvenden loop as it sets out for Wittersham Road on April 26. ROBIN COOMBES

The distant hillsides hues are just starting to change and the rapeseed blooms as *Marcia* approaches Harvesters Crossing with the three vintage carriages. OWEN HAYWARD

loads moving but not necessarily sustain continuous running over long distances, services for the weekend ran only as far as Wittersham Road, with locomotive swaps taking place there on services worked by *Judy*, *Willy* and *Marcia*, while *Hastings* and *Knowle* changed over upon return to Tenterden Town.

Though the line beyond Wittersham saw onAly an Austerity on a pre-booked dining train, the small engines put on an impressive display nonetheless as they tackled the steepest gradients, which reach 1-in-50 on the bank between Cranbrook Road and the station at Tenterden. A challenge for even some of the largest locomotives, it only proved an issue for *Judy* on its first attempt on the Saturday, with *Marcia* caught out on the Sunday, both locomotives briefly stalling just before the summit.

Departures from Tenterden Town were scheduled at 45-minute intervals, allowing ample time for the smaller locomotives to complete their journeys, with services passing at Rolvenden. Here, shed tours were on offer, allowing a glimpse into the workshops where GWR 4200 2-8-0 No. 4253 and SR War Department 'Yankee Tank' 0-6-0T No. 30065 are currently approaching the end of overhauls.

The final round trip saw a further two vintage carriages added to the short rake for a double-headed departure to Wittersham, which was brought back with all three 'dwarves' at the helm.

Despite the risk of opting for what many perceive as less glamorous locomotives, the event proved that there is very much a following for them – with visitors coming from as far as the Scottish highlands for the occasion. General manager Robin Coombes said: "It was a real reminder of what the KESR does best – celebrating the quirkier, often-overlooked side of Britain's railway and industrial heritage.

Kerr Stuart 0-4-0WT No. 3063 *Willy* rounds the curve on the approach to home signal foot crossing on April 27 as it climbs towards Tenterden Town. NATHAN SPENCE

"While there's always a place for the Duchesses over Shap or the Streaks on the East Coast Main Line, events like this showcase the true everyday workhorses that kept the country running.

"Each of our guest locomotives has a remarkable history, and these are the unsung heroes of Britain's ports and shipyards – small engines doing hard, essential work away from the spotlight. It was wonderful to see them working hard again between Tenterden and Wittersham, capturing the imagination of visitors and bringing out the crowds.

"This is exactly the kind of event that plays to the KESR's strengths – a true light railway, full of character, celebrating the resilience and spirit of the working railway rather than just the glamour.

"A huge thank-you to Rapido Trains UK for its generous sponsorship, which helped bring the event to life. We are already looking forward to Dwarfs of Steam 2 next year!"

Andy Hardy, who also organised the event, added: "The weekend was brilliant and I'm still buzzing. From Rapido's perspective, it could not have been better.

"We had three aims: to give the KESR volunteers some fun; to raise some money for the KESR, and to put a spotlight on the little locomotives, particularly *Judy* – of which we are making a model – and, of course, our very own *Marcia*. We smashed all three items.

"All in all, everyone had fun, it was commercially successful and we are already being requested to run another event. I think Dwarves of Steam will return next year." HR

Even the smallest of carriages are able to dwarf *Judy* as the Bagnall approaches Cranbrook Road. OWEN HAYWARD

The 137-year-old *Hasting* approaches Rolvenden with a pair of Mk. 1 carriages shortly after departing Wittersham Road. OWEN HAYWARD

INGROW MUSEUM GETS £100K REFURBISHMENT

The Vintage Carriages Trust at Ingrow is entering a new phase in its development. **Sally Clifford** finds out more and reports in words and pictures.

The Vintage Carriages Trust is undergoing a chapter of change.

Visitors can instantly see the progress being made at the museum, based at Ingrow station on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. Improvements to the wall-mounted displays are currently underway in an ambitious redesign curated by VCT volunteer Paul Holroyd.

The four-phase scheme, also including improvements to the toilet facilities, is costing around £100,000 and has been funded by the VCT along with generous donations on which it, like so many other charities and organisations, heavily rely. Legacies, along with the sale of second-hand books and magazines donated through the generosity of others, are helping to keep this place ticking.

The overall objective is, of course, for this museum with its vast collection of beautifully-restored carriages from the 19th and 20th centuries, among them Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway four wheel carriage No 176; Midland Railway six-wheel composite No. 358 as well as historic locomotives including Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST No. 402 of 1893 *Lord Mayor* and Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1210 of 1891 *Sir Berkeley* on loan to the Middleton Railway to continue into the future.

Wall-mounted advertising posters, station signs and signal equipment are also displayed around the museum with information about their purpose painstakingly researched by Paul to educate those unfamiliar with the golden age of steam.

Preserving this legacy is an ever-present focus, yet there is also a consciousness that none of the volunteers are getting any younger. Many have already more than surpassed retirement age, which is what prompted the recent appointments – making history in the process.

For the first time since the VCT was formed in 1965, women are now fulfilling roles at the helm.

Driving force: Debbie Cross and Katharine Carlton are the first women to take the helm of the VCT.

Yet these appointments do not necessarily need any fanfare. There is far more diversity on today's railways with women than were once to be found in what was a male dominated environment.

"It should not be a big thing that women are taking leading roles – it is their ability to do the job – it's that simple," said VCT vice chairman Ian Smith.

New leadership

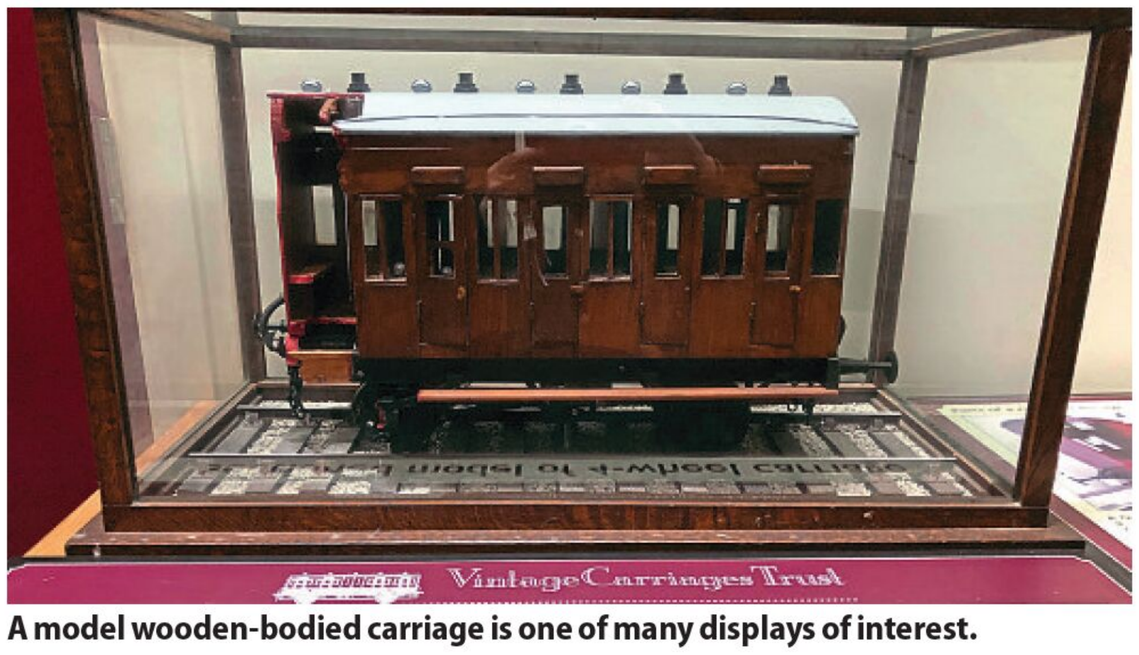
For the VCT's incoming chairman Debbie Cross, who took over from VCT stalwart Trevor England in November, the railway has come a long way since she joined in 2014.

In those early days Debbie recalls sitting in meetings predominantly attended by men but, with the VCT's first female secretary Katharine Carlton - who was also appointed in November – by her side, this female force of nature is incredibly enthusiastic, if also a little daunted, by the huge responsibility that comes with their roles.

Working full-time and a mum to two young children, Debbie is conscious she may not be able to devote the same amount of time as her predecessor Trevor, who has proved his commitment with more than 30 years' service with the VCT.

Yet that does not detract from the job in hand. Debbie knows she can count on the support from this largely retired voluntary workforce who have the time and are only too

The Vintage Carriages Trust Museum at Ingrow station.



A model wooden-bodied carriage is one of many displays of interest.

Some of the signs and memorabilia on display.

A National Time Recorder machine displayed in the museum.

VCT volunteer Paul Holroyd with the information boards that he has curated as part of the improvement project.

happy to help. "The goodwill is one of our best assets," said Ian.

For them, having younger incumbents taking on these important roles, and sharing their forward-thinking vision, is hugely important and among the skills Debbie and Katharine are bringing to the table around which we sit in the VCT meeting room for our chat.

Debbie's introduction to the organisation came through her audience development role with the Bahamas Locomotive Society, also based on the KWVR, and part of Rail Story, the educational element of the railway which Debbie helped to develop.

Her contract was funded through a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. When that came to an end she began focusing on developing the heritage aspect on the KWVR.

Debbie, who currently works in heritage regeneration for North Yorkshire Council, and fellow museum professional Katharine, bring skills that are a perfect fit for the VCT. "I am very pleased and very proud. It is brilliant, but it is a little daunting as well," said Debbie.

"Trevor has had such a long reign as chairman, so it is a case of having massively big shoes to fill. Trevor and I have always worked really well together, and Ian as well.

"My main concern, and I think it is probably the same in any heritage organisation, is sustainability. How do we move into the future so that we are definitely here in another 20 years' time?"

Debbie touches on the age-related decline and ongoing necessity of recruiting younger volunteers who can help them care for the carriages in their collections. "It is a hard landscape, and with rising living costs we are only a small organisation so these things impact," she added.

Debbie said that the focus is very much on the future and adapting to the challenges they face. "A lot of what we do is how do we continue into the future – are we still going to be restoring and hiring locos and carriages, or are we going to be more of a static museum? We are conserving the collections and a lot of the heritage skills we need to restore are getting less.

Rising to the challenges

"We have got a lot of challenges ahead of us and a lot of big decisions to make, but what I want to make sure happens is that we have plans in place and a clear vision of what we are and what we become.

"I take the responsibility of it very seriously, but it is also daunting because it has always been such a successful group and it has achieved so much over the years and that responsibility to keep it going, to future proof and make sure we keep that kind of ethos is a big job."

While accepting the challenge, she and Katharine have a shared excitement about the future. Katharine has a particular affinity with the place as she was practically brought up on the KWVR.

"My dad was a driver and guard, and I used to tag along when I was a kid. I grew up with it and met my husband, Jason," said Katharine.

"I remember the VCT being a small shop at the end of Platform 4 at Keighley, so VCT has always been part of my life."

Katharine also brings her skills as an academic, with a particular interest in industrial heritage, to the role.

"I have known the VCT for a long time and they have always had a clear vision of what they want to do.

"The people are very warm and receptive to the things you want to do, and there has always been a really good community spirit about VCT.

"We do stand on the shoulders of people like Michael and Jackie Cope, who led the organisation for decades, and Trevor.

"It is a lot of hard work, there is a lot to do but it's about the future, it's about thinking ahead. We want to do good in the world and leave a successful organisation to whoever takes over from us," added Katharine.

While aware of the future challenges, Ian is confident that together great things can be achieved to secure the future of the VCT.

"We are moving the VCT from a traditional 20th century museum into something fit for the 21st century," he said.

For more information about the VCT, visit www.vintagecarriagestrust.org HR

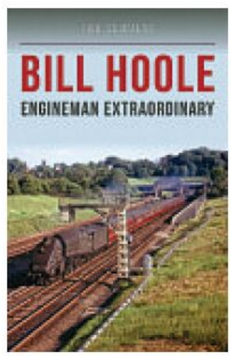
Platform signs which once showed the way to the right trains, now displayed at the museum.

A toolbox belonging to an apprentice at York Carriage Works in 1978.

The completed part of the museum's improvement project.

Bill Hoole; Engineman Extraordinary

PWB Semmens (paperback, Crecy Publishing, 166pp, £9.99, ISBN 9-781-800353-18-3)



GIVEN the recent observations by the CEO of the Mid-Hants Railway that railway people are often forgotten about, it is rather apt that I should come across this particular publication for review, which focuses on the career of one former Kings Cross 'Top Link' driver, writes Owen Hayward. Indeed, the foreword penned by Gerard Fiennes (general manager of British Railways' Eastern Region in 1966 when this title was first published) opens with a comment about that very matter and even from his words that follow, you get a sense of the man that Bill Hoole was – respected even by his peers.

Born and raised in Liverpool, Bill began his railway career as many did – young, aged just 13 but with a love for steam that had been cemented in the years beforehand. His first post was as a dock messenger within the traffic department for the Midland Railway at its Huskisson Docks on the shores of the River Mersey.

By the age of 16 he had been promoted to the very responsible position of Bullion Messenger, with which came regular jaunts into London, yet while his fellow dock colleagues were transferring to work aboard the sea-faring vessels, those journeys aboard locomotives and trains to the capital had encouraged Bill to request a transfer to that side of the company. With no vacancies at the MR's shed at Walton-on-the-Hill, he joined the Great Central Railway (which shared the depot) as a cleaner, therefore officially starting his footplate career.

Through the years that followed he transferred to Neasden, signed up for war service (but kept an eye open for railways in that time) and passed out as a fireman despite having comparatively-little footplate experience at the time, an amusing occurrence that showed his grasp of understanding and a stark contrast to his later achievement when, as a driver on May 23, 1959, he achieved the official post-war steam speed record of 112mph aboard A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*.

His career would continue to flourish and would see him join the ranks of 'Top Link' drivers. He drove some of the big-name express services such as 'The Flying Scotsman' and was on the footplate of A2/1 No. 60508 *Duke of Rothesay* when it derailed after exiting Barnet Tunnel on July 17, 1948. He even crewed some of the earlier steam railtours prior to the BR steam ban introduced in 1968.

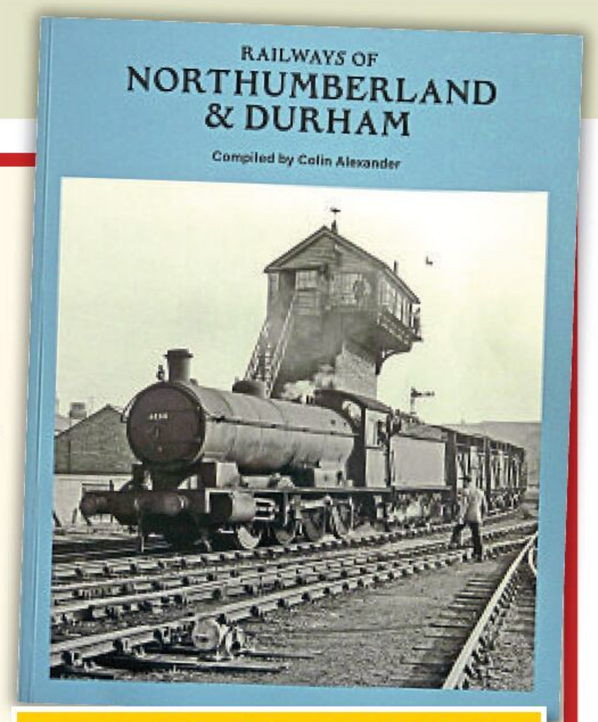
After his main line career ended, following some volunteering sessions Bill found employment at the Festiniog Railway as revival efforts commenced there; he even took up residence in a cottage at Boston Lodge and drove trains into his seventies, when the effects of a stroke forced his retirement from active duty there.

Such was the regard in which he was held, in April 1972 it was arranged for him to once again take control of No. 60007 which was, at the time, ensconced at the National Coal Board's sheds at Philadelphia Colliery in County Durham, and had but 200 yards of track along which to shuffle about until its main line return some years later.

The often-forgotten stories of the people in the railway industry are surely some of the most interesting, with personal accounts of some of rail history's greatest moments – positive and negative – offering a deeper insight into what really happened at the ground level. I was unfamiliar with the name Bill Hoole prior to picking up this book, but I was gripped throughout and laud Semmens for its existence.

INSIGHT TO THE CAREER OF A TOP LINK FOOTPLATEMAN

Railways of Northumberland & Durham



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Compiled by Colin Alexander (softback, Transport Treasury Publishing, 112pp, £14.95 cheques payable to Transport Treasury Publishing and sent to 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe HP13 7PJ, ISBN 978-1-913251-87-1).

AT first sight, I surmised this was not a subject to get the pulse raising, unless these two counties were, or are, your railway stomping ground, writes Geoff Courtney. Very industrial from both the motive power and locations points of view, I anticipated, while the cover, despite an eye-catching signalbox, set the tone.

Compiler Colin Alexander, however, soon put me in my place in his introduction. The urban and former industrial areas around the navigable rivers Blyth, Tyne, Wear and Tees, he averred, were distinct from the vast, solitary stretches of the sparsely-populated uplands in the west and north, stretching from the Pennines to the Cheviots and Scottish border. And then came an additional boost, when I read that the book's images were from the archive of the late Neville Stead, surely one of the top photographers of his generation. The stage was set for an enjoyable read.

A miscellany of chapters ranges, among other subjects, from the East Coast Main Line to rural routes in the Borders, from the Blyth and Tyne Railway to west of Durham, and from south Tyneside to the old main line and central Durham.

It is an area, says Colin, of dramatic contrasts, criss-crossed by a complex matrix of railways and colliery wagonways, but now only a fraction remains, with almost no branch lines surviving. Some of the closures seem ill-judged, he states, but balances that view by wondering how and why some of the more rural railways were built in the first place, because they never made financial sense.

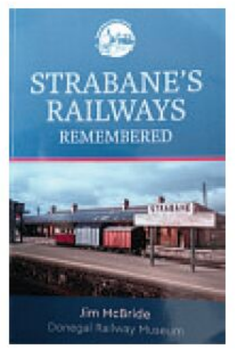
It would be tempting to assume that there would be little variety of motive power in the book, but about 50 different types feature, mostly steam interspersed with a few examples of diesel and electric traction. A3 Pacific No. 60041 *Salmon Trout* on Tweedmouth shed (52D) on May 6, 1959, for example, is followed by an image of diminutive Y7 class 0-4-0T No. 68089 on a mixed train at Chathill, on October 21, 1951, seemingly utterly out of place on the ECML.

Or how about J21 class 0-6-0 No. 65119 sauntering through Falstone (population about 200) on the Border Counties route with a one-wagon and guard's van freight train in 1953, and in contrast overleaf a superb overhead view of BR Standard 3MT 2-6-0 No. 77011 crossing the Tyne on the same line with a passenger train?

Gresley A4 Pacific No. 60008 *Dwight D. Eisenhower* also catches the eye heading the non-stop Edinburgh to King's Cross 'Elizabethan' on diversion on the Tyne Valley line west of Hexham on September 9, 1954, and at the other end of the operational scale, so too did G5 0-4-4T No. 67261 at Newsham on the Northumberland line with a short train on September 20, 1957, in an image described by the compiler as a "modeller's delight, with the lamps, signal gantries, signalbox, subway, telegraph pole and signage."

TOP STEAM PHOTOGRAPHY IN VARIETY SHOW

Strabane's Railways Remembered



by Jim McBride (softback, County Donegal Railway Heritage Museum, 94pp, €20 plus €4 p&p, ISBN 978-1-874518-12-9. Tel 00353 74 9722655, www.donegalrailway.com

Parking today in Strabane's ASDA car park, you'd be forgiven for not realising that this was the site of one of Ireland's most important and busiest railway junctions for more than a century.

Strabane station was where the 5ft 3in gauge Portadown-Derry railway, met the County Donegal's 3ft gauge lines to Stranorlar, Derry and Letterkenny. In its heyday, with goods transfer facilities and a customs post, the station employed around 400 people, and saw thousands of Donegal exiles leave their native county, to transfer to Great Northern Railway of Ireland trains, and to a new life in the USA or Scotland.

Author Jim McBride has brought Strabane station, and the lines that radiated from it, back to life, with a fascinating collection of black-and-white and colour pictures, with short, but informative, captions. We travel to Castlefinn, Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Derry, even reaching Victoria Bridge on the GNR(I), for a brief jaunt up the 3ft-gauge Castlederg & Victoria

Pre-order Issue 333: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Bridge Tramway.

There are broad and narrow gauge locomotives, railcars and trains in plenty to delight the enthusiasts and modellers with the colourful and bustling scene that was Strabane station. It was cruelly shorn of its narrow gauge lines by 1959 and closed completely in 1965 by a Stormont government not just committed to the bus and lorry, but also to withdrawing rail services from West of the Bann, and cutting off nationalist towns such as Strabane.

The author has included shots of the County Donegal Railways replacement buses using the station, and also its sad decline after overall closure in 1965, when it lay derelict until 1988, before being swept away to make way for a new road scheme.

Ironically, now that the Portadown-Derry line is recommended for re-opening under the All-Ireland Rail Review Plan, planners are scratching their heads as to how to bring the railway back to Strabane, given the fact that the station site has been obliterated.

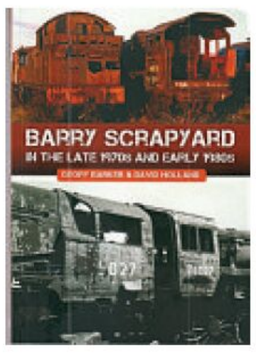
This book really does bring the glory that was Strabane station back to life, with all proceeds going to Donegal Railway Heritage Museum funds.

CLIMB ABOARD A FASCINATING JOURNEY TO THE PAST

Barry Scrapyard in the Late 1970s and Early 1980s

By Geoff Barker & David Holland (softback, Amberley Publishing, 96pp, £15.99, ISBN 978-1-3981-1660-3).

The big message of Railway 200 year is how Britain changed the world through the introduction of steam-hauled passenger trains in 1825. Today our vast heritage sector is the ultimate monument to our proud railway past, a plank of many a local tourist economy and a shining contributor to education though awareness of our rich living historical legacy. And yet, the roots of its modern-day magnificence lay in where else but a scrapyard!



Thanks to Dai Woodham's commercial decision to cut up the more profitable rakes of redundant freight wagons that entered his yard and save the more difficult-to-dismantle rows of rusting locomotive hulks for a rainy day, 213 of them survived into preservation where many became a backbone of our heritage railways, with several, like BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76077 as highlighted in News, page 36, the subject of current restoration schemes.

Woodham Brothers scrapyard was an unintended cornerstone of our movement, and lucky indeed were those fortunate enough to have visited it before its last locomotives departed for a second life. For those who missed out on that experience, here is a superb account of the scrapyard in its final decade, packed with pictures both in colour and black-and-white of locomotives which eluded the cutter's torch to become firm favourites with modern audiences. We see for example the likes of Bulleid West Country light Pacifics No. 34028 *Eddystone*, a Swanage Railway fleet member, and No. 34046 *Braunton*, now a regular on main line excursions. Covered in rust with graffiti highlighting the name of the preservation purchaser, who looking at these back them would have dared dream that they could again be anything but static museum exhibits.

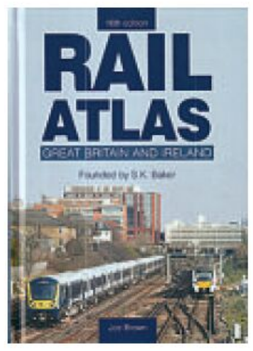
The volume perfectly captures the atmosphere of dereliction and decay of this "benevolent" scrapyard to the point where it is like stepping back in time to visit it.

Had Dai Woodham not mirrored the practice of fellow scrap merchants in dissecting each locomotive shortly after arrival, we would be so much the poorer for it today.

PORTRAIT OF A DEFINING WATERSHED IN RAILWAY HERITAGE

Rail Atlas Great Britain and Ireland

By Joe Brown, founded by SK Baker (hardback, Crecy Publishing Ltd, 141pp, £30, ISBN 978-1-80035-287-2)



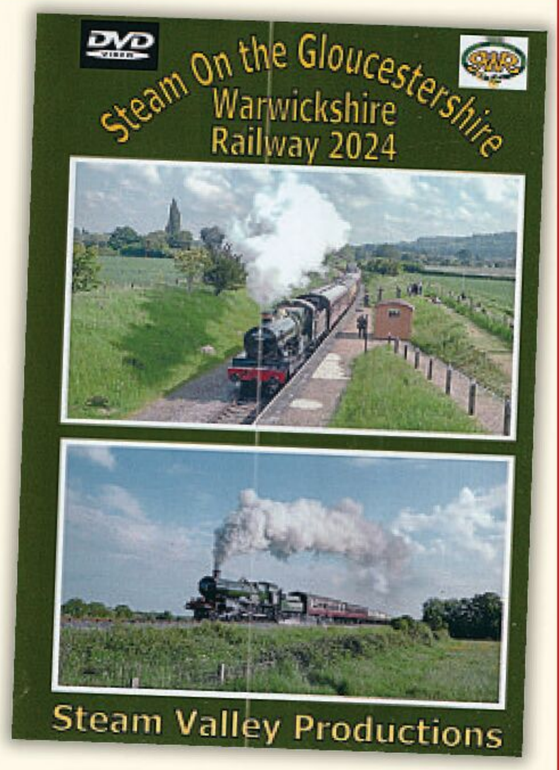
Here is the 16th edition of this essential rail atlas first produced by university student Stuart Baker 43 years ago. Following his established formula, it is a definitive guide to the routes of all railways, both main line and heritage of all gauges, and tramways, including still-extent ones which are currently disused.

New passenger routes have appeared including the Ashington and Levenmouth lines and the Elizabeth Line and Barking Riverside extension in London. Several new large-scale maps of complex areas have been introduced in this addition.

A MUST-HAVE CARTOGRAPHICAL MASTERPIECE UPDATED

Steam On The Gloucestershire Railway 2024

DVD (Steam Valley Productions, 1 hour 3 mins, Standard DVD £15 from Tiddington and Broadway station shops and exclusively to the railway at www,gwsr.com, and on Blu-Ray, only from www.steamvalleyproductions.com tel: 07875 556615, £20, plus £4.50 p&p).



AS featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 320, new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6800 *Betton Grange* made its public debut on the G/WR at the start of last year's May 25-27 Cotswold Festival of Steam, and as also previously reported, is now based on the line.

This splendid video captures its first appearance there and many other highlights from last year's season, including the last year in traffic on WR 4-6-0 No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* and the return of GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850 following a nine-year overhaul.

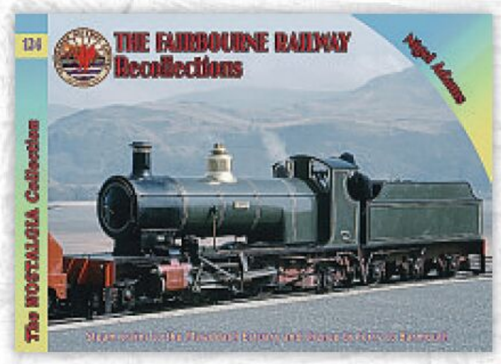
Also featured are WR 4-6-0 No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall*, Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental SN Co*, class 117 DMU No. L425 (since sold to Bo'ness) and two more visiting new-builds, GWR mogul No. 9351 from the West Somerset Railway and Saint 4-6-0 No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* from Didcot Railway Centre.

The video does justice to the marvellous scenery through which this line runs, and drone views give the viewers angles that they would normally see on a typical visit.

MAGNIFICENT PORTRAIT OF A MAGNIFICENT LINE

HERITAGE RAILWAY

BOOK CORNER



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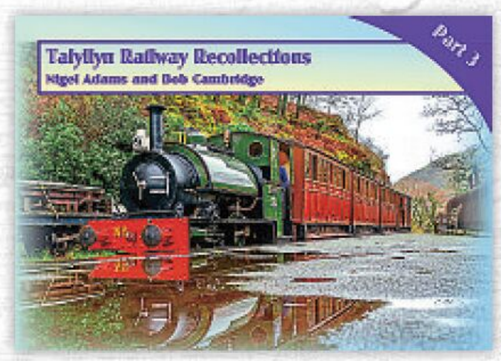

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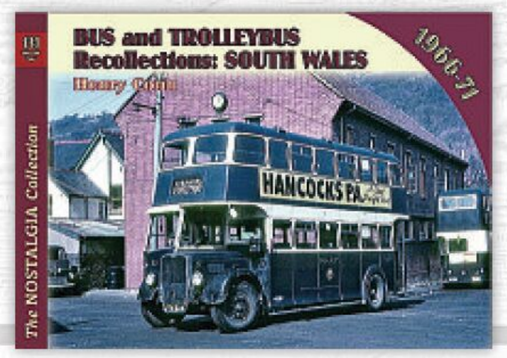

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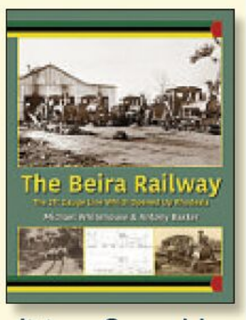
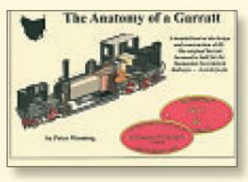
NEW **The Beira Railway • Whitehouse & Baxter • £46.95**



2ft gauge and 222 miles long, the Beira Railway only operated in this gauge for two years, from Beira on Mozambique's coast to the borders of the new Rhodesia. It had taken 10 years to build, was converted to 3ft 6ins Cape gauge to connect with what became Rhodesia Railways. Motive power initially was 'Lawley' class 4-4-0 tender locos which whilst delicate looking, coped well with the arduous condition. Superbly illustrated 224 page book with many archive B&W photos covering the line' construction and infastructure, as well as drawings. Hardbound.

Camden DIGITAL EDITIONS

The Anatomy of a Garratt • Manning • £ 9.95



The Darjeeling Garratt and the engine it tried to replace • Manning • £ 9.95

Available again, now in Digital Format, here are Peter Mannings' books on the first and second designs of Garratt locomotives built, the first for Tasmania and the second for India. As well as the history and technical details of each engine, each book contains full sets of drawings, dimensioned for full size, which are tremendous for modellers in any gauge. 66 and 72 pages respectively. Spiral bound card covers.

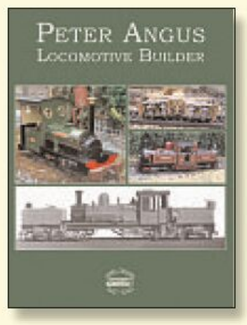
These two 'Digital Editions" may be read on a computer or laptop, and MUST be ordered from our website.

Mixed Gauges - VERY SPECIAL PRICE - 69% off! • Snell • £22.70

The late John Snell's wonderful story of his life with steam, and his travels to 21 countries worldwide, told in 256 pages, 386 photos in full colour and 48 in B&W. As is clear from this book, John was a superb writer and photographer. Hardbound. A recent comment: *"really is a superb book, a really good read, and with non-digital photos which have a quality of light that digital just does not give. Mr Snell had a unique way of viewing the international railway scene, and also the ability to take excellent photos and write an absorbing text, thus communicating the all-important ambiance of places and machines".* Mr. C.L.

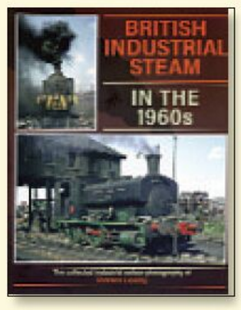
BUY WHILST YOU STILL CAN - HUGELY ENJOYABLE!

Peter Angus - Locomotive Builder - VERY SPECIAL PRICE - Angus • £26.70



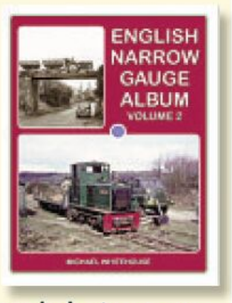
If you would like to build a live steam narrow gauge engine in16mm scale and want ideas, suggestions, hints, tips and the story of the prototypes, look no further than this book from Peter Angus, who has built 100s of such models. A pleasure to read and with 217 A4 size pages crammed with photos, drawings and illustrations, the bulk in colour, it is very good. *(Original price - 39.45 inc UK P & P)*

British Industrial Steam in the 1960s • Dorrity • £36.95



This book of 'The collected industrial colour photography of Terence Dorrity' contains many fascinating shots well reproduced. The photos are grouped firstly by country - England, Scotland and Wales, then by Industry and then by area. Narrow and standard gauge systems are both well covered. Many of the lines are those of the National Coal Board, but many other industries' lines are included. 224 pages of interesting photographs, with good captions. Hardbound.

English Narrow Gauge Album Volume 2 • Whitehouse • £41.95



The second of two volumes featuring the extraordinary breadth and individuality of narrow gauge railways in England, ranging from the remarkable Redruth & Chasewater Railway and the much loved Lynton & Barnstaple Railway in Devon to the Ashover Light Railway and industrial lines such as Holman F. Stephens Snailbeach Line in the Shropshire Stiperstones. All profusely illustrated to show the variety of steam locomotives and their operating environment, with many historic pictures never published before. 224 pages and Hardback. *Volume 1 still available at £40.95*

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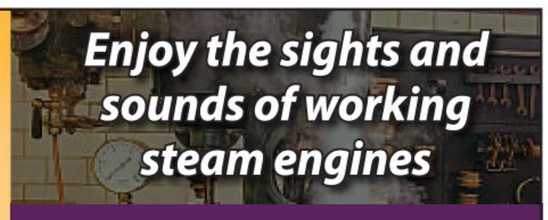
The Waterworks Museum Hereford



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01432 342192
www.waterworksmuseum.org.uk

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

THE historic bronze statue of Robert Stephenson has gone on public display in the grounds of the Locomotion museum in Shildon for 10 years, as per the agreement reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 330.

Since its removal from the piazza at Euston station as part of the HS2 redevelopment in October 2020, the 150-year-old statue of the pioneering engineer has been kept by HS2 in safe storage and is now loan to mark his part in the world's first steam-hauled passenger train on the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825.

Sarah Price, Head of Locomotion, said: "As one of the most influential engineers in railway history, Robert Stephenson's legacy is deeply connected to Shildon, the world's first railway town. Having this iconic monument on display alongside the pioneering locomotives and engineering marvels he helped to inspire is a fantastic boost for Locomotion and for the region during a landmark year in railway history." HS2

Headline events:

August 1-3 – Alstom presents: The Greatest Gathering
Litchurch Lane Works, Derby
August 23-25 – Stockton & Darlington Bicentenary steam gala
Stainmore Railway, Kirkby Stephen East
September 26-28 – *Locomotion No. 1* on the Stockton & Darlington Railway

Extended celebrations:

National Railway Museum and Locomotion Shildon – Activities, displays and events including the reopening of Station Hall in York. Throughout 2025.
Hopetown Darlington – Nine-month-long 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. Until November 30.

Heritage railways, museums and works:

May 24 – Corris Railway
Gala Day
May 24-26 – Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Cotswold Festival of Steam
Until May 31 – Swanage Railway
Swanage Railway 140th anniversary & Railways to the Seaside
June 7/8 – Bure Valley Railway
Anniversary Gala Weekend
June 13-15 – Spa Valley Railway
Cuckoo Line Gala
June 14/15 – Lappa Valley Railway
Gala Weekend
June 20-22 – Ffestiniog Railway
Platinum Jubilee Weekend
June 21/22 – Ply Valley Railway
Heritage Transport Weekend
June 28/29 – Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
Steam, Beer & Music Festival
July 5/6 – Great Central Railway
Open Weekend
July 5/6 – Stoke Park Miniature Railway Gala Weekend
July 5/6 – Talyllyn Railway
Anything Goes Gala
July 18-20 – Talyllyn Railway
Awdry Extravaganza
July 19 – Middleton Railway
90th anniversary of Courage – the world's smallest standard gauge diesel locomotive
July 24-August 31 – Bluebell Railway
Rail Present and Future
July 25-27 – Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Diesel Gala
July 27 – Plym Valley Railway
Drive a train day
August 2/3 – Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
45th Anniversary Weekend
August 22-25 – Isle of Wight Steam Railway
50th Island Steam Fair
August 30/31– Battlefield Line Railway 200 Gala

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

Main line:

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
August 1-3 – Alstom presents: The Greatest Gathering
Litchurch Lane Works, Derby

Talks:

May 10 – Thunder & 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
June 18 – Three Greeners of Etherley (Tom Walker)
Shildon Railway Institute, Shildon
July 16 – Timothy Hackworth's Institute (Dave Reynolds)
Shildon Railway Institute, Shildon

Exhibitions:

Until May 31 – The Heart of Metroland
Rickmansworth Library, Hertfordshire
Until September 7 – Smoke & Steel: The History of Scotland's Railways
Stirling Castle, Stirling
Until September 28 – 200 years of British Railway Locomotives
Ongar Station, Essex
Until October 26 – The Bishop's Waltham Branch Line
Bishop's Waltham Museum, Hampshire
Until November 2 – 1825 and all that!
Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, Tywyn
Until December 10 – East Surrey Railways
East Surrey Museum, Surrey
Until January 26, 2026 – Railway Firsts
National Railway Museum, York
Locomotion Shildon, Co. Durham

May 26-30 – Railway 200 @ Dartmouth Town Council
The Engine House, Dartmouth
June 26-28 – Blood, Bone & Muscle
Shildon Railway Institute, Shildon
July 19 – Railway History
Dorset History Centre, Dorchester
August 1-14 – A Pilgrim Destination
The Old Railway Station, Little Walsingham, Norfolk
September 1-30 – Railart 2025
Kidderminster Railway Museum, Worcestershire

Other:

Until July 31 – Railway 200 Poetry Competition
Lordshill Library, Southampton.
Until July 31 – FEATI University Railway Laboratory tours
Manila, Philippines
Unitl September 30 – Barton Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership Railway 200 Photo Competition
Online: www.bccrp.co.uk

May 10 – Railway Bicentenary Tea Dance
Shildon Railway Institute, Shildon
May 17 – BCIMO Family Day
Very light Rail National Innovation Centre, Dudley
May 25 – Hoddesdon Model Railway Club Extravaganza
Broxbourne, Hertfordshire
June 14 – Guided walk: Seaside Special (Tales from the Tracks)
Folkestone, Kent
July 12 – Guided walk: Life between the tracks (Tales from the Tracks)
Ashford, Kent
August 9 – Joseph Locke and others: Kensal Green Cemetery tour
Kensington, London
August 30 – Guided walk: Folkestone's Railway Transformation (Tales from the Tracks)
Folkestone, Kent
September 13 – Heritage Open Day
Poppleton Community Railway Nursery, York

Dates throughout the year:

Southport Model Railway Society
Open Days
57A Portland Street, Southport

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: Tues-Suns, bank hols, sch hols.**

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254. **Running: Weds + June 1, 21**

Chatham Historic Dockyard
Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent. Tel: 01634 820800. **Open: Daily.**

East Kent Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042. **Running: Suns.**

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway
10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. **Running: W/Es, sch hols.**

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, bank hols + June 28.**

Isle of Wight Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204. **Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns, sch hols, bank hols + May 17, 31.**

Kent & East Sussex Railway
Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155. **Running: Tues (from June 3), Weds, W/Es, sch hols + May 15, 20.**

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515. **Running: May 25/26, June 15, 29.**

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810. **Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.**

Mizens Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922. **Running: Suns.**

Old Kiln Light Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey. **Running: W/Es.**

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353. **Running: Daily.**

Royal Victoria Railway
10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246. **Running: W/Es, sch hols.**

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899. **Running: Suns, bank hols + May 28, 31.**

Spa Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141. **Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 29.**

Volk's Electric Railway
2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton. **Running: Daily.**

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538. **Running: Suns + May 17, 24, 26, 28, 31.**

Bodmin Railway's BR Class 08 No. 08444 has returned to service in Cornwall following a thorough overhaul, carried out entirely in-house at Bodmin General workshops. With it now taking over the shunting and works train duties, it has allowed the hired-in Class 10 locomotive D3489 *Colonel Tomline* to return to its home at the Helston Railway. JIMMY JAMES

Bodmin Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555. **Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns, bank hols + May 10, 16/17.**

Bristol Harbour Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600. **M Shed Museum open Tues-Suns. Running: May 24-26, June 7/8.**

Dartmouth Steam Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Paignton, Devon. Tel: 01803 555872. **Running: Daily.**

Devon Railway Centre
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon. Tel: 01884 855671. **Open: Thurs-Suns + sch hols.**

East Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset. Tel: 01749 880417. **Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + Thurs from June 5.**

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752. **Running: May 26, June 29.**

Helston Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597. **Running: Thurs, Suns.**

Lappa Valley Railway
7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile. Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317. **Open: Daily.**

Launceston Steam Railway
1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665 **Running: Suns-Tues from May 25.**

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487. **Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.**

Moors Valley Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415. **Running: W/Es, sch hols.**

North Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, 1200ft. Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset. Tel: 01258 860696. **Open: Weds, W/Es.**

Plym Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Marsh Mills, Plymouth. Tel: 01752 345078. **Running: Suns + May 24, 31, June 7.**

Seaton Tramway
2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375. **Running: Daily.**

Somerset & Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221 Open: Suns. **Running: May 25/26, 28, June 1.**

South Devon Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370. **Running: Tues-Suns, bank hols.**

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800. **Running: Daily.**

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615. **Running: May 10/11, 24-26, June 7/8.**

West Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, 20 miles. Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996. **Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.**

Yeovil Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420. **Open: Suns. Running: May 11, 25, June 1.**

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum
Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900. Open: Daily.

Bure Valley Railway
15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858. **Running: Daily.**

Colne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174. **Running: Suns, bank hols + May 24, 28/29, 31, June 7.**

East Anglian Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524. **Open: Weds, W/Es. Running: May 25/26, 28, June 1.**

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: Weds, Fris (from May 30), W/Es, bank hols + May 29.**

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899. **Running: May 25/26, June 1, 8, 15.**

Nene Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01780 784444. **Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.**

North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA. Tel: 01263 820800. **Running: Tues-Weds, W/Es, sch hols, bank hols + June 13.**

Southwold Railway Trust
3ft gauge. Blyth Road, Southwold. Tel: 01502725422. **Open: Tues + May 18.**

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.**

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HOME COUNTIES

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Quainton Road, Bucks. Tel: 01296 655720
Cafe open Mon-Fri.
Running: Suns, bank hols + May 17.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366
Running: Suns + May 24, 26, 29, 31.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067
Running: May 10/11, 25/26, 31, June 8, 15.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + Thurs & Fris from June 5.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + May 22/23, 2930.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 28.

Great Whipsnade Railway
2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.
Tel: 0344 225 1826.
Running: Daily.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway
2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.
Tel: 01932 212235.
Running: Suns + May 10, 17, June 14.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles.
Leighton Buzzard, Beds.
Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Suns, bank hols + May 28/29, 31.

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: June 1, 21/22.

Apedale Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. Tel: 0845 094 1953.
Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Barrow Hill Roundhouse
Standard gauge. Barrow Hill, near Chesterfield. Tel: 01246 475554.
Open: W/Es.

Battlefield Line
Standard gauge, five miles.
Shackerstone, Leics. Tel: 01827 880754.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 27/28.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys). Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Chasewater Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Walsall, West Midlands. Tel: 01543 452623.
Open: Daily. Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Churnet Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 5¼ miles.
Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile.
Crich, Derbyshire.Tel: 01773 854 321
Open: Sats-Weds.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles.
Norchard, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + May 28.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles.
Wirksworth, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 823076.
Running: Fris-Suns, bank hols + May 29.

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 + May 17.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Standard gauge, 15 miles.
Toddington, Glos.Tel: 01242 621405.
Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es, bank hols + Apr 24, May 1, 29.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: Thurs (from June 5), W/Es, bank hols + May 27-29.

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, sch hols, bank hols.

Class 423 No. 3417 *Gordon Pettit* will appear at events at the Swanage and Bluebell railways this year. JAMES CUMMINS

Southern Region electric traction lined up for multiple summer diesel galas throughout the region

With the unfortunate news of the death of Gordon Pettit OBE (News, page 27), Class 423 4VEP No. 3417, which in 2009 was named after the former general manager of BR's Southern Region, has been aptly booked to appear at two diesel galas in the south.

Making a return to the Swanage Railway for the May 9-11 event, the 4VEP will join a plethora of main line locomotives, with Class 69 No. 69007 *Richard Tevithick* being an appropriate choice for this celebration of modern traction in the year of the Railway 200 celebrations, while Class 73 No. 73128 brings a third heritage line into the mix being named *Kent & East Sussex Railway*. Also appearing in the Isle of Purbeck will be Class 20 No. 20066, Class 45 No. 45108, Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer*, and a Class 56, the identity of which was unconfirmed as this issue went to press.

As the summer gives way to autumn, the 4VEP will next appear at the Bluebell Railway's own September 5-7 gala, where it will appear alongside resident Class 73 E6040 *The Bluebell Railway,* Class 33 No. 33108 from the Severn Valley, and other locomotives to be announced.

Railway Museums

Beamish
County Durham. The Living Museum of the North. Open: Daily.
Tel: 0191 370 4000.

Coleford GWR Museum
Coleford, Gloucestershire.
Open: Fris and Sats.
Tel: 01594 832032/833569.

Crewe Heritage Centre
Vernon Way, Crewe.
Open: W/Es, bank hols until Nov 2.
Tel: 01270 212130.

Hopetown Darlington
North Road Station, Darlington.
Open: Tues-Sun in term time, daily in school holidays.
Tel: 01325 405060.

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: Weds-Suns in term time, daily in school holidays.
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

National Railway Museum
Leeman Road, York.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

Rail Story
Ingrow, West Yorks.
Open: Tues-Suns in term time, daily in school holidays.
Tel: 01535 690739
or 01535 680425.

Railworld Wildlife Haven
Peterborough.
Open: Weds, W/Es and school holidays.
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: Thurs-Sats.
Tel: 01884 256295.

West Cumberland Railway Museum
St Bees, Cumbria.
Open one week per month or by appointment for special interest groups – contact petergrooke@btinternet.com

Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
Cultra, Co. Down.
Open: Tues-Suns.
Tel: +44 (0)28 9042 8428.

Midland Railway – Butterley
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 28.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Pitsford, Northants. Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: Suns & bank hols from May 18.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Tel: 01604 702031.
Running: TBA.

Peak Rail
Standard gauge, four miles. Matlock, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 580381.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Perrygrove Railway
15in gauge. B4228, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Tel: 01594 834991.
Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es.

Rocks by Rail
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore, Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.
Open: Tues, Thurs.
Running: May 11, 25/26, June 15.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants. Tel 0300 3023 150.
Running: June 15.

Severn Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.
Running: Weds & Thurs (from June 4), W/Es, sch hols, bank hols + May 15/16.

Statfold Country Park
Multiple gauges, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU. Tel: 01827 830389.
Open: Fris-Suns, sch hols, banks hols.

Tanat Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Nantmawr, Shropshire SY10 9HW. Tel: 01691 780042. www.tanatvalleyrailway.co.uk
Open: TBA.

Telford Steam Railway
Standard gauge, one mile. Telford, Shropshire.
Running: Suns, bank hols.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.
Running: May 24-26, Sats during June.

Valley Railway Adventure
15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.
Running: Weds, W/Es, sch & bank hols.

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Blackpool, Lancs. Tel: 01253 209521. www.blackpoolheritage.com
Depot: Mons, Sats, bank hols.
Heritage tram tours: TBA.

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs. Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: Weds & Thurs (from May 21), W/Es, bank hols + May 30.

Eden Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.
Running: Suns, bank hols.

Great Laxey Mine Railway
19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 862007/670386.
Running: Suns.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453.
Running: Weds (from June 11), Suns.

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: Weds-Mons. Daily from June 1.

Kirkby Stephen East
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 371700.
Open: W/Es.

Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Near Ulverston, Cumbria. Tel: 01539 531594.
Running: Daily.

Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway
3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER), 5½ miles (SMR). Douglas, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 697473.
Running: Daily.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.
Running: Daily.

Ribble Steam Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Preston, Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.
Running: Sats, bank hols.

South Tynedale Railway
2ft gauge, 4¾ miles. Alston, Cumbria. Tel: 01434 338212.
Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 779747.
Open: Tues-Suns, bank hols, sch hols.

West Lancashire Light Railway
2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs. Tel: 01772 815881.**Running: Suns.**

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland. Tel: 0300 030 3311.
Running: May 10/11, 24-26, 28, June 15.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe
Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe. Tel: 07889 297271.
Running: May 10, 24, 31, June 7, 14.

Bowes Railway
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles. Springwell, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07850 916484.
Open: Tues & Thurs to pre-booked groups only.

Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles. Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire Tel: 01472 604657.
Running: Daily.

Derwent Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.
Running: W/Es.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 710614.
Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles. Ford Forge, Northumberland. Tel: 01890 820244.
Running: Daily.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ. Tel: 01535 645214.
Running: Weds, Thurs (from June 5), W/Es, sch hols, bank hols + June 20.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway
2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs. Tel: 07407 500884.
Running: May 24, June 14.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.
Running: May 18, 25/26, June 15, 22.

Middleton Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunslet, Leeds. Tel: 0845 680 1758.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 28.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.
Running: Sats-Weds, sch hols.

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 May 29.

Tanfield Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07508 092365.
Running: Suns, bank hols + May 10, 17, 24, June 20/21.

Weardale Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Stanhope, Co. Durham.
Running: Weds (from May 28), Sats, bank hols + May 11, 16, 29.

Wensleydale Railway
Standard gauge, 22 miles. Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire. Tel: 01677 425805.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)
15in gauge, four miles. Huddersfield, West Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.
Open: W/Es, sch hols, banks hols.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.
Open: Suns, bank hols.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway
2ft gauge, 4½ miles. Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols, bank hols.

War Department Light Railway trench Hunslet 4-6-0T No. 303 (works No. 1215 of 1916) is the guest at the South Tynedale Railway's summer steam gala held during the weekends of July 5/6 and 12/13. After the First World War, Hunslet sold it to Bingera Sugar Mill, Bundaberg, for use on sugar cane railways in Queensland, and it was later displayed at a children's home, from where an enthusiast bought it for restoration in 1994. The War Office Locomotive Society later acquired it and repatriated it to the UK in 2005. With the aid of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, it was restored to working order and made its public debut at the July 2018 Tracks to the Trenches event at the Apedale Valley Light Railway, where it is now based. It will run alongside the STR's home fleet during the gala.
PHIL PARKER/CREATIVE COMMONS

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Blaenavon's Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Blaenavon, Torfaen.
Tel: 01495 792263.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 28.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.
Pant, Mid-Glamorgan.
Tel: 01685 722988.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile.
Corris, near Machynlleth.
Tel: 01654 761701.
Running: Sats, bank hols + May 25.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles.
Fairbourne, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01341 250362.
Running: Tues-Weds, W/Es, sch hols, bank hols.

Ffestiniog Railway
2ft gauge, 13½ miles.
Porthmadog, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Daily.

Gwili Railway
Standard gauge, four miles.
Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 01267 238213.
Running: Weds, Thurs, Suns, bank hols.

Llanberis Lake Railway
2ft gauge, three miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870549.
Running: Suns-Fris. Daily from May 18.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 07956 082305.
Running: May 10, June 7.

Llangollen Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles.
Llangollen, Denbighshire.
Tel: 01978 860979.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

Rhyl Miniature Railway
15in gauge.
Rhyl, North Wales.
Tel: 01352 759109.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Snowdon Mountain Railway
800mm gauge, 4½ miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01286 870223.
Running: Daily.

Talyllyn Railway
2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.
Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.
Running: Daily.

Teifi Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Henllan, Ceredigion, SA44 5TD.
Tel: 01559 371077.
Running: sch hols.

Vale of Rheidol Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles.
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion.
Tel: 01970 625819.
Running: Daily.

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

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd.Tel: 01766 513402.
Running: Tues (from June 3), Weds, Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

Welsh Highland Railway
2ft gauge, 26 miles.
Caernarfon, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Daily.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, eight miles.
Llanfair Caereinion, Powys.
Tel: 01938 810441.
Running: Weds, Thus, W/Es, sch hols, bak hols + June 13.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Bo'ness, West Lothian.
Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: Tues, W/Es + May 30.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles.
Brechin, Angus.
Tel: 01356 622992.
Running: May 17, June 21/22.

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge.
Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Running: Suns from May 25.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Dufftown, Banffshire.
Tel: 01340 821181.
Running: W/Es.

Lathalmond Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Scottish Vintage Bus Museum,
Lathalmond, near Dunfermline.
Tel: 07379 914801.
Open: Suns.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South Lanarkshire.
Running: Suns.

Royal Deeside Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Banchory, Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.
Running: June 15, 29.

Strathspey Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.
Running: Weds, Thurs, Fris (from June 6) W/Es, sch hols.

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway
3ft gauge. Drumod, Co. Leitrim. Tel: +353 71 963 8599.
Running: Sats-Mons.

Downpatrick & County Down Railway
5ft 3in gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down.
Tel: 028 4461 5779.
Running: May 24.

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...

MAY
- 9-11 Swanage Railway Diesel Gala
- 10 Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Caernarfon Food Festival
- 10/11 Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Rail 200 Spring Gala
- 10/11 Statfold Country Park Steam in Miniature
- 10/11 Talyllyn Railway Awdry's Railway Series 80th Anniversary Celebration
- 10/11 Tanfield Railway Great North Festival of Railways
- 11 Abbey Pumping Station Emergency Services Day
- 11 Apedale Valley Light Railway Bus and Classic Commercial Vehicle Rally
- 11 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Vintage Road & Rail Rally
- 11 Great Central Railway Paddington Bear Visits
- 11 Groudle Glen Railway Diesel & Electric Day
- 11 Mizens Railway Visiting Engines Day
- 13 Kent & East Sussex Railway Morning Birdwatching Experience
- 14-31 Didcot Railway Centre Rivals Reunited
- 15-18 Severn Valley Railway Spring Diesel Festival
- 17/18 Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Model Railway Workshop
- 17/18 Foxfield Railway War Wheels
- 17/18 Great Central Railway Heritage Bus Rally
- 17/18 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway 1940s Weekend
- 17/18 Kent & East Sussex Railway 1940s Weekend
- 17/18 Tanfield Railway Great North Festival of Railways
- 18 Barnards Miniature Railway Small Engines Day
- 18 Isle of Wight Steam Railway Festival of Transport
- 23 Great Central Railway Diesel Running Day
- 24 Corris Railway Rail 200 Gala
- 24/25 East Lancashire Railway Vintage Vibes
- 24/25 Yeovil Railway Centre Model Railway Weekend
- 24-26 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Cotswold Festival of Steam
- 24-26 Tanfield Railway Great North Festival of Railways
- 24-31 Mid-Hants Railway Day Out With Thomas
- 25 Leighton Buzzard Railway Peppa Pig Visits
- 25-30 Isle of Wight Steam Railway Half Term Beside the Sea
- 26 Leighton Buzzard Railway Family Fun Day
- 25/26 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Day Out With Thomas
- 25/26 East Anglian Railway Museum Transport Extravaganza
- 25/26 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway 1940s Weekend
- 28 East Lancashire Railway Dinosaurs Day
- 28 South Tynedale Railway Teddy Bear Day
- 29 Talyllyn Railway Dragons Day
- 30 East Lancashire Railway Villain Academy
- 30/31 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway Steam Diesel Gala
- 31 Foxfield Railway Beer Festival & Traction Engine Rally
- 31 Great Central Railway 1940s Weekend
- 31 Leighton Buzzard Railway Diesel Gala
- 31 Peak Rail Road & Rail Steam & Vintage Festival

JUNE
- 1 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway Diesel Gala
- 1 Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway 50th Anniversary Gala
- 1 Didcot Railway Centre Rivals Reunited
- 1 Foxfield Railway Beer Festival & Traction Engine Rally
- 1 Great Central Railway 1940s Weekend
- 1 Leighton Buzzard Railway Diesel Gala
- 1 Mid-Hants Railway Day Out With Thomas
- 1 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Model Railway Exhibition
- 1 Middleton Railway Classic Car Rally
- 1 Peak Rail Road & Rail Steam & Vintage Festival
- 5-8 West Somerset Railway Summer Diesel Festival
- 6/7 Kent & East Sussex Railway Beer Festival
- 7 Abbey Pumping Station Teddy Bears Picnic
- 7/8 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway Teddy Bears' Picnic
- 7/8 Bure Valley Railway 35th Anniversary Gala
- 7/8 Llangollen Railway Diesel Weekend
- 7/8 Severn Valley Railway 1940s Weekend
- 7/8 Statfold Country Park Summer Spectacle of Steam
- 12-15 North Yorkshire Moors Railway Diesel Gala

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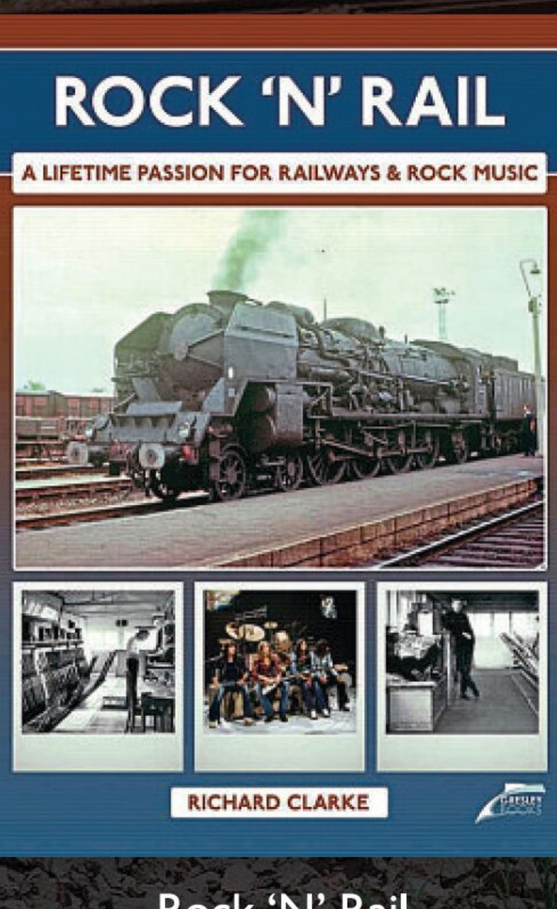

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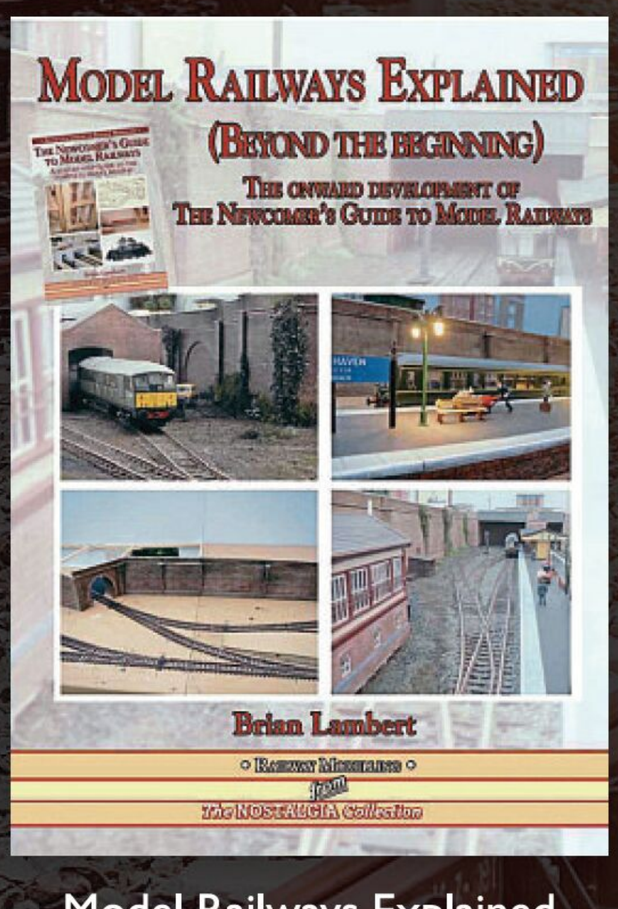
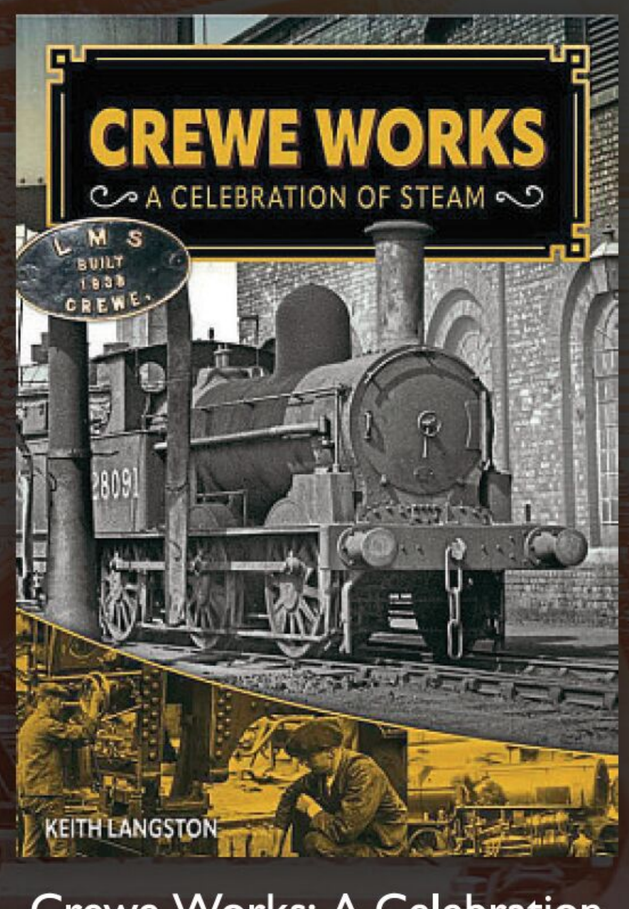
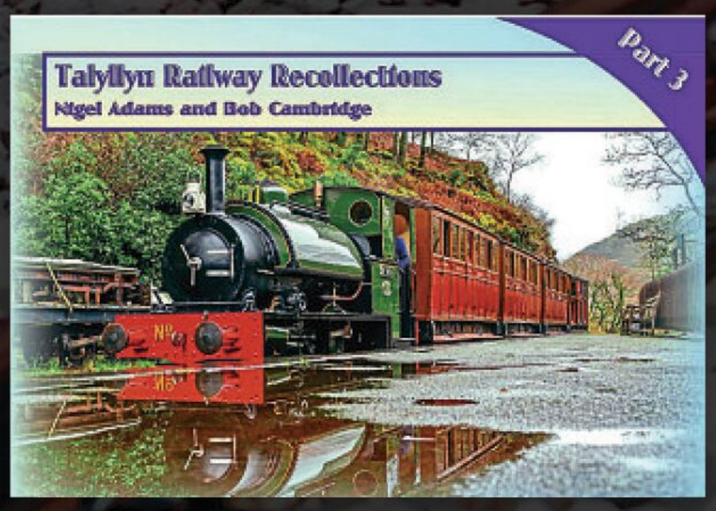


Model Railways Explained (Beyond the Beginning)
Brian Lambert **£20**



Crewe Works: A Celebration of Steam
Keith Langston **£39.99**



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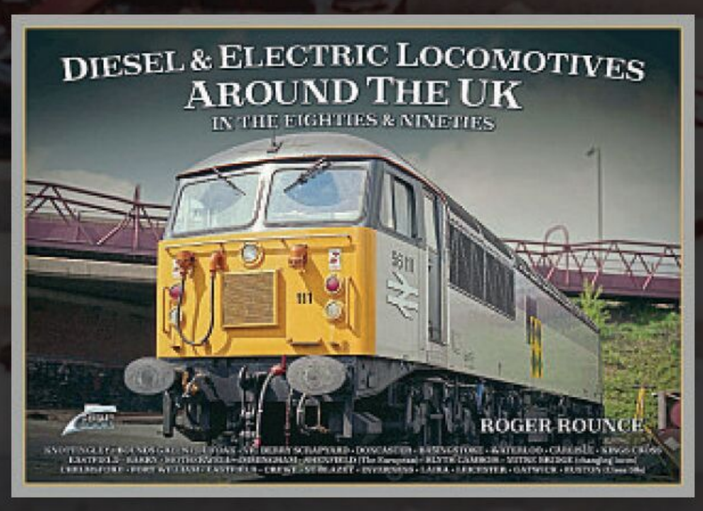

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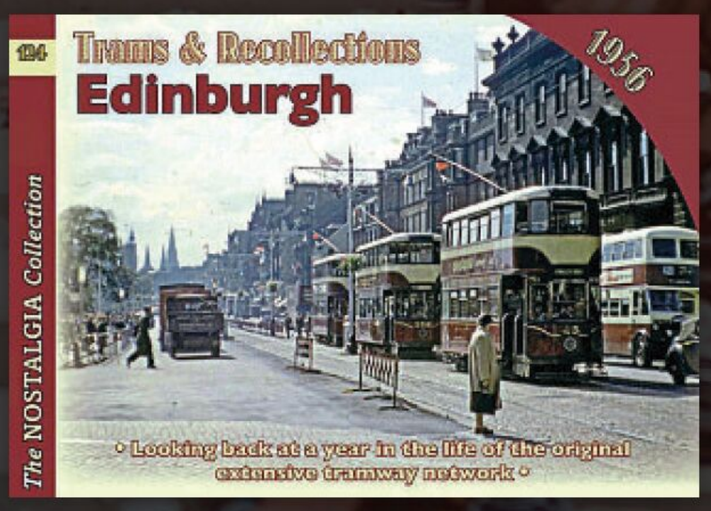

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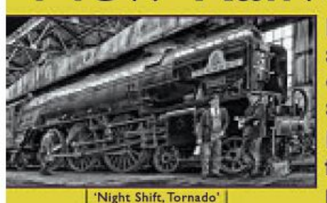
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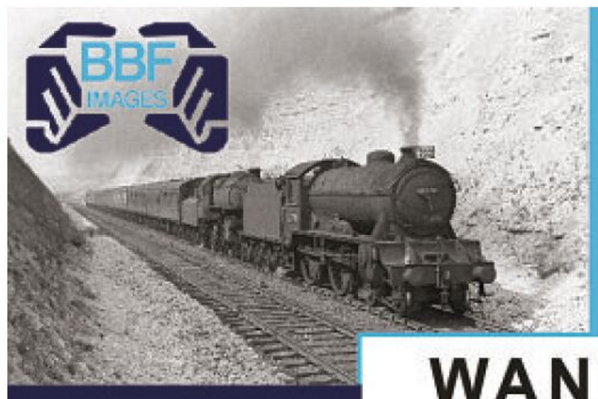

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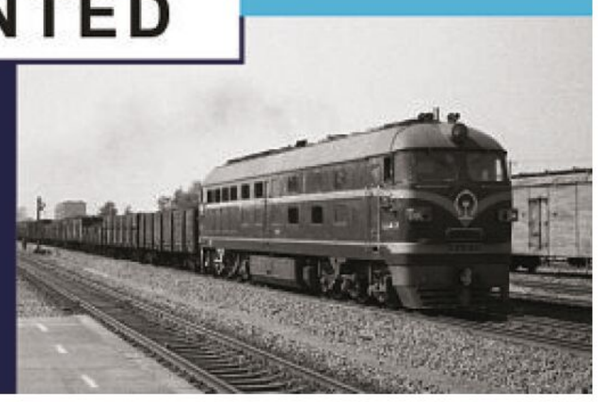

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Layout builder, 92, sets up train room for care home

By Robin Jones

A 92-year-old has turned an unused room in the care home where he lives into a miniature railway wonderland.

David Thompson, who resides with his wife Olive at Edenbridge Manor Care Home, at Eden Bridge, near Sevenoaks, Kent, has spent the past two years meticulously designing and building an intricate model railway layout.

What began as a quiet personal project has since become one of the most popular and lively spaces in the Avery Healthcare-owned home. It features hand-built scenery, a Pullman Express circling the tracks, and even a growing miniature town, one that fellow residents are invited to help shape.

Due to its popularity, the railway room is a regular highlight on tours for prospective residents and their families.

Originally from Evenley in Northamptonshire, David worked as an accountant and company secretary before retirement. He then turned to modelling and crafting, driven by a desire to create something lasting. "A bricklayer can walk down the street and see the walls they've built," he said. "An accountant doesn't get to do that. I wanted to leave something behind.

"It's more than just trains – it's a place where people connect. I love seeing others enjoying it.

"It brings back memories for many, and it's wonderful to share something that brings people together.

"As far as the layout goes, we are always evolving it. The Pullman express has made countless circuits, and now we are planning a small-town set-up around the track."

"We have even received generous donations from visitors inspired by the railway room.

"It's lovely to know people enjoy it so much that they want to contribute."

David also welcomes visitors for chats and to play games of dominoes, cribbage or cards by the tracks. The room too showcases several of his hand-built non-railway models, including a scale model of the *Titanic*, a musical 3D Ferris wheel puzzle, and a collection of radio-controlled trucks, all made with remarkable attention to detail.

The room honours the late Malcolm Hill, a fellow resident and co-founder of the project, who died in November. A custom plaque stands in the room in his memory.

The model layout David Thompson has created in the care home where he now lives. AVERY HEALTHCARE

Attention to the detail in the layout's townscape. AVERY HEALTHCARE

Home manager Esther Adams said: "David's railway room has really added something special to the home. It's a place where residents come together, share stories, get creative, and make lasting connections. It's such a big part of our community now.

"It really captures people's imaginations. We often hear visitors reminiscing about their childhood trainsets. It's lovely to see the joy it sparks."

Fellow resident Colin Bentley added: "It's fantastic! A great reminder of our childhoods."

➜ To learn more about the care home or to see the train room in person, you can book a tour by visiting www.averyhealthcare.co.uk or telephone 01732 927469.

Miniature marvel as the Forth Bridge is rebuilt brick by brick

A 'SECOND' version of the Forth Bridge – one made from 100,000 Lego bricks – was booked to appear in Edinburgh on May 10/11.

The 26ft-long model with two working railway tracks was set to go on show at the annual Edinbrick charity model show at Meadowbank Sports Centre. Its past shows having proved hugely popular, Edinbrick moved to the new venue this year and reported that tickets had sold out by April 16. A waiting list was being compiled.

Built by a team of four builders from the Lego UK Railway group, the bridge was first shown in Manchester last year, and this is its first time in Scotland.

As with the full-sized version, a UNESCO World Heritage site, boats and houses also made by Lego can be seen beneath.

Edinbrick organiser Doug Adamson said: "What could be more fitting than seeing the biggest Lego Forth Bridge ever built in the city where you can see the real bridge?"

The 26th-long Forth Bridge made from Lego bricks. LEGO UK RAILWAY

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 333 out June 6

Mark Smithers looks at the current project to replicate another early locomotive, the Ffestiniog Railway's 0-4-0T *Mountaineer* of 1863.

PLUS

Picture perfect

Owen Hayward asked some of *Heritage Railway's* regular photographers to share how they approach the most iconic locations a little differently to get a shot that stands out from the norm.

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Avoid the crowds and explore the full beauty of this Mediterranean isle in October – by train! Away from the beaches this Balearic Island is equally stunning in its interior as its coastline. This escorted tour visits areas that may be unfamiliar to most as you journey inland on narrow gauge rail lines that date back over 100 years.

- ★ Scenic rail journey to Soller
- ★ Exploring destinations off the tourist trail
- ★ Centrally located hotel
- ★ Escorted daily excursions
- ★ Time to explore Palma, Manacor, Soller, Inca & Polença

Great Autumn Escapes

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