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ISSUE 336 August 29 – September 26, 2025

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With diesel assistance because of the trackside fire risk during the recent heatwaves, A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* heads Saphos Trains' 'The Lakelander' on August 16, rounding the final curve before reaching the summit of Ais Gill. The trip from Nottingham to Carlisle and return saw the A2 join at Preston for the northbound run over Shap, but Network Rail requested diesel assistance because of the dry spell, so Locomotive Services Limited's immaculately presented lined black Class 57 Nos. 57002 *Winston Churchill* and 57311 *The Institute of Mechanical Engineers* were engaged. No. 57002 was tucked inside behind the A2, and No. 57311 was attached to the rear end. The return leg from Carlisle was switched to the Settle and Carlisle line from the original Cumbrian Coast route because of the closure of Bransty Tunnel at Whitehaven for complete track replacement following recent flooding by historic mine water. RODNEY TOWERS

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1825 and all that!

HAVING ascended the first of the twin peaks of Railway 200 to be mesmerised by the exhilarating sights from the summit, Britain has been left owing an enormous debt of gratitude – not just to Alstom and its ground-breaking unique combination of partners from the main line and heritage sectors who made The Greatest Gathering one of the most successful events of its kind of all time, but also those who are responsible for the entire national Railway 200 programme. Winners all!

Its multitude of events, big and small, have switched large swathes of the public on to the sheer importance of the 200th anniversary of the world's first modern train movement, when passengers rode behind George Stephson's *Locomotion No. 1* in the carriage *Experiment* in a rake of chaldron wagons on the Stockton & Darlington Railway on September 27, 1825 – and unlocked the immeasurable potential of steam to revolutionise transport around the globe.

The blend of historic, modern and future rail transport at Litchurch Lane Works in Derby created an event which unlocked stories and surprises for the general public at every twist and turn, and in every corner and crevice.

Now, we are all set to climb the second peak: the sight replicating the first train running over that original route, with a host of ancillary events at several venues in County Durham to mark the S&DR200 festival, as outlined on pages 52/53.

The Greatest Gathering sold out well in advance and welcomed more than 40,000 visitors, and the eagerly-anticipated September re-enactments at Darlington, Shildon and Stockton are all but guaranteed to attract hordes of sightseers from both home and abroad.

Railway 200 has guaranteed that the year 1825 will be elevated into that exclusive list of core dates in UK history long headed by the likes of 1066. The programme's benefits in terms of popular education and tourism will be immeasurable.

I believe that rekindling interest in one of the greatest of all British inventions will in turn boost support for our vast portfolio of heritage lines and museum venues which, for the most part, have risen to their present status due to unswerving volunteer efforts over several generations and the generosity of public donations.

The time has rarely been more right but now is definitely the opportunity for those who have been fascinated by the Railway 200 events or whose dormant interest in the sector has been reignited to seek out what they might do to help their local heritage line. After all, volunteering brings its own rewards and justly so.

Let's start planning ahead for the third century, with the bicentenary of the Rainhill Trails on the Liverpool & Manchester Railway only four years away.

Robin Jones Editor

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CONTENTS: Cover: On August 9, BR 5MT No. 73082 *Camelot* crosses New Road Bridge on the approach to Horsted Keynes on the Bluebell Railway during the line's 65th anniversary celebrations. The Derby-built 4-6-0 was also celebrating its own 70th birthday, with a headboard worn throughout the event denoting this landmark. See feature, pages 66-69 for the full story. OWEN HAYWARD

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A year of celebrations to mark Nigel Gresley 150th

By Robin Jones

A YEAR-LONG series of events will mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of legendary locomotive designer Sir Nigel Gresley.

The Gresley Society Trust, founded in 1963 to honour the life and works of the designer of LNER icons including *Flying Scotsman*, *Cock O'The North* and *Mallard*, has arranged a series of commemorative events under the banner A Legacy of Innovation, Speed and Elegance.

They will be held in collaboration with Doncaster City Council and other partner railway organisations, and an application has been submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Fund for support.

The centrepiece will be a symposium and gala dinner on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at the Mansion House, Doncaster, featuring presentations by esteemed speakers exploring Gresley's personal history, professional achievements, and his enduring influence on modern railways. Topics include his early career, LNER locomotive and coaching stock development, the iconic streamliners, and his legacy in preservation and today's railway industry.

The evening's 1930s-themed gala dinner will offer a nostalgic culinary experience inspired by menus from famous LNER trains, including 'The Flying Scotsman,' 'The Silver Jubilee' and 'The Coronation'.

Other celebration highlights include a new plaque at Doncaster station, unveiled on June 19, marking Gresley's 149th birthday; an exhibition at the Danum Gallery, Doncaster, showcasing Gresley's life and works (with part of it becoming a permanent display); and a Gresley-focused theme at The Festival of British Railway Modelling at Doncaster Racecourse on February 7/8, 2026, featuring the award-winning Grantham: The Streamliner Years layout.

The logo for the 150th anniversary year. GST

A series of events will be held by partner organisations, including those connected to Gresley's class A4 No. 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley* (which appeared at The Greatest Gathering at Derby) and the LNER Coach Association on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

The trust's archive is to be digitised to ensure broader access and long-term preservation, a short film on Gresley's life and achievements will be made, and a commemorative logo for partner organisations will be created.

Trust chairman Philip Benham MBE FCILT said: "Sir Nigel Gresley's visionary designs, from the world-famous *Flying Scotsman* and record-breaking *Mallard* through to the streamlined trains of the 1930s, transformed the railway industry and continue to captivate enthusiasts worldwide.

"This 150th anniversary celebration is a fitting tribute to his legacy of innovation, speed and elegance, bringing together our members, partners and the wider railway community to honour his remarkable contributions."

The statue of Sir Nigel Gresley which was unveiled at King's Cross station on April 5, 2016, the 75th anniversary of his death. ALAN BURKWOOD/GST

The society owns N2 No. 1744, the oldest surviving Gresley locomotive, which is nearing the end of a major overhaul at the North Norfolk Railway, and Gresley Buffet Lounge Car No. 1852, the sole surviving vehicle from the 1938 'Flying Scotsman' train, soon to be the subject of a NHLF bid for restoration. The Trust has also commemorated Gresley with plaques at sites like Doncaster and Edinburgh Waverley, and a statue at King's Cross station.

➜ Tickets for the symposium and gala dinner are priced at £25 (members) and £30 (non-members) for the symposium, and £75 (members) and £85 (non-members) for the gala dinner, with spaces limited to 100. To register, complete the RSVP form available from The Gresley Society Trust by April 30, 2026. For more details, visit Gresley.org or email chairman@gresley.org

LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* displayed at the hugely successful The Greatest Gathering at Alstom's Litchurch Lane plant in Derby on August 1.
➜ Special feature – pages 44-49. ROBIN JONES

Tyne & Wear Metrocar pair to be preserved

TWO redundant trains from the Tyne and Wear Metro are being given to Beamish Museum and the Stephenson Railway Museum rather than being scrapped.

The 45-year-old Metrocars, currently being phased out, are being sent for recycling, with much of their used metals repurposed and shipped abroad to support manufacturing.

North East metal recycling specialist J Denham Metals Ltd is taking them to its yard near Bishop Auckland.

Metals from the Metro's rolling stock – including aluminium, copper and steel – are being exported via regional hubs to countries including Spain, India and Turkey.

The Tyne and Wear Metrocars were manufactured by Metro-Cammell in Birmingham between 1978 and 1981 and are designated as Class 599 under TOPS. They are being replaced by Stadler Class 555 Metro units.

A total of 29 trains – almost a third of Metro's current rolling stock – have been recycled so far.

Paul Welford, major projects director at Metro owner Nexus (the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive), said: "We are bidding a fond farewell to the old Metro train fleet over the next couple of years and it's good to see that a lot of the used parts are being sent away for recycling.

"These trains have been real workhorses over the last four decades. They helped transform public transport in our region. They have given us outstanding service, running 20 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Customer can be assured that two of the old trains are being retained for heritage purposes and will be sent to two local museums – the Stephenson Museum and Beamish – so we can celebrate and remember their contribution to our region for many years to come."

The Stephenson Museum is home to George Stephenson's *Billy*, a forerunner of Rocket.

J Denham Metals commercial manager Graeme Smith said: "These trains are part of our region's heritage, and we are proud to be carrying out the recycling work given the region's railway connections and that nearby Shildon is the home of rail.

A Metrocar set arrives at the J Denham Metals to be scrapped within an hour. NEXUS

"Enthusiasts visit regularly to catch a final look at the Metros before they undergo the breakage process.

"There has been more demand for recycled metals in recent years, so the materials removed from these Metro trains is providing an important environmental benefit. We can break a Metro train apart completely in just under one hour."

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Listed Dean Forest bridge damaged in collision

A Grade II-listed footbridge on the Dean Forest Railway was severely damaged in an incident involving an engineering train which is believed to have struck it on August 14.

The bridge, which carries a public footpath over the line at St Mary's Halt, partway between Lydney Junction and Norchard on the 4¼-mile line, is believed to be the last-surviving piece of infrastructure from the Severn & Wye Junction Railway. It was built in 1892 to prevent possible accidents being caused by people crossing the line ahead of trains.

It was closed in 2007 after concerns were raised about its condition. A diversionary route was in place for 11 years before funding from the Rural Development Programme for England was secured to enable repairs to take place, and it reopened in 2019.

On August 14, an engineering train was being operated which comprised Class 08 No. 08769 and a well wagon, aboard which an excavator was loaded.

As the consist passed beneath the bridge, it is understood that the loaded vehicle made contact with part of the structure, the result of which was that the majority of the wrought iron bridge was pulled down.

As this issue of *Heritage Railway* magazine went to press, the precise reason for the cause of the incident had not been disclosed.

A DFR statement issued later that day said: "At about 10.55am this morning, there was an incident involving an engineering train and the Grade II-listed bridge at St Mary's Halt. Thankfully, nobody was harmed and our staff and volunteers are now working with the Office of Rail & Road and the Rail Accident Investigation Branch."

Local residents shared their dismay online after seeing what had happened, with one commenting: "Such a shame, it's a really beautiful bridge too. I really hope there are funds to rebuild this. Fingers crossed it gets fixed and continues to be a much-loved bit of history for everyone to enjoy again."

The scene at St Mary's Halt on the Dean Forest Railway shortly after an engineering train struck the footbridge, resulting in much of the Grade II-listed structure being pulled down. MIKE DANIEL ROWE

On August 19, a subsequent statement confirmed the bridge had been removed and put into storage pending an assessment, and the full line was reopened.

A DFR spokesman advised that as the matter was the subject of an ongoing investigation, it was unable to offer any further comment until it had been concluded.

Forgotten artwork by renowned artist Cuneo displayed in Derby museum to celebrate Alstom's The Greatest Gathering

A FORGOTTEN oil painting by renowned railway artist Terence Cuneo has gone on display at the Derby Museum of Making, portraying the venue for Alstom's record-breaking The Greatest Gathering festival as it was in 1959.

Alstom has loaned the artwork, which was safely stored on site several decades ago ahead of refurbishment works but never went back on display.

It was during preparations for The Greatest Gathering festival that organisers reached out to the Museum of Making to ensure that the piece's historical significance was fully recognised and enjoyed as widely as possible. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the museum at Derby Silk Mill – the world's first modern factory – showcases the region's 200-year history of innovation, ingenuity and creativity.

An accomplished portraiture and landscape painter, Terence Cuneo (1907-1996) is most synonymous with artworks depicting railways, particularly the transitional period between steam and diesel traction. From 1954, Cuneo included a small mouse within many of his works – with the Alstom painting no different.

Cuneo's 'DMU at Derby Carriage and Wagon Works' from 1959 depicts the construction of a BR Class 108 DMU at Alstom's UK factory, today known as Derby Litchurch Lane Works. A total of 333 Class 108s were built at Litchurch Lane in 1958-61.

A restored two-car example of the DMU featured in the painting returned to Derby and starred in The Greatest Gathering. Comprised of coaches Nos. 51941 and 52064, it is based at Severn Valley Railway and part of the DMU Group (West Midlands).

Festival organisers arranged for the oil painting to be positioned next to the train that inspired it for a brief time.

"Terence Cuneo's painting is a powerful reminder of Derby's proud railway heritage and the enduring legacy of British engineering," said works managing director Andy Butters.

"We are delighted to see it on public display, especially following The Greatest Gathering, which brought together generations of rail fans to celebrate our factory's historic and ongoing contribution to train-making."

Marking The Greatest Gathering, the Museum of Making opened until 10pm on August 1, while Derby Market Hall hosted a fringe event for visitors on August 1-3. Held in conjunction with the Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership, it featured model railways, train-themed board games and heritage displays highlighting the rich railway history of Derby and the surrounding area.

Laura Phillips, head of curation at Derby Museums, said: "The painting beautifully illustrates Derby's railway heritage, linking the Alstom site with the collections at the Museum of Making – home to our Railways Revealed gallery, Railway Study Centre and the Midland Railway Society collection. It was thrilling that our historic model railway volunteers could take part in the record-breaking The Greatest Gathering – a phenomenal tribute to Railway 200."

Andy Butters, managing director of Alstom's Derby Litchurch Lane Works, James Cooper, chairman at DMU Group (West Midlands), and Eilish Clohessy-Dennis, curator of making at Derby Museums, with Terence Cuneo's oil painting 'DMU at Derby Carriage and Wagon Works' in front of a Severn Valley Railway-based restored Derby-built Class 108 as depicted in the artwork, visiting Litchurch Lane for The Greatest Gathering. IAN CASTLEDINE

New-build steam project launched by Glyn Valley revivalists

EXCLUSIVE

by Robin Jones

THE Glyn Valley Tramway Trust has announced plans to build a new steam locomotive.

The trust now owns the rolling chassis of a Kerr Stuart Tattoo 0-4-2ST that will become the revived tramway's flagship once built.

The chassis was donated by the family of enthusiast Christopher Castro, who had been building the locomotive as a metalworking project and sent the wheels to the Statfold Barn Railway workshops to be profiled. Sadly, he died last year.

The family advertised the frames – the component which gives a locomotive its identity – and wheels on Facebook Marketplace for free of charge and the GVTT took up the offer.

The family wishes the locomotive to be completed in his memory and it shall be named *Christopher* at their request, numbered five to continue the numbering system of the pre-1935 original GVT, and to reflect Christopher's birthdate. The trust intends to set up a separate organisation known as the No. 5 Club to support and fund its construction.

For the revived line at Chirk, the locomotive will be built to 2ft 3in gauge rather than the 2ft 4¼in gauge (exactly half standard gauge) of the original. The slightly different but still comparatively rare gauge will make the new tramway compatible with the Talyllyn and Corris railways, enabling mutual visits by locomotives and rolling stock.

Growing collection

The trust owns several items of rolling stock, all of which will be used in the construction of the line south from Chirk station.

Its tool van, No. 5, and two flat wagons, based on ex-RNAD chassis and which were restored for the trust by CJS Engineering of Wigan, will be used to carry sleepers, ballast, tools and other equipment as the railhead moves further away.

> "We want the tramway to be a force for good in the community."

Also based on an RNAD chassis is a passenger brake coach currently in the process of being restored by CJS. It will be used at first on permanent way construction trains to carry volunteers and act as a brake van and then for passengers once the tramway opens.

The trust was founded in 2008 and based in Chirk. It is a separate organisation to the New Glyn Valley Tramway & Industrial Heritage Trust, which is located at the opposite end of the original line at The Old Tramway Engine Shed in Glyn Ceiriog.

The Chirk station site has seen the platform being uncovered and the ground returned to trackbed level. So far, about 80 yards of track have been laid in the platform.

The concrete foundations for the ticket office have been poured. It will be constructed from reclaimed local 'Ruabon Red' bricks and look identical to the original. The platform's stone edge is being restored using traditional techniques and lime mortar.

The Chirk trust's goal is not only to open its section of the Glyn Valley Tramway as a new heritage line, but to also use it as a community and learning hub, teaching skills like welding, bricklaying and lime mortaring. It views the station building as a community centre.

The trust has planning permission for just over a mile of track to Pontfaen, opposite the fishery on the B4500. So far, 570 yards have been cleared and made ready for track laying, subject to further funding.

A trust statement said: "We also wish to support Chirk itself and encourage passengers to venture into the town to support the shops and local businesses on the high street. We want the tramway to be a force for good in the community.

"The restoration of the station and the laying of track are obviously expensive undertakings. We ask people to donate and join as members of the trust to help the GVT one day see its reopening day."

To donate and/or join, visit https://www.glynvalleytramwaytrust.co.uk/memberships

Membership for a year costs £10 or £250 for life. The trust will also be exhibiting at the Warley Model Railway show at the Statfold on October 11/12.

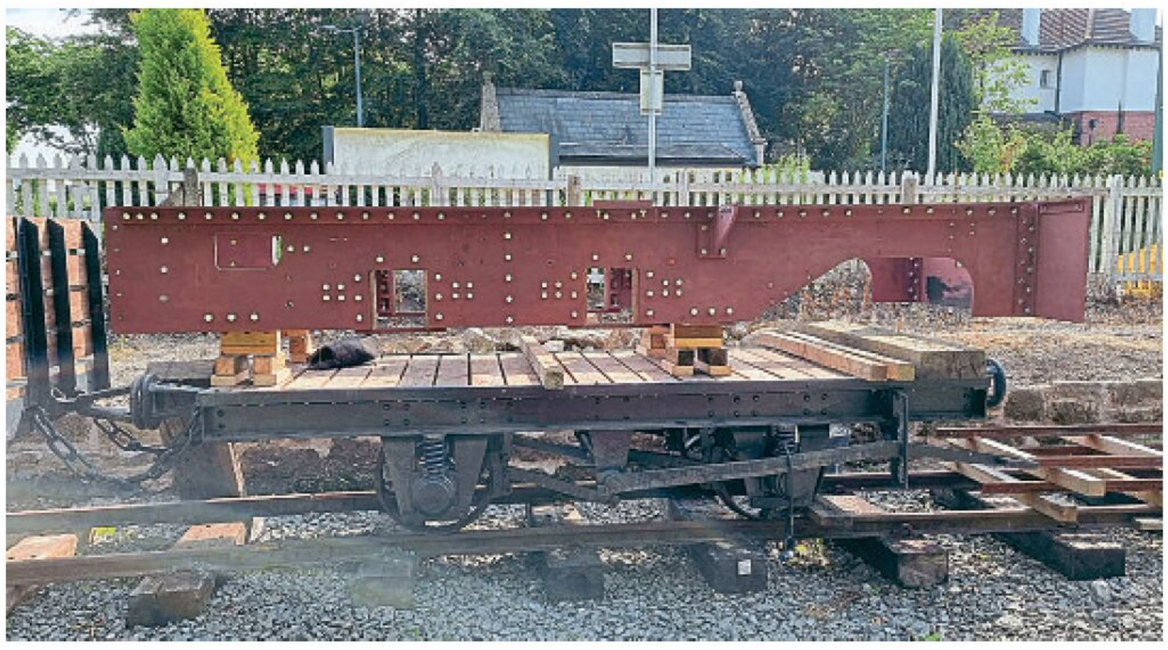
Six-mile run

The tramway opened in 1873 and originally worked by gravity and horse and ran for six miles from Glyn Ceiriog to Gledrid Wharf, near Chirk Bank on the Shropshire Union Canal.

A passenger service began in April 1874, running between the New Inn (now the Glyn Valley Hotel) in Glyn Ceiriog and Pontfaen.

In 1885, a further Act of Parliament included conversion to steam power and a mineral extension from Glyn Ceiriog to Hendre Quarry.

After the First World War, labour costs rose while traffic steadily declined as lorries took mineral products direct from quarries. A motor bus service introduced in 1932 easily beat the tramway's 12mph permitted speed, and despite cutting fares, passenger services were withdrawn on April 6, 1933, followed by freight on July 6, 1935, after which voluntary liquidation followed. All four locomotives were scrapped by 1936, along with most of the wagons and carriages.



The frames of the new-build Kerr Stuart Tattoo class 0-4-2ST now at Chirk. GVTT

Helston's viaduct appeal's early boost – but much more needed!

THE Helston Railway so far raised £20,000 of its £100,000 appeal to buy and restore Lowertown viaduct.

As highlighted last issue, the railway has the chance to purchase the 313ft-long and 120ft-high six-arch viaduct.

Meanwhile, the railway has just installed a new footbridge at its Trevarno request-only stop for walkers using the public footpath

Named locally as Black Bridge, it carries a footpath which makes for a good circular walk. It means that now there are circular walks around the countryside at the Truthall end of the line, the centre section at Trevarno and, thanks to a new initiative by Cornwall Council, there should soon be another one at the Prospidnick end, giving stunning views of the countryside out to Mounts Bay.

The aim is to attract more visitors to the area and boost opportunities for people to expand their visitor experience.

➜ A beer mat to promote the viaduct appeal has been distributed around local pubs. Donations can be made to Helston Railway Co Ltd c/o Lowertown Viaduct Appeal, Helston Railway, Trevarno Farm, Prospidnick, Helston, Cornwall TR13 0RY, by visiting www.helstonrailway.co.uk/viaduct-appeal, or by BACS transfer to sort code: 30-98-90 and account number: 17131960. You can also contribute at https://gofund.me/79378faf

The new footbridge at the Helston Railway's Trevarno request stop is now complete. HR

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Tornado trips and *Duke's* first passenger outing cancelled amid ongoing dry spell

MAIN line tours and heritage services continued to suffer as heatwaves baked much of the UK, with cancellations and alterations required as soaring fire risks led to concerns for surrounding landscapes.

A substantial fire at Harwood Dale on August 12 saw the North Yorkshire Moors Railway – which travels through much of the national park on its way from Pickering to Grosmont – withdraw steam services once again, with diesel traction taking over until a suitable change in weather reduced the fire risk once more. Accordingly, the planned services featuring visiting Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* on August 15-17 were cancelled.

A Moorsline statement on August 13 said: "Due to the prolonged hot weather and recent fires elsewhere in the county, which have meant firefighting resources have been more stretched, we've taken the decision to delay the start of the special No. 60163 *Tornado* services.

"We are reviewing all current *Tornado* services and hope to have an update on the revised start date once temperatures have cooled down."

Five days later, however, the A1 was permitted to start working some of its booked trips after precautions including fire patrols and shortened carriage sets were put in place, with the situation continuing to be monitored.

The prolonged dry spell also saw Network Rail put its fire risk assessment to red status in many areas. With no rain forecast, this was expected to be raised to its most severe level of black. In response, the first planned outing with recently-overhauled BR Standard 8P 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* on a member's charter on August 16 was postponed, to be rescheduled.

On Sunday, August 17, Vintage Trains' 'Shakespeare Express' from Worcester Shrub Hill to Stratford-upon-Avon, which was due to be headed by WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle*, was instead delegated to Class 37 No. 37240 and Class 47 No. 47773 *The Queen Mother*.

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway went diesel-only from July 31, while the Mid-Hants Railway substituted steam with diesel on full line workings from August 14, with a steam shuttle operating between Ropley and Alresford only. The North Norfolk Railway worked with surrounding landowners to ensure that following the harvest of crops in adjacent fields, suitable firebreaks were made to prevent any fires from spreading too far.

Having recently successfully completed several main line test runs, BR Standard 8P 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* stands silent at Locomotive Services Limited's Crewe base on August 16 after its members' charter the following day was called off due to the fire risk. TREVOR TUCKLEY

Left: A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* at Grosmont on August 18, when it was permitted to start working its booked Moorsline services. TONY WINWARD

Class 37 No. 37688 *Great Rocks* passes Moorgates while heading towards Goathland on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on August 12, w the steam ban in place. SANDY BIGGS

Hastings Diesels hits main line tour centenary

HERITAGE DEMU operating Hastings Diesels Ltd has planned a special 426-mile outing to celebrate its 100th railtour, taking in five Warwickshire towns.

On May 11, 1996, the Class 201 DEMU made its first appearance on the main line since being withdrawn by BR exactly 10 years before, heading from Hastings to Folkestone Harbour, then on to Charing Cross, followed by a non-stop run back to its starting point. Since then, it has visited countless destinations.

On September 20, No. 1013 will run in a six-car formation from Hastings (departing at 7.02am) and run to Birmingham Moor Street via Oxford, Leamington Spa, Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, with pick-ups at Tonbridge, Bromley South, Kensington Olympia and Reading.

The train will not call at Kensington on the return journey, instead stopping at Clapham Junction instead.

A buffet car with a trolley service will be available. Prices start at £95 for the journey, with £129 for First Class travel; for those starting and finishing at Reading, a reduced rate of £82 and £119 respectively applies. As we closed for press, consideration was being given to offering any remaining seats available nearer to the day to those wishing to board at stations from Oxford.

➜ To book, visit www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk/railtours

IN BRIEF

The Polar Express returns to Birmingham main line

VINTAGE Trains has announced that it will again run The Polar Express over the main line from Birmingham Moor Street during the coming festive season.

Last year, about 19,000 passengers were carried on the Tyseley operator's trains for the immersive family-oriented experience.

The 2004 hit Warner Brothers movie is based on Chris Van Allsburg's classic Christmas picture book which tells the story of a boy who takes a magical Christmas Eve train ride to the North Pole to receive a special gift from Santa.

The VT trips involve the film being theatrically recreated on board heritage carriages behind a steam locomotive.

Tickets are now on sale for the trips which start on November 22 and run at weekends through to December 23, offering four daily departures (with an additional fifth on December 20/21). Tickets are available in twos or fours; prices range from £86 to £108 for two people in standard and from £110 to £138 in premium, depending on the date of the train ride.

Each passenger gets a golden ticket, with a hot chocolate and a bell that only rings for those who believe, given out by Father Christmas himself.

Exclusive Polar Express merchandise will be on sale, and there will be the opportunity to take photographs with the locomotive and characters from the film.

Premium tickets each come with a ceramic mug exclusive to this year's trip and a Polar Express bag for every table.

Exact dates, times and fares are available at https://vintagetrains.co.uk/train-rides/polar-express/

Bishops Lydeard main line services link talks planned

A PLAN to reconnect the West Somerset Railway to the national network moved forward after Tiverton and Minehead MP Rachel Gilmour secured a key meeting with senior Department for Transport officials. She will meet the Government representatives after the summer recess to discuss the proposal for a link between Bishops Lydeard and Taunton.

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Austerity class NCB No. 49 is one of the stars of the Severn Valley Railway's September 18-21 gala weekend where it will join former Port Talbot railway 0-6-0ST No. 813 to recreate scenes of NCB Backworth, the pair having worked there together there in the 1960s.
KENNY FELSTEAD

Unique Stanier mogul No. 13268 is one of a trio of visiting LMS locomotives at the Great Central Railway's October 2-5 steam gala.
OWEN HAYWARD

Castle, A4 and mogul among the line-ups unveiled for upcoming autumn gala season

By Owen Hayward

ENTHUSIASTS will be hard pressed to pick their galas this autumn as a plethora of steam locomotives are set to travel the nation over the next few months to star at these events.

Having returned to service only in April, GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* (picture, Main Line News, page 56) has spent the summer shedded at Bishops Lydeard on the West Somerset Railway to work main line tours bound for Paignton, but it will now run over the full line to Minehead when it stars at the October 17-19 steam gala.

The WR express locomotive will offer a comparison to the previously announced pre-Grouping veteran that is LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563, which will be making its second trip away from Swanage since returning to steam.

Elsewhere, the Great Central Railway's October 2-5 event will take on a strong LMS theme. Joining the already announced LNWR coal tank No. 1054 (LMS No. 7799) and Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas* (LMS No. 5596) is Stanier mogul 2-6-0 No. 13268. It will therefore be a gala with a first and last, with *Bahamas* making its final appearance in service ahead of the expiration of its boiler ticket, while the mogul will make its first trip away from the Severn Valley Railway since completing overhaul there in October 2023.

Gresley and *Sir Archibald* head for Hampshire

The Mid-Hants Railway's own autumn gala (October 3-5) will welcome A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* (picture, Headline News, page 6) and Battle of Britain class No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* (picture, page 68) to Hampshire for a weekend.

The 'Streak' previously visited the Hampshire Alps in April 1996, while the Bluebell Railway's Bulleid, which ran over the MHR route in May 1966, will be making its first visit away from its home since being restored in 2009.

They will feature alongside SR Merchant Navy No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific*, which returned to service in March.

The Southern Region will have a strong presence this leaf fall season. September will see three galas in quick succession, starting with the Swanage Railway's September 12-14 event which will see the MHR's Urie S15, recently returned to service as BR No. 30506 (see News, page 18), star alongside Schools 4-4-0 No. 926 *Repton*, which will make the long trek south from its home at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

In addition to regular trains between the seaside town and Norden, some services will continue 'over the road' and run to Frome Bridge, the boundary between SR and Network Rail.

On its way back to Yorkshire, *Repton* will make a short stopover in Essex to appear at the Epping Ongar Railway. No. 926 will be closely followed by Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34072 *257 Squadron*, with both locomotives appearing in the EOR's September 19-21 'Southern Giants' gala, joining resident WR No. 4953 4-6-0 *Pitchford Hall* and converted Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0T No. 3781, which is on loan to the Essex line from the MHR until January 2026.

Both *Repton* and *257 Squadron* will then head straight off in readiness for the NYMR's September 25-28 gala, where they will be joined by the GCR's BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019. The trio will complement the rest of the NYMR home fleet, which will see BR 9F No. 92134, 'Black Five' Nos. 44806 and 5428 *Eric Treacy*, BR Standard 4MT No. 80136, Lambton Tank No. 29 *Peggy* and Cockerill 0-4-0VBT No. 8 *Lucie* in service.

Notably absent from the home fleet line-up, LNER P3 No. 2392 and Q6 No. 63395 will instead be starring at Hopetown Darlington's Titans of Steam gala, which runs from September 20 until October 5.

Galas of firsts

September will also see several firsts happening for two heritage lines. Firstly, the Blaenavon Heritage Railway will welcome newly-restored Hunslet 'Fitzwilliam' 0-6-0ST No. 1589 *Newstead* to South Wales for its September 12-14 steam gala. Once presumed scrapped but discovered on the grounds of a convent in 2015

Above: Having made its preservation debut at the North Norfolk Railway in July, *Newstead* will enjoy a brief trip to Wales for the Blaenavon Heritage Railway's September 12-14 steam gala.
OWEN HAYWARD

Left: Captured at Water Arc during the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's September 2024 steam gala, Schools class No. 926 *Repton* will be appearing at the Swanage and Epping Ongar railways this September on rare outings away from its usual home.
ROBERT FALCONER

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(as reported in issue 335), *Newstead* made its preservation debut in July at the North Norfolk Railway, where it made its first gala appearance at the August 29-31 summer steam gala. Its visit to Blaenavon will therefore be its first external appearance since returning to steam.

Continuing the Southern dominance of gala line-ups, LBSCR A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* (picture, page 66) is also due to appear and become the first of its class to work in Wales, with No. 40 *Brighton* having been displayed at the Butlins holiday camp in Pwllheli from 1964 until 1972 before moving to the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, where it was renamed *Newport*.

This event will also see the first passenger trains use Platform 2 at Blaenavon High Level since May 5, 1941, which has now been fully reinstated.

Hot off the heels of this small loco-centric gala is the Severn Valley Railway's autumn steam offering on September 18-21, which will see four visiting locomotives which have never run over the Kidderminster-Bridgnorth line before.

Joining the previously-announced Mercant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S N Co* will be BR 5MT No. 73082 *Camelot* (as pictured on cover), normally resident at the Bluebell Railway. *Camelot* is celebrating its 70th anniversary, having exited Derby Works in 1955 – meaning it is just a decade older than the SVR, which has been celebrating its own 60th anniversary throughout th yisear.

The third guest to be announced was Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn Works-built Austerity No. 7098, which is currently running as NCB No. 49. Built in 1943, it entered service with the War Department as WD 5062 but by 1947 was in service with the National Coal Board, based at Backworth sheds. While there it would have worked alongside former Port Talbot Railway & Docks Co. 0-6-0ST No. 813, which will return to steam in time for the gala as NCB No. 11 (see separate story) and thus presents a rare opportunity to witness two survivors from the Northumberland area coal fields.

A fourth and final visitor was due to be announced but had not been confirmed as we went to press.

Great Western finale

Closing off a busy gala season, No. 78019 is due to appear at the Dean Forest Railway's November 1/2 Royal Forest of Steam of gala. A small number of the class were allocated to Gloucester Horton Road shed, with at least one known to have travelled on the branch in the later days of BR. This will therefore be the first time a Standard 2MT 2-6-0 has run over the 4½ miles between Parkend and Lydney since the line was closed in 1977. It will join residents 0-6-0PT No. 9681 and Peckett 0-4-0 No. 2147 *Uskmouth No. 1*, with hopes that repairs to RSH-built Austerity No. 3880 *Rennes* will be completed in time to allow that to appear. Negotiations were ongoing for a second visiting locomotive.

The Great Central Railway's BR Standard 2MT 2-6-4T No. 78019 is off on tour this autumn, with planned appearances at both the North Yorkshire Moors and Dean Forest railways. OWEN HAYWARD

Meanwhile, October 31 to November 2 will see the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway's gala in the hands of USATC 2-8-0 S160 No. 6046 (which has been on loan for the season from the Churnet Valley Railway), resident Sentinel 0-4-0 VBGT No. 7109 *Joyce* and previously announced GWR Castle No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* (from Dicot Railway Centre).

Completing the roster will be GWR 5600 0-6-2T No. 6695, which will visit from its usual home at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway.

Colliery days comeback for unique survivor after repair-induced absence

UNIQUE Port Talbot & Docks Railway Co. 0-6-0ST No. 813 will temporarily adopt its NCB identity for its return to service at the Severn Valley Railway's upcoming steam gala following the arrival of its new saddle tank at Bridgnorth works.

Built by Hudswell Clarke in 1901 for the PTR as No. 26, it became No. 813 in 1922 when the line amalgamated with the GWR, although the number was not carried until two years later, having spent 17 months undergoing modifications at Swindon Works.

Sold off in 1934, it eventually passed into National Coal Board ownership in 1950 and was allocated to Backworth Sheds to serve the Northumberland coalfields. There it became No. 11 and entered service after having first been given a new boiler by Hudswell Clarke, with a new firebox also fitted in 1962.

These factors may well have been instrumental in ensuring the locomotive entered preservation, which occurred in 1967 when sold to the GWR 813 Preservation Society.

In recent years it has been the victim of a sequence of unfortunate events. Partway through the SVR's September 2021 gala, it was failed with a number of leaking tubes. A full retube was undertaken to reset the boiler ticket, allowing it to return to service that November.

The following April, further disaster struck when the cast iron dragbox fractured, projecting the transverse spring supporting the rear axle up through the cab floor.

A new replacement casting was ordered, but setbacks meant it was not until January 2024 that No. 813 was ready to run again.

However, further misfortune occurred when it was discovered that the saddle tank had developed a multitude of leaks.

With initial hopes of repairing the tank dashed, a replacement was ordered and manufactured at the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge works. The new tank was delivered on July 28 and reuses a number of original components from the expired one, including hand rails, filler cap and steps.

Additionally, with little use since the replacement of the tubes in 2021, a qualified inspector has agreed to issue a new 10-year boiler ticket for No. 813 without the need to conduct a further retube, although a small number were removed to allow for the inspection to be carried out. A complete retube will, however, be carried out after five years, subject to the usual caveats.

With the locomotive in need of a full repaint, but with insufficient time prior to the September 18-21 gala event to fully complete this, the decision was made to turn No. 813 out in its NCB identity of No. 11, which it has not worn since withdrawal from the colliery.

A slight creative liberty will be taken, in that given the locomotive will revert back to its GWR colours in the future, it will run in undercoat green rather than the black it would have worn at Backworth, although with a number of fittings having been replaced when restored reverting it to GWR condition, it would still not be wholly authentic even if it were turned out in the correct colour.

With its new water tank in place, No. 813 will temporarily assume its NCB identity of No. 11 during the upcoming SVR gala, the beginnings of which were being applied at Bridgnorth at the end of July. GWR 813 PRESERVATION FUND

No. 813 at Backworth Colliery, Northumberland, in June 1966 when it carried the identity of NCB No. 11. ERNIE BLACK/ GWR 813 COLLECTION

On August 11, Class 47 No. 47367 departs the Mid-Norfolk Railway, having been sold by its owning group, and resides at the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway. MNR

A sight now confined to the history books: Class 73 No. 73140 departs Eridge station for Tunbridge Wells West as No. 25185 waits behind to shunt to the bay. The electro-diesel departed the Spa Valley the following week to take up residence at the nearby Lavender Line. PHIL BARNES

'Spoons' on the move in big summer of diesel festivals and relocations

By Owen Hayward

HERITAGE diesel locomotives of multiple classes and size have been moving about the UK this summer, with some paying visits to galas while others have taken up residence at new homes – with more movements set to come as autumn rolls in.

Affectionately nicknamed 'Spoons,' examples of BR's Class 47 design have been the mainstay of such movements, with the Mid-Norfolk Railway alone having seen two examples of the design type depart during August. No. 47580 *County of Essex* on August 4 headed for the Spa Valley Railway for that line's summer diesel gala on August 8-10, becoming the first example of its class to run between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge. It joined resident Class 31 No. 31430 *Sister Dora* and Class 207 'Thumper' No. 1317, which has now been repainted into BR Blue on one side following a graffiti attack on one side earlier in the year; it is the first time in more than 40 years that this particular unit has worn this colour scheme.

Classes 08 No. 08022 and 09 No. 09004 were both working passenger services during the event, the latter being no stranger to the Spa Valley, having been resident there between 2003 and 2009. Now owned by Valley Rail Preservation, it will remain based at Tunbridge Wells West for the foreseeable future, providing a much-need vacuum-braked locomotive for shunting duties, with the 08 being air-only.

A third and unique shunter was also on display. Once one of a fleet of 26, No. 15224 is the only surviving Class 12 locomotive. Built in 1949 and based on an earlier Richard Maunsell prototype, they were designed by Oliver Bulleid and featured his distinctive Firth Brown wheels.

No. 15244 has been stored in the sidings out of public view for at least a decade, being in need of a major rebuild. General manager Jonnie Pay said: "Currently, the locomotive will remain stored, pending space inside the engine shed. However, due to other projects, such as the overhaul of LMS Jinty No. 47493 and LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' No. 32650 *Sutton*, which have a limited number of volunteers available to work on them alongside the operational locos, the Class 12 wouldn't be started immediately, and it too requires funds."

Farewell 73

Making its final appearance at the Spa Valley that weekend was privately owned Class 73 No. 73140, which, after 22 years of hard graft on the railway, departed on August 15 to take up residence at the Lavender Line at Isfield. Jonnie said: "We would like to extend our gratitude to the owner of No. 73140 for the many years of service that the locomotive has put in at our railway. We would have been lost without it on more than one occasion.

"Since arriving in 2003, it has travelled thousands of miles between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge with very little downtime."

The MNR bid farewell to a second 47, No. 47367, which, following its sale by the Stratford 47 Group, moved on August 11 the Chinnor & Princess Risborough Railway, where it arrived two days later. A MNR statement said: "For more than a decade, No. 47367 has been the backbone of countless operations, serving the railway and our operational department with reliability and strength. Its contribution has been invaluable, and we owe a great deal of thanks to the Stratford 47 Group for allowing us the privilege of its use throughout these years."

The arrival of No. 47367 at the C&PRR fills the gap left by classmate No. 47715 *Railway Engineering Solutions*, which is now based on the line following its April 4-6 diesel gala but has been making appearances at events elsewhere, including most recently at The Greatest Gathering.

Elsewhere, Mid-Hants Railway resident Class 08 No. 08288 *Pheonix* has moved to Valley Rail Preservation's base at Lydney on the Dean Forest Railway to allow some specialist repair works to be carried out. Once completed, it will return straight to Hampshire.

Sulzer symphony

Class 27 D5370 will travel from the Caledonian Railway at Brechin to feature in the Great Central Railway's September 4-6 diesel gala, appearing alongside resident No. 27056, the latter working its first public trains since 2016 following an extensive overhaul at Loughborough and now sporting BR blue livery with white stripe and full yellow ends.

Also set to emerge in time are Class 45 D123 and Class 33 D6535, both following extensive bodywork repairs and repaints. The 'Peak' remains in its BR green colours, while the 'Crompton' is set for BR blue.

Joining the home fleet – including prototype Class 37 D6700 and Class 55 Deltic No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* – is Class 35 Hymek No. 7018, from the West Somerset Railway, and Class 14 'Teddy Bear' D9551.

Class 47 No. 47580 *County of Essex* passes through Groombridge with the 9.30am Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West service on August 8, the first time a member of the class has ever worked over the route. PHIL BARNES

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Class 201 DEMU No. 1001 *Hastings* at Kingscote on August 6 during its first day in service at the Bluebell Railway. JAMES CUMMINS/BRPS

Extracted from the sidings for the Spa Valley Railway's diesel gala was sole-surviving Bulleid-designed Class 12 No. 15224. A return to service is hoped for, but with many other projects ongoing, work won't begin any time soon. PHIL BARNES

The Bluebell Railway's September 5-7 diesel weekend will feature Class 201 DEMU No. 1001 *Hastings* in what is believed to be its first gala appearance in preservation. Usually exclusive to main line charters run by Hastings Diesels Limited, a four-car consist has been based on the Bluebell over the summer to enable extra trains to be run in conjunction with Railway 200 celebrations there.

Recent headliners of other galas this summer, Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* will appear alongside No. 47715, debuting in its newly applied Virgin Trains livery, with the South Devon Railway's Class 25 No. 25262 and Severn Valley Railway's Class 33 No. 33108 offering smaller locomotives for comparison.

Also returning to Sussex for the weekend will be 4VEP No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt*, expected to work in push-pull mode with the Class 33 at times. Class E6040 *The Bluebell Railway* is also rostered to appear.

The Severn Valley Railway will be celebrating the 65th anniversary of the introduction of the Class 37s on October 2-5, with Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway resident No. 37248 announced as the first visitor, followed by Wensleydale-based No. 37250.

More guests were still to be confirmed as this issue of *Heritage Railway* magazine went to press, and the Severn Valley Railway promised ample opportunity to ride behind the visitors throughout the event.

From Cinderella into a princess:
Dartmouth unveils newly-restored Class 37

WHILE it may predominantly be one of the few standard gauge lines to run steam-only passenger services, the Dartmouth Steam Railway has outshopped a second Class 37 to support railway operations, the 'Tractor' having undergone a remarkable transformation that has seen it returned to service carrying Railfreight coal sector livery.

Built in 1962 at English Electric's Vulcan Foundry and entering service as D6767, it was rebuilt in 1986 into the sub-class 37/7 for use on heavy freight work, being given additional ballast for weight and altered gearing for traction to manage the loads. In 1990/91, it was repainted into the two-tone grey colours and allocated to Cardiff Canton depot, being used to haul lengthy rakes of merry-go-round coal hoppers like those preserved on the Chasewater Railway.

Further repaints and reallocations took place in the ensuing years until in May 2001, as No. 37703, it was one of 14 'Tractors' exported by EWS for use in Spain, building high-speed lines between Madrid and Barcelona. All but six of those exported never returned to the UK; No. 37703 returned in 2007.

Highland retreat

Sold to Direct Rail Services in 2013, it worked at Daventry International Railfreight Terminal as a super shunter, although it saw little use and moved to Bo'ness in July 2014 for warm storage. In 2022, it was acquired by the Harry Needle Railroad Company, which had planned to use it as a source of spares but allowed it first to appear at a Swanage Railway diesel gala that May, followed by an appearance at the East Lancashire Railway in July.

In September 2023, HNRC agreed to sell No. 37703 to its current owner, Charles Paget, who has been involved in the main line rail business for 30 years and has developed a good friendship with Harry Needle. Charles also has a strong relationship with the Dartmouth Steam Railway, whose engineering director Paul Merrington had expressed an interest in acquiring another of the class to support resident No. 37275.

Turned out in Railfreight coal sector livery, No. 37703 has returned to service on the Dartmouth Steam Railway following extensive bodywork repairs. DSR

"After a number of further discussions knowing No. 37703 may be available, Paul said, 'why not bring it to Paignton? We will look after the it, and you know us all anyway.' With the warm relationship with the directors and staff over many years, it wasn't a difficult decision to make!" said Charles.

No. 37703 arrived at Paignton on October 17, 2023, and following some maintenance and test runs entered service on June 1, 2024, to work services in connection with the Torbay Airshow and an arriving main line railtour.

In the autumn of 2024, the 'Tractor' entered the workshops where a significant amount of bodywork repairs have been undertaken, following which it was repainted into its new livery – something which was carefully considered.

"We could have gone for BR Blue, but No. 37275 is already in that livery, so we wanted something different," Charles said. "We considered early Railfreight Grey but in the end opted for the coal sector variant replicating that worn in its time at Cardiff Canton, making it the only example of the class to wear this livery in preservation.

It now carries the name *Vulcan*, along with Cardiff Canton depot plates, despite neither of these ever having been carried under BR ownership.

"Special mention must be made of the dedicated DSR team, who have helped and spent many hours turning out No. 37703 to look like it has just been released from Crewe Works. In particular, my thanks go to Seb Hambly, Barry Damon and Ray Stabb, all longstanding and dedicated members of the railway's family."

Stress-free retirement

Although the locomotive remains registered on TOPs to operate on Network Rail infrastructure, there are no plans to see it return to main line duty. The presence of second Class 37 will offer a suitable standby locomotives in event of steam failures or at times of high fire risk. Furthermore, the 'Tractor' may well relive its days transporting coal, which the DSR still does today between Paignton and Kingswear to supply its paddle steamer, *Kingswear Castle*.

Indeed, during the BR era the wharf at Kingswear was used for unloading coal from ships and into wagons for onward transport to the Hollacombe Gas Works, near Torquay, making it rather apt that such activity continues to this day, albeit in the opposite direction.

No. 37703 is planned to make its debut on Saturday, August 30, when it is rostered to work special evening services to tie in with the Dartmouth Regatta, at which *PS Kingswear Castle* will meet the last sea-going paddle steamer in the world, *PS Waverley*, which was built in 1946 for use by the LNER.

Swift progress has been made on No. 37703, which on May 7 was still in the throes of having repairs carried out at Churston, although it was not far off from the first coat of primer being applied. OWEN HAYWARD

No. 37703 prior to the start of its restoration on June 1, 2024. DSR

Great Central delivers with annual step back to the 1960s

By Owen Hayward

RAILWAYS At Work has become a fixture for the Great Central Railway, which general manager Malcolm Holmes described as "the best thing we do at the railway" in terms of its immersive nature.

The event, which in 2024 won the HRA interpretation award sponsored by *Heritage Railway* magazine, recreates the 1960s, the time of transition when steam was giving way to diesel and the Beeching Report seeing a myriad of lines and their associated goods yard closed for good.

The decade was one of not only significant change on the railways, but also culturally, with drastic changes in areas such fashion, music and technology. The year 1963 also saw the Great Train Robbery take place, in which £2.61 million (£62 million in today's value) was stolen from a Royal Mail train on the West Coast Main Line.

Left: Deltic No. 55019 approaches Rabbit Bridge on August 16 hauling a lengthy rake of vans bound for Loughborough. MARTYN TATTAM

Below: As at previous events, Dr Beeching put in an appearance each afternoon to observe activity in the yard. ADAM ASHFORD

Goods on the go

Making full use of the varied collection of goods wagons at the GRCR's disposal, a carefully thought-out timetable of passenger and freight workings ran between Loughborough Central and Leicester North, incorporating steam and diesel locomotives, as well as DMUs.

As always, much of the August 16/17 event focused on the goods yard at Quorn & Woodhouse station, where arriving and departing trains allowed for live demonstrations of how wagons were loaded and emptied as part of the transportation of goods around the network, all performed by appropriately dressed reenactors. Trains arriving at platforms were also involved, with porters loading and unloading parcels for onward travel to other destinations along the route – all forming part of what could best be classed as 'live theatre.'

In addition to those working around the trains, many donned attire as would have been seen during the decade, with police officers, businessmen and military personnel just some of those represented. The stations were decked out with posters similar to those which adorned the network duringf that era, with references made to tax changes being imposed by the Government of the day and line closures.

Steam and diesel traction worked side by side for the event, with Austerity No. 68067, BR 5MT No. 73156, 2MT No. 78019 and WR Hall No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* flying the flag for the dying days of the former, while Class 55 No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* and Class 33 D6535 fought the case for dieselisation.

Organiser Jack Shawe pointed out that Railways At Work is the "perfect example of creating an engaging and entertaining event without having to rely on the expense of bringing in big expensive locomotives.

"Nearly everything happening and on show comes from the railway's own resources, with just a small number of road vehicles externally sourced."

Right: Stations were decorated with posters reflective of the full 1960s era. OWEN HAYWARD

Reenactors came in a plethora of period costumes, including these two police officers who kept a watchful eye over activities around the railway. OWEN HAYWARD

Right: Easy does it: An oil drum is rolled from wagon to lorry during a demonstration. ADAM ASHFORD

The never-ending flow of parcels appears to be on the mind of one reenactor as he pauses for a brief rest. HEATHER ALLISON/GCR

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Coal tank steals the show at Peak Rail gala

A FOUR-LOCOMOTIVE gala line-up in Derbyshire was headlined by the visit of LNWR coal tank 0-6-2T No. 1054, which had arrived on the line just days beforehand following its appearance at Alstom's The Greatest Gathering the weekend before.

Built for the LNWR at Crewe works in 1888, the veteran locomotive joined Peak Rail's resident fleet of industrial locomotives for two days of steam-powered action between Rowsley, Darley Dale and Matlock. No. 1054 was the oldest in the line-up, with Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST No. 750 *Waleswood* the next youngest, having been built in 1906, followed by Peckett works B3 class 0-6-0ST No. 2000 (1942) and finally Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. S102 *Cathryn* (1955).

Though steam took charge of the passenger workings, there was a small diesel presence, with two locomotives (Andrew Barclay 0-6-0DH No. 873 *John Boy* and 0-4-0DH RS8, which started life in 1923 as a steam locomotive before being rebuilt to diesel power in 1959) taking charge of shunting demonstrations and driver for a fiver experience courses.

Freight trains ran the length of the line offering rides for a small supplement on brake vans forming part of the consist, with opportunities to travel aboard both fitted and unfitted trains to compare the experiences guards would have had many years ago. A miniature railway at Rowsley South saw up to five steam locomotives in action throughout the event.

No. 1054 worked trains which included restored LMS third open No. 16122, making for a rather apt scene, with the locomotive having passed into LMS ownership at the time of Grouping.

No. 1054 arrives at Darley Dale on August 10, an LMS open third immediately behind it forming one of the passenger sets for Peak Rail's steam gala weekend. ROBERT FALCONER

Freight finale: Peckett No. 2000 and Hudswell Clarke S102 *Cathryn* charge through Darley Dale with an unfitted goods working as the gala drew to a close. ROBERT FALCONER

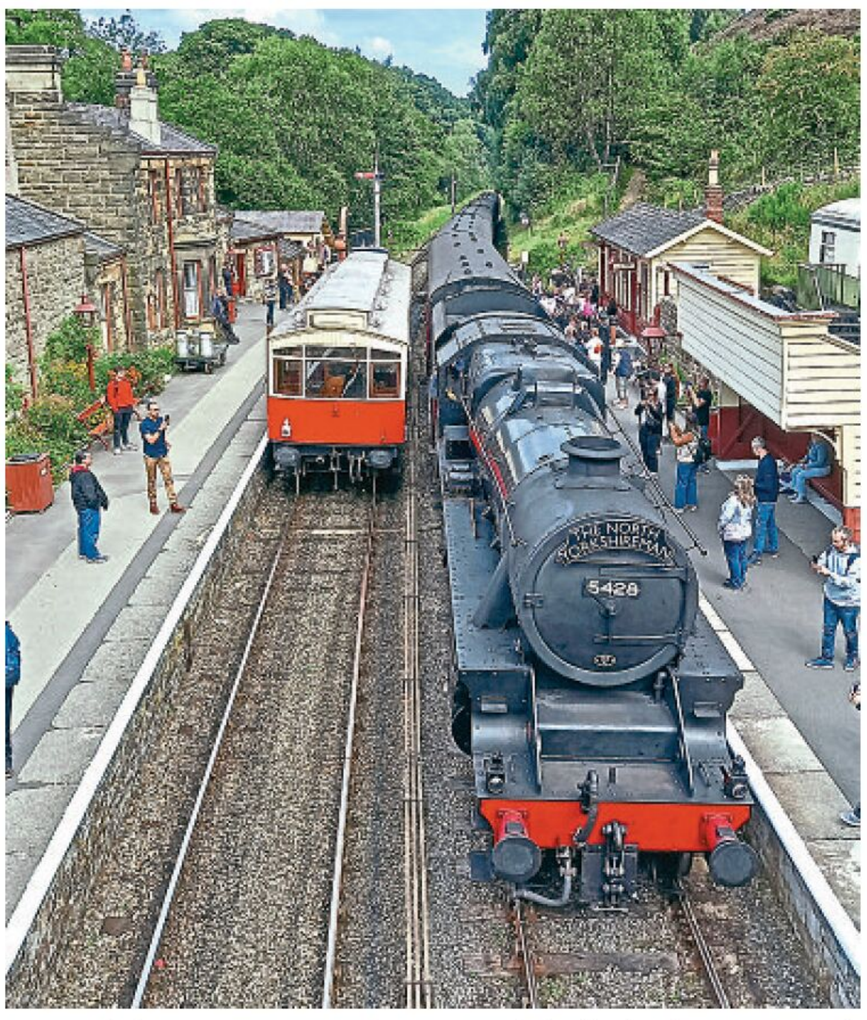
Argentinian Potter fans invade Goathland!

On July 27 at Goathland station on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, LMS 'Black Five' No. 5428 *Eric Treacy* was watched by a crowd of Argentinian Harry Potter fans as it drew into the station with the 10.40am Grosmont-Pickering service on July 27.

Goathland station featured as Hogsmeade in the 2001 film Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, complete with superimposed castle and mountain backcloth, and as such draws fans from many parts of the world, although one of the station's platform staff commented as he looked at the crowded platform: "We're used to fans from many countries, and I thought these were from Spain. I was astonished when they told me they had flown in all the way from Argentina."

No. 5428 carried a 'North Yorkshireman' headboard and is photographed passing 1903-built North Eastern Railway electric autocar No. 3170, which has proved to be so popular during its visit to the line that its stay has been extended to the end of summer.

Meanwhile, the Back To Hogwarts event at King's Cross held on September 1 for several years has been permanently cancelled by Warner Bros Discovery. The public event saw hundreds of costumed fans gathered at the symbolic Platform 9¾ to mark the magical return to Hogwarts, complete with countdowns and a departure board display.



Argentinian Harry Potter fans greet 'Black Five' No. 5428 *Eric Treacy* at Goathland on July 27. BARBARA PRINCE

Director of engineering Paul Middleton with No. 75029. NYMR

Place a bid and help Moorsline overhaul *The Green Knight*

MONEY-CAN'T-BUY experiences have been put up for auction by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway as it seeks to raise funds for the £400,000 overhaul of its BR 4MT No. 75029 *The Green Knight*. With more than £21,000 already raised towards the £200,000 needed to start work, the sale of unique experiences is hoped to almost double that amount.

Among the rarities on offer is an original painting by renowned artist John Austin, president of the Guild of Railway Artists, depicting LNER B1 No. 1264 on a rake of matching coaches crossing Bridge 27 at Goathland station. Those looking for something unusual can place a bid for a personalised headboard, which will be carried aboard a service of the winner's choosing.

Dining with director

Breakfast, lunch and footplate experiences with the NYMR's director of locomotive engineering, TV star Paul 'Piglet' Middleton, are also up for grabs, the latter offering a chance to travel aboard one of the line's heritage steam locomotives for a 36-mile round trip through the Moors National Park between Pickering and Grosmont.

Kerry Carruthers, head of engagement at the NYMR, said: "All bids in the auction will make a huge difference to the future of steam and mean that future generations will be able to enjoy the magic of a journey to Whitby on the NYMR.

"Thank-you to everyone who has supported *The Green Knight* fundraiser so far and to those who will support the auction – it keeps us steaming into the future."

Bidding is open now and runs until 8pm on October 3. For full listings and to place bids, see https://www.32auctions.com/NYMR-THEGREENKNIGHT

All for one: Severn Valley members back restructure

By Robin Jones

MEMBERS of the Severn Valley Railway Company Limited have voted to support the next stage of the line's ambitious One Railway restructuring project.

At its annual general meeting at Kidderminster Railway Museum on August 9, they voted overwhelmingly in favour of its merger with Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) Plc, following the latter's conversion into a Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS). It was a legal requirement that at least 50% of votes cast needed to be in support of the amalgamation for the resolution to be passed.

Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) Plc is the owning and operating company of the railway, now celebrating its 60th anniversary, and its shareholders voted overwhelmingly to support its conversion to a CCBS at their annual meeting in June this year. The process to enact the conversion is already underway.

Diane Malyon, chairman of the SVR Company Limited, the line's membership organisation, together with the rest of ITS board of directors, recommended that the resolution be supported.

Severn Valley Railway Company Limited members vote in favour of One Railway on August 9. ALAN GWILT/SVR

Pleasing response

She said: "I am extremely pleased at the strength of support shown by our members for this second important stage of the One Railway project.

"At each stage, members have examined the information presented to them, engaging with it and asking questions. Now they've given their mandate for the One Railway project to proceed, and this is a terrific validation of the hard work that has been put into this project by a dedicated team of volunteers.

"The benefits and opportunities that the One Railway project potentially brings to the SVR are hugely exciting. It will bring improved resilience, transparency and efficiency."

Another director of the SVR Company Limited, Charlie Wright, who has played a leading role in steering the project, added: "Now the next stage of hard work begins. We must shape the detailed rules for the new organisation, complete the compliance processes, and put the arrangements and documentation in place to allow the transition to take place at the earliest possible time."

➜ The 2857 Society, the owner of SVR-based GWR 2-8-0 No. 2875, has agreed with engineer Riley & Son to undertake its mechanical overhaul. The bottom end will move to Bury next April, with work expected to take two years. The boiler will be overhauled in-house at Bridgnorth, while volunteers and paid staff will complete the tender.

Nesta takes centre stage in annual charity steam fair!

THE first appearance of a newly cosmetically restored Quarry Hunslet was just one of the attractions for those attending this year's annual Charity Steam Fair at the Richmond Light Railway in Kent on August 9.

Built in 1899, No. 704 *Nesta* was once among many locomotives to be found working at Penrhyn quarry in North Wales before being sold and exported in the 1960s, first to the USA but ultimately ending up in Puerto Rico, where it was recovered from a swamp and repatriated by Robert Gambrill.

Until recently, *Nesta* was on display in the Bala Lake Railway's heritage centre at Llanuwchllyn station. Last year it was announced that conservation work would be carried out by the Ffestiniog Railway at Boston Lodge Works, and earlier this summer the now cosmetically restored locomotive moved to the RLR, where it has been displayed once more, its first appearance in refreshed condition being at the line's annual charity steam day.

Tickets for the rare opportunity to visit this private line sold out within a week of going on sale on March 1.

Visitors enjoyed unlimited rides behind up to six steam locomotives and displays of classic cars, road-going and stationary engines, model railways and more, before the event concluded with a spectacular fireworks display.

Proceeds were donated to the Riding for the Disabled Association, a charity which has supported more than 25,000 disabled children and adults to date with activities including riding, carriage driving and equine assisted programmes.

***Nesta* on display in the museum at the Richmond Light Railway, which is only open to the public once a year for its annual charity fair.** COURTENAY FORDER

A parade of locomotives saw out the annual charity steam fair at the RLR on August 9. COURTENAY FORDER

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Back in (BR) black: Mid-Hants' Urie S15 returns to service

By Owen Hayward

A STALWART of the Mid-Hants Railway steam fleet in recent years, Urie S15 No. 506 has returned to service following extensive repairs and now carries its later BR identity of 30506 as its owning group sets the stage for a potential start and end of career comparison.

At the start of April, the Urie Society-owned locomotive was pulled from service after leaks in the firebox were discovered. Further investigation revealed that there was also cracking to the copper plating in this area, with repairs necessitating the lifting of the boiler from the frames to access the affected areas.

In less than four months, the required work (which has involved the replacement of about 70 firebox stays) has been conducted, completed, and the locomotive reassembled to bring it back into service, with the opportunity to give it an external refresh at the same time.

The boiler for No. 499 is now in the boilershop at Ropley, having returned from Bridgnorth earlier this year where it had new copper plates welded into the firebox. STEPHEN BEDSER/ULS

The Urie Locomotive Society's second S15, No. 499, has seen the chassis moved into the main shed for restoration work to continue. It will return in LSWR livery, providing a comparison of examples of the class from both the start and end of their working lives. STEPHEN BEDSER/ULS

First in class

Although seven of the class survive, none have yet carried the BR early crest in preservation, making No. 30506 the first to do so.

Previously running in unlined SR black livery with Sunshine lettering on the tender, the locomotive now carries the BR crest and number it had when receiving the Urie tender in 1956, replacing the Drummond water cart it ran with beforehand.

This new tender remained until withdrawal in January 1964, No. 30506 having clocked more than 1.2 million miles at that point. While this boiler work was not anticipated at the start of the year, the S15 had been due to be temporarily taken out of service in May to allow maintenance to be carried out to the bottom end, which would have seen the wheelsets removed to allow work to remove excessive play on the axleboxes to be carried out.

While the locomotive ended up being out of action for longer than anticipated, it has meant that both jobs could be completed at the same time without too much disruption.

However, while the work has been thorough, it is not sufficient to see the boiler ticket renewed for a further 10 years. A spokesman said: "It has been a common question asked, but the simple answer is 'no.' The reason is because the boiler, No. 755, is tired.

"We knew this even before the failure, so to gain a fresh or extended ticket, a full overhaul would have been required, which on this particular occasion would not have been a quick or cheap job."

With one S15 now carrying a livery worn in its final years of service, the stage is set and ready for the return of the society's second S15 No. 499 in a few years' time, which will carry LSWR livery as worn at the start of the class's working life, presenting a rare opportunity to compare classmates from the start and end of their development.

Progress on the second

The boiler for No. 499 has arrived back at Ropley, having had two new lower sections of copper plate welded in to the firebox at Bridgnorth on the Severn Valley Railway. The locomotive's frames are now inside the MHR's main shed awaiting the return of the driving wheels, allowing other work to be carried out including the steam and vacuum brake pipes and measuring up for brackets for those serving the injectors.

Society publicity officer Stephen Bedser said: "The rear beam on the cab dragbox has been subject to quite serious corrosion. Initially, we considered building up with weld; however, on close inspection this was neither practical or cost-effective. We have now removed the offending beam and, as feared, it was considerably worse, with extensive inter plate corrosion, and the threads holding the draw bar rubbing blocks ranged from poor to just acceptable!

"A new steel plate has been ordered. Meanwhile, the remaining brake hanger rivet holes have been welded up, drilled, and countersunk to the original diameter. We have also turned and moved tender No. 3223 to the concrete area where No. 499 had previously been. This will be a far better location for finishing the tank, which is now mounted in place."

Urie S15 No. 506 has returned to service on the Mid-Hants Railway as BR No. 30506 carrying BR early crest, a first for a member of the class in preservation. ALEX CLEMENTS/MHR

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Talyllyn Tracksider team completes unusual 24-hour fundraising challenge

A TOTAL of 136 people aged from as young as four months to 78 completed more than 8000 slides within a 24-hour period at Abergynolwyn station on the Talyllyn Railway as a fundraising challenge to raise money for the line's plans to rejuvenate its Pendre workshops.

The challenge was led by the Talyllyn Tracksiders, a group established to allow families with members under the age of 16 an opportunity to start their volunteering journey, and it began at the sound of the whistle of the 11.49am departure on August 10.

Joanne Jordan, one of the group's leaders, said the suggestion was pitched at a meeting to discuss fundraising ideas back in May 2024.

"The idea had entered my head and left my mouth without any thought and was met with a certain amount of silence as the concept was processed. Then the questions flooded in. Just the children? Do you really mean 24 hours? How will that work? Tracksider parents, being wonderful people, were full of instant enthusiasm and creativity and the plan took shape.

"Move forward 14 months and we found ourselves gathering at Abergynolwyn on a sunny Sunday morning in August, ready to slide. A schedule had been created giving 14 of us repeating 30-minute slots throughout the 24-hour period, ably assisted by 10 other people who would make up the numbers on each shift."

Over the next 24 hours, volunteers young and old stepped up to the fold to watch, support, and even slide alongside the core team, with eight dogs and even a slug joining in with the action, all of which was streamed live on the TR's YouTube channel.

"There was so much enthusiasm and energy bouncing around and we quickly amassed 180 slides in the first 30 minutes," Joanne said. "'Great', we thought, 'this is going to be not too bad.' Someone did some maths and said we could reach 8000 slides by the whistle the next day.

"As the core team became tired, we became increasingly grateful to the wonderful Talyllyn family of volunteers and staff, their families, and the support of passengers to allow our team to miss the odd slide while they took a turn.

"In the early hours of the morning, when tiredness plays with your mind, a slug made the mistake of trying to get on the slide and was promptly given a slate sliding mat and took two trips down before being safely moved to the undergrowth."

Planned shifts to allow sleep breaks enabled a constant rotation of sliders to continue throughout the night, and in a bid to maintain enthusiasm as the challenge wore on, sliders were even given points for style as they descended. Despite a promising start, Joanne was worried that they might fall short of their target. "Suddenly, we were an hour to go but were 800 slides short of reaching the magic 8000," she said. "Could we do it? Everyone was called in and a frantic military-style approach was taken to see descents rapidly happening. As the whistle blew at 11.49am, a loud cheer echoed down the valley. We had done it!"

Success: Talyllyn Railway Tracksiders completed more than 8000 slides at Abergynolwyn within 24 hours, all to raise funds for the line's 75 Appeal. JOANNE JORDAN/TR

In total, a whopping 8178 slides were completed, 978 of which were in the final hour, at an average of one slide every 10 seconds. A target of £2000 was exceeded by more than half, with the amount raised sitting at £3241.32 as this issue of *Heritage Railway* went to press.

"We were seriously proud of ourselves and extremely grateful to all those who sponsored us and helped us over the line by 'guest sliding'," Joanne concluded.

➜ **Those wishing to pledge support can still do so by visiting donate.talyllyn.co.uk/appeal/home/SponsoredSlide**

Carriages destroyed in two separate fires at sidings within 13 days

INVESTIGATIONS were underway after two fires in a fortnight destroyed several parked rail vehicles at a yard in Staffordshire.

The two fires broke out at Cockshute Sidings, off Shelton New Road, between Shelton and Basford and just north of Stoke station, destroying three heritage carriages.

On July 19, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, British Transport Police and Network Rail found the coaches well alight.

Goodnight, 'Night Ferry'

One of the carriages was Compagnie Internationale de Wagons-Lits composite sleeping car No. 3801, which was built in Paris in 1939. Used on the 'Night Ferry' service, it was withdrawn in 1980 and bought by a group of the Bluebell's working members for use as accommodation. Its condition deteriorating, it was sold to another group in 2022, collected by haulier Reid Freight Services, and moved to the firm's base in Longton, Stoke, in June last year. It was subsequently transferred to the firm's storage at Cockshute sidings site.

The second fire at the sidings was first spotted at 10.14pm on August 1, and another carriage was said to have been badly damaged.

Nobody was injured in either incident.

Both fires were being investigated by British Transport Police.

Awdry stories work magic for Talyllyn and community

THE Talyllyn Railway's July 18-20 Awdry Extravaganza has been confirmed as being one of the railway's most successful events of all time – setting new records for both revenue and passengers across the three days. As reported last issue, the event was held to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the books first penned by the Rev Wilbert Awdry and continued later by his son Christopher.

Featuring resident and visiting locomotives portraying their fictional counterparts, it was confirmed that more than 2660 travel tickets were sold during the event, with visitors travelling from as far as Kuwait, Poland and the USA. When combined with takings from merchandise and catering outlet sales, revenue (before deducting costs) amounted to more than £151,000, beating previous years' events by some considerable margin.

Furthermore, it has been estimated that through accommodation bookings and extended opening hours at eateries, the local economy benefitted by more than £250,000 worth of business.

The event concluded with a locomotive line-up at Tywyn Wharf, along with what is believed to have been the largest ever gathering of people there in the 160 years history of the railway.

Event co-organiser Luke Ryan said: "To quote the Railway Series book Gallant Old Engine, you never heard such a noise in all your life. Whistles were blown, crowds cheered, and some even cried.

"While the extravaganzas may now be on a break, there is no doubt there will continue to be Awdry-themed events here in the future – not only for the railway's benefit, but for the community that transcends borders and which has built itself upon our humble little line."

On July 20, steamroller *Thistledown* and *Sir Haydn* recreate the story of George and Sir Handel's confrontation as part of the successful Awdry Extravaganza. OWEN HAYWARD

Switching coasts: Ravenglass sells small locomotive pair

By Owen Hayward

TWO 15in gauge locomotives have found a permanent new home at the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway following their sale by the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway.

Bonnie Dundee and *Flower of the Forest* have been on long-term loan to the CCLR, and the sale now secures their futures on the Lincolnshire line.

Originally a 2ft gauge 0-4-0WT built in 1900 for use at Dundee gas works, *Bonnie Dundee* was first rebuilt in 1982 into a 0-4-2T 15in gauge locomotive before becoming a tender locomotive in 1996.

Withdrawn in 2005, it was overhauled in workshops at Old Hall Farm, Bouth, before returning to steam in December 2020, entering service the following May at the CCL.

Plans to return *Flower of the Forest*, a unique 15in gauge vertical boiler locomotive, to service are being devised by the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway following its recent acquisition of the 0-2-2VBT, pictured at Cleethorpes in 2023. ROBIN JONES

***Bonnie Dundee* has found its forever home on the Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway after being sold by the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway.** CCLR

Aside from a brief visit to the RER in May this year for the line's 150th anniversary celebrations, it had not returned, being too small for regular use on the seven-mile line with its challenging gradients.

Flower of the Forest is an 0-2-2VBT built at the railway in 1985 for Ian Fraser, of Arbroath, with construction centred around a chimney from a Kerr Stuart locomotive found in a scrapyard. Returning to Cumbria following Fraser's death in 1992, *Flower* temporarily resided at the CCLR for six years in that decade before returning there on long term-loan in 2016. It has not been operational for several years, but a return to working order is being considered for the near future.

RER spokesman Daniel Morley said: "Although they were never formally listed for sale, when Cleethorpes approached us about making their custodianship permanent, it felt like the natural next step. We are proud to see these engines remain where they are clearly treasured.

"We thank the team at the CCLR for their dedication over the years and look forward to seeing *Bonnie Dundee* and *Flower of the Forest* continue to delight audiences in their new and now official home.

"We look forward to welcoming them back from time to time as visiting engines."

CCLR director John Kerr said: "We are very grateful to the RER for entrusting us with the loan of these locomotives back in 2016 and now allowing them to become a lasting and integral part of the CCLR collection. We are committed to the future of both.

"The presence of *Bonnie Dundee* since its restoration has been a tremendous asset to our railway, both as a working locomotive and as a piece of living railway history. This resonates deeply with our visitors, with whom it is popular, and it has become a firm favourite with our team. While we have not commenced work on *Flower of the Forest*, we are committed to investing in its restoration to working order, ensuring that both locomotives remain operational and appreciated by future generations."

Public house miniature line vandalised in two attacks

POLICE were investigating two vandal attacks on the Fancott Miniature Railway in which items were stolen or damaged.

CCTV cameras monitoring the 7¼in gauge ¾-mile-long volunteer-run railway at the Grade II-listed pub The Fancott, in the hamlet of Fancott, near Toddington, in Bedfordshire, showed young children entering the grounds – on both occasions accompanied by an adult – despite the locked gates and camera warning signs.

Footage shows an adult helping the children back over the fence.

The damage occurred on August 3, when six children were recorded by the camera trepassing, and on August 8. During the incidents, the tea hut was vandalised, with obscenities written on it in indelible marker pen ink, a sign was pulled off a tree, displays were moved and donated cameras stolen. On the second occasion, damage was caused to a camera.

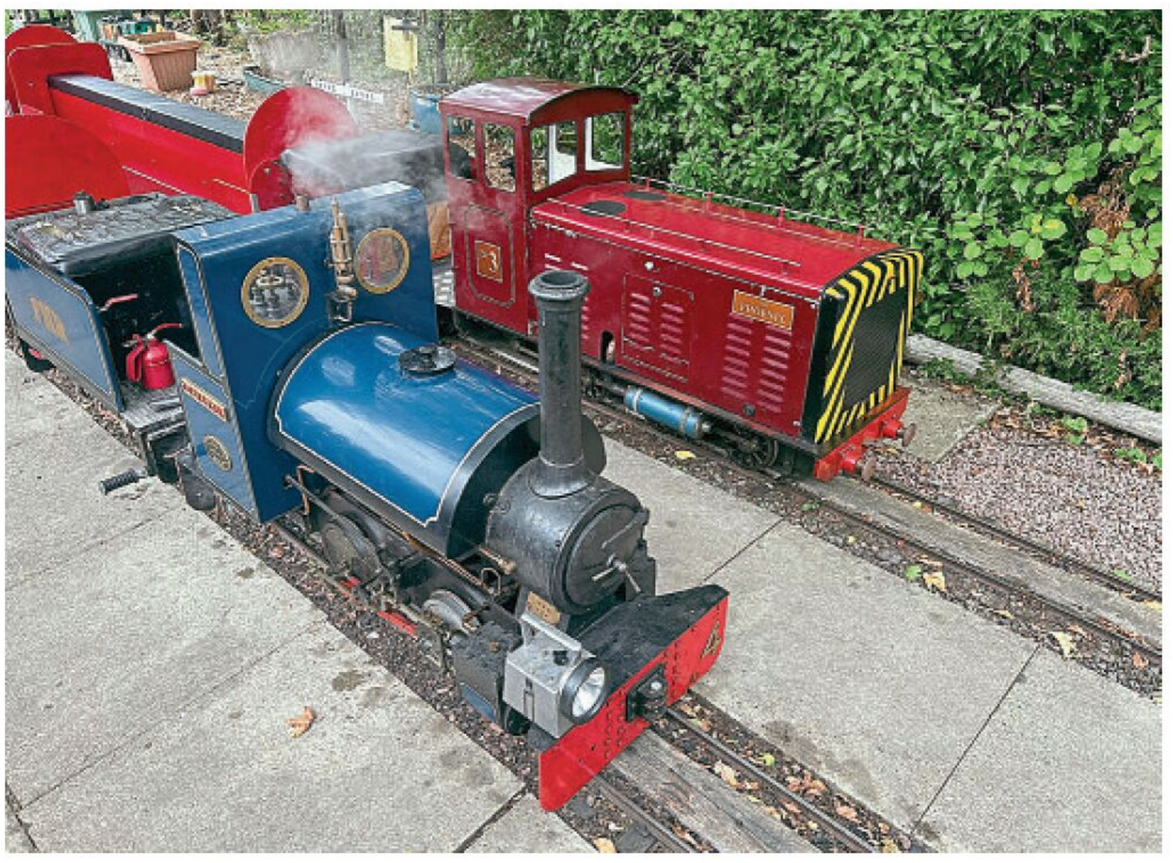
A railway statement said: "We don't understand how adults can even start to think this behaviour is okay or in any way safe. Children were climbing over the fence at the station, as well as the crossing gates.

"They were also seen on camera climbing over the gate on the bridge – if they had fallen, they would have seriously injured themselves. The railway is a hazardous place, not a playground."

Rare occurrence

FMR Society president Ron Stanbridge said: "In the 26 years I have been here, there has been only one other incident like this before."

Images of the intruders have been passed to Bedfordshire Police. Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101 or report online at beds.police.uk/ro/report, quoting reference 40/45423/25.



The Fancott Miniature Railway in action on August 10. FMR

The railway, a registered charity, first opened in 1975 as the 10¼in gauge Fancott Light Railway. In 1996, a new 7¼in gauge line was opened, and from 2001, volunteers upgraded the tracks, adding a footbridge and signalling.

It is due to hold a 50th anniversary event on August 30/31.

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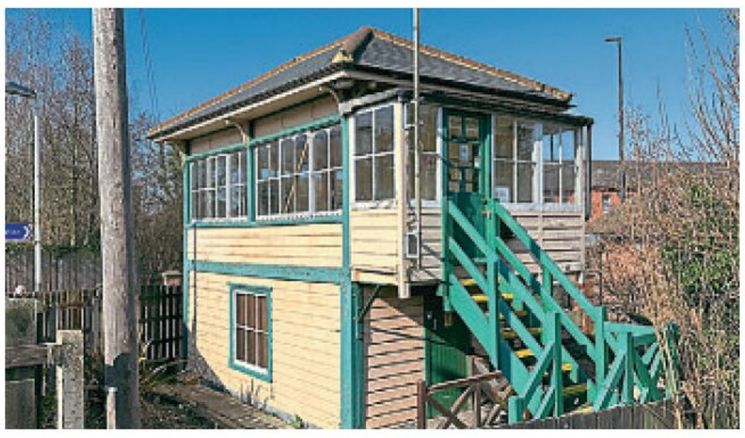
An artist's impression of how the interior of the 'box could look once converted. THREE ACRE BREWERY



Left: From serving trains to serving beer, conversion plans will soon see the 1858 signalbox at Uckfield converted into a taproom by a local brewery. THREE ACRE BREWERY

Drink up! Brewery plans bright future for redundant Victorian signalbox

By Owen Hayward

A DISUSED signalbox in East Sussex will soon be serving up local ales after planning permission for its conversion into a taproom was approved.

In April, proposals were submitted to Wealden District Council by the owners of Three Acre Brewery to convert the redundant Uckfield 'box into a new social space to serve up locally-sourced produce for the town.

The 'box, which dates back to 1858, was built for the Lewes & Uckfield Railway, which was absorbed first by the LBSCR and then SR. It once controlled movements around the station, as well as a level crossing; however, the line south of the station was closed in 1969 and the platforms, which were once sited on that side, were relocated, therefore negating the need for the crossing and subsequently the crossing.

The 'box was decommissioned and purchased by Uckfield Town Council, which wished to secure the future of the landmark.

Revival plans

For several years it served as the offices of a local taxi firm. However, it has been vacant for two years, and its condition has begun to deteriorate. Spotting an opportunity for a unique venue in which to serve drinks, the founders of Three Acre Brewery, which began trading in 2019, formulated the plans for its possible conversion.

Co-founder Chester Broad told *Heritage Railway*: "We've been looking for a taproom/micro pub-type venue for years, and for various reasons potential venues have fallen through. The signalbox was something we had briefly considered in the past, following a suggestion from a local CAMRA member, but we initially felt it was too small. However, we eventually decided to view it, and we immediately fell in love with its character and Victorian features. In terms of size, it's deceptively ample, with two floors for seating and the bar, a basement (soon to be a cellar, we hope), and a garden.

"All of us have a keen interest in social and industrial history and were fascinated by the old photos of the 'box in action – as well as the old signalling machine itself, which is still there inside. Going forward, we will make sure we preserve and champion the history of the building, retaining its characterful features and, of course, the iconic yellow and green Southern Railway colour scheme on the exterior."

Chester explained that the building will require extensive renovations before it can begin to serve ales, and that the token machine would likely need to be removed as part of this.

"We are actively looking for the best home for it – perhaps a museum, but it certainly won't go in a skip," he said.

The plan focuses very much on the surrounding community, with the intention being to employ local people to manage and staff the business, as well as providing a hub for locally-made produce in addition to the beers.

Community conditions

After the application was approved in late July, council officers said that the size meant noise impacts would be limited and opening hours controlled through planning conditions. Plans are for the micro pub to open from 8.30am-10pm Monday to Thursday and Sundays, from 8.30am-11pm on Fridays and 9am-11pm on Saturdays.

A brewery statement said: "We couldn't be more excited to make this happen. There are still a few small hoops to jump through and a lot of work to do, but this is a huge step in the right direction. This was the biggest hurdle, and we've cleared it. Stay tuned."

On August 9, WR Modified Hall 4-6-0 No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* was spotted near the M1 at Donington Park having emerged from an undisclosed location, where it has been repainted in readiness for filming for Warner Brothers' new television adaptation of the Harry Potter books. As reported last issue, the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre-owned locomotive was chosen to fulfil the role of the locomotive to pull the Hogwarts Express.

Observed with its fresh coat of paint applied but lacking nameplates and a smokebox number, Warner Brothers confirmed in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) that the locomotive was on its way to the company's studios in readiness for filming to commence with it. It is expected that the locomotive will return to the Bluebell Railway (where it has been on loan since 2022) later this year, still wearing its Hogwarts livery, and may even feature at the Giants of Steam gala in October alongside the trio of visiting new-build locomotives booked to appear. TIM NORTH

Own a piece of *Clan Line* – in miniature!

THE Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society announced at The Greatest Gathering in Derby (see feature, pages 44-49) that it has teamed up with model railway manufacturer Bachmann to commission an exclusive limited-edition model of support coach Mk. 2 BFK No. 14096 *Mercator*, which accompanies SR Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* on all its main line tours.

Built in 1968, the carriage was professionally overhauled at Cranmore between early 2000-3 and runs in pseudo-Pullman livery, closely matching the colours of Belmond's stock that *Clan Line* can usually be found working on regular circular trips of Kent via Dover Priory. The OO scale model will replicate the prototype using Bachmann's tooling of the carriage design.

***Clan Line's* support coach could be yours – in OO scale. A limited run of models will be available through the MNLPS recreating the vehicle known as *Mercator*.** MNLPS

Society spokesman James Cummins said: "It is incredibly exciting to see our support coach recreated in OO scale with Bachmann, and we can't wait to see the finished result.

"Derby was the perfect location to launch, and with the backing of Pete Waterman and the Making Tracks team, it proved a fantastic advert for both the society and our very special model."

An undecorated sample of the new model was on display on Pete Waterman's Making Tracks layout over the course of the August 1-3 festival. Each model is priced at £74.95 plus P&P and is expected to see delivery in the third or fourth quarter of 2026. To place an advance order, visit https://tinyurl.com/CL-Mercator

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‘Yankee tank’ running again after 15 years at Shillingstone

By Robin Jones

YUGOSLAVIA-BUILT Class 62 ‘Yankee tank’ 0-6-0T No. 30075 has returned to steam at its North Dorset Railway home after 15 years.

Project 62, the restoration group based at Shillingstone station which also owns No. 30076, was celebrating on August 6 after a long and often frustrating overhaul of the USATC S100-type locomotive, passed its boiler inspection and secured its ticket.

The group is now looking for expressions of interest for hire of No.30075 to UK heritage lines.

The project formed in 1990, a group of enthusiasts and fans of the S100, many of which had been used on the Southern Railway in the post-war years, mainly for shunting in Southampton Docks. Fourteen, plus one for spares, had been bought from the US Army Transportation Corps in 1946, and they proved to be powerful, economical to operate and relatively easy to maintain.

European deployment

During World War Two, and the years following, up to 400 US-built locomotives were deployed in Europe, many becoming part of European national fleets. The Yugoslavian rail authorities were so impressed that they reproduced the design in their own workshops, almost identical in appearance to the older USA-built engines, but incorporating improvements learned from operational experience. Both USA and Yugoslav models were known as Class 62, which gave the project group its name.

In 1990 there were still some Class 62s active, and a redundant model with only 25,000 miles in service was located at the Store Steelworks near Ljubljana in what is now Slovenia. Numbered 62-669, it had been built in 1960 by Djuro Djakovic in Slavonski Brod, Croatia, but was now in a pretty sorry state. It was dismantled on site and then transported to the Swanage Railway, where it was altered to reduce the overall width to fit within the British loading gauge, reassembled and prepared for service.

A few years later improvements were needed, and major overhaul was carried out between 1994 and 1996 and led by Ron Pocklington, former Chief Mechanical Engineer with Southern Railway. At the same time, Project 62 decided to adopt both Southern Railway’s livery, malachite green, and their numbering system for the ‘USA’ class. Its engines had been numbered 30061 to 30074, of which today only four survive, and 62-669 took the next vacant number, 30075.

> “An ideal size and power for general service, special events, and footplate experiences...”

The locomotive was withdrawn from traffic in 1998 after a major steam pipe failure. In 2002 it was dismantled and transported to East Somerset Railway, where it had made a guest appearance in 1997. It returned to service there two years later, before moving to the Mid-Hants Railway in August 2009.

No. 30075 was withdrawn again in 2010 due to leaks in the inner firebox, and was used in static exhibitions before moving to Project 62’s new Shillingstone base in January 2016.

Class 62 0-6-0T No. 30075 steaming again at Shillingstone on August 6. JAMIE LAWRENCE

A total overhaul was needed, and in 2018 the boiler headed for Vincent Engineering in Somerset for a full recondition. To keep costs as low as possible it was agreed it would be worked on between full price contracts on an ‘as and when’ basis, and the Covid pandemic slowed progress even further, but it finally returned to Shillingstone in September 2022.

Raising steam

In May last year a fire was lit and steam raised for the first time in many years, but a further steam test in June revealed that the left injector needed major repairs. A specialist manufacturer with the skill and, importantly, the working drawings of the injector, was identified.

However, the repairs took far longer than expected, and the injector arrived in January. The contractor agreed to overhaul the large injector of sister No. 30076.

Several more problems came to light before boiler inspector Dave finally issued the ticket.

An ideal size and power for general service, special events, and footplate experiences, it is hoped that No. 30075 will be able to run over the NDR’s newly laid tracks (see separate story) before it goes out on loan,

The new miniature railway on Llanuwchllyn station platform 2 during its construction. JOE STEVENS

Bala Lake gains a second (smaller) railway!

A NEW dual gauge miniature railway has opened at the Bala Lake Railway’s Llanuwchllyn terminus.

It runs over the unused platform 2 and is both 5in and 7 ¼in gauge and will eventually be around 130 yards long. The line includes two platform roads and an unloading spur allowing larger locomotives to be transported over to the minature railway via a 2ft gauge flat wagon

The miniature trains are boarded at the water tower end of the platform, using the newly-constructed foot crossing. At present, the miniature line runs to the office building halfway along the proposed route and it is hoped to have the whole line completed by August 2026.

It is intended to run the miniature line at all main railways such as galas as well as select days throughout the season depending on volunteer and locomotive availability.

Builder Joe Stevens said that the aim is to generate additional interest among visitors arriving by train at Llanuwchllyn and encourage them to stay longer while enjoying the scenery and rarely-seen view of the GWR station.

There is no set fee to have a ride, but a donations box will be situated at the station to raise funds to run the miniature line and to extend it further.

A 7 ¼in gauge Lister diesel based at the miniature line for regular use but operators will be looking for visiting steam locomotives for running days throughout the year.

The miniature line made its debut over the August bank holiday weekend , and will run on the September 20/21 model show weekend.

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Golden moment at Shillingstone station as track extends

By Robin Jones

A MAJOR milestone was passed at Shillingstone station on the North Dorset Railway when a 1312ft extension was joined to existing track with the customary insertion of a 'golden spike.

Joining the tracks with a regular screw painted gold was the culmination of a project which started several years ago, when the NDR applied for planning consent to carry out engineering and landscaping work to reinstate the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway trackbed and extend the line northwards from the station.

The application was supported by 11 reports, including construction and environment management plans, ecological reports, tree surveys, and a biodiversity plan. Sensitivity for the environment was always going to be paramount – an issue which would not have slowed up the original builders when they created the 18-mile link between the Somerset Central's Templecombe station to the north and Dorset Central's Blandford Forum. While permission was granted in April 2021, work could not start until September that year, to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

The first 656ft of was at the time occupied by the North Dorset Trailway, a public path that had been created along most of the historic line between Sturminster Newton and Blandford Forum, so the first task was to divert the trailway to a safer route alongside. That task was completed by the summer of 2022, allowing work to start at last on preparing the trackbed.

The greatest challenge was presented by the fact that a substantial length of the former embankment had been excavated by the former owner to build a tennis court. More than 2000 tons of material was required to refill the embankment, involving many hours of layering and rolling to compaction. By last November the construction work was complete and a membrane was laid on the formation, followed by 656ft of base ballast.

Tracklaying started at the northern limit of the planning permission working back towards the station. Out in all weathers all winter long, by mid-March the NDR permanent way team had reached and crossed Lamb House Bridge - the first standard gauge track to cross a S&DJR bridge since 1966.

On June 8, temperatures hit 26 Celsius, and with other volunteers plying them with food, squash and lots of water, a 12-man permanent way team laid the final sleepers, cut the last rails to length, fixed the last fishplate, and drove the golden screw in the last chair.

Many more weeks of work ay ahead to prepare for an Office of Rail & Road Inspection, along with mountain of paperwork, a major step forward towards the NDR ambition to start carrying passengers in 2026 had been accomplished.

➜ Shillingstone station is open every Wednesday and weekend from 10am to 4pm, and entry is free.

Above: The newly-laid track completed: the project took a total of 850 hours of work. NDR

Right: The 'golden spike' lining the latest section of the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway to be relaid is screwed into place on June 28. NDR

Somerset & Dorset coach recovered from back garden for restoration

A VICTORIAN Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway coach body has been recovered from a back garden and taken to the North Dorset Railway at Shillingstone for eventual restoration.

The Prussian Blue-liveried six-wheel type TZ carriage was likely to have been built in the 1880s and withdrawn from service around 1930. In the 1970s, the body, still in its form as a five-compartment third-class carriage, was used as a tennis court pavilion in Mark, Somerset, until some time during 1989.

Minus two of its five compartments, it was moved to a private garden in Cannington, Somerset where it was used as a shed.

The property previously belonged to the late train enthusiast Michael Hodge, and was bought two years ago by Sarah Cripps and George Pike.

They decided to donate it to the trust in March this year to get it "back to where it deserves to be", and so it acquired by the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust on July 23, being lifted out of the garden by a 100-tonne crane.

Trust director Melvyn Marshman, who arrived pick up the carriage and said it was "like Christmas" and that returning it to the rails would be a "dream come true."

A carriage expert believes he knows which number it is. Its external structural condition is said to be good, and the internal condition satisfactory.

At Shillingstone, it has joined on loan the trust's two other unrestored S&D carriages, Third Class carriages dating from 1890 and 1894, one of which was built in the S&D's own works in Highbridge. The trust also a fully-restored First Class carriage, S&D Coach 4, which was built at Highbridge in 1886 and is currently at the Hornby One:One Museum in Margate.

The Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway coach body on a low-loader to be taken to Shillingstone. S&DRT

VERA marks its 30th birthday

THE Volk's Electric Railway Association is to hold a series of 30th birthday events on September 20-21.

On the Saturday evening, VERA members will take over the world's oldest operating electric railway to run until late evening with illuminated cars.

Punch and Judy shows will take place at the halfway station, where the shed viewing gallery will also be open.

On the Sunday, behind-the-scenes tours will run at the halfway station sheds at 11am, 12.30pm and 2.30pm, with a tour around Magnus Volk's original workshop going into the cliff wall and a visit to the new Lottery-funded sheds on the beach where the cars are stored and maintained.

At 7.30pm on Wednesday, September24 at Patcham Community Centre, longstanding volunteer Ian Gledhill presents 'Forty years with the Volk's Electric Railway'.

Llangollen volunteer honoured in Railway 200 musical celebrations

By Owen Hayward

WHILE trains may be the main focus of the bicentenary of the first 'modern' passenger railway celebrations, heritage railway volunteer Joanne Ormesher has been immortalised in song as part of BBC Radio 2's 21st Century Folk as the programme.

In her day job, Joanne is a qualified accountant, but she also volunteers as a fireman on the Llangollen Railway. Her involvement with heritage railways has spanned many years and has helped her feel connected to her late grandfather, who was a model engineer. Despite memories of his home being littered with engine parts, it was not until two decades after his death that she first came across a full-sized example at her local station.

Past connections

"I thought they were consigned to museums," she recalled, "but this was hissing and breathing at the station. It felt alive. I stood at the back of a throng of enthusiasts, and it felt like my grandad was there. The smells and the sounds... everything reminded me of him."

Joanne's life changed that day, and she began volunteering cleaning locomotives at a local heritage line and quickly rose through the ranks to become a fireman. Having recently joined the LR, the three-hour drive from her home in Blackburn, combined with the hard graft that comes with footplate work, does not put her off being involved. Volunteering, she said, helped her through a difficult time after being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in 2019.

"I didn't know if I was going to survive. I shouldn't have survived," Joanne said. "But I was determined to get back to firing steam engines. It's what kept me focused.

"Ten weeks after my treatment I was back at it."

Now in remission, Joanne continues to volunteer as a fireman. She also strives to pass on her knowledge to the next generation of enthusiasts and champions greater opportunities for women on heritage railways.

As part of the Radio 2 programme's challenge, which has seen five songs composed about different people with railway connections by five different folk artists, Joanne was selected as the subject for the song Firecracker by Findlay Napier.

Emma Roberts, programme manager for Railway 200, said: "The BBC and the folk artists have done an amazing job bringing these five stories to life. Joanne's story is inspirational, and it really demonstrates the powerful impact that the railways can have on people's lives.

"This is a momentous year for the UK, and it's been wonderful to see so many people getting involved, with hundreds of events happening around the country and the world."

Life into stories

BBC Radio 2's Folk Show presenter Mark Radcliffe said: "Folk music tells the story of everyday life, with melodies and lyrics that are passed down through generations of families. It's been amazing to see these listeners' stories take on a life of their own with these special compositions written and performed by some of the folk world's most loved artists."

Other stories covered by the programme include 85-year-old Hampstead resident 'Siggy,' who came to the UK from Barbados in 1962 and became a railway worker on the day he arrived; Tom, who as a two-week-old baby was found in the ladies' waiting room of Reading station in 1965; and Charlotte and David, from Bradford. David, a train driver, stopped when he spotted Charlotte by the side of the line. She was intending on taking her own life, but David gently talked her out of it and convinced her to board his train. The pair later began dating and are now married with children.

All five songs can be found online by visiting canvas-story.bbcrewind.co.uk/radio-2-21st-century-folk-2025/

Llangollen Railway volunteer Joanne Ormesher, the subject of Findlay Napier's song Firecracker, which was written as part of a BBC Radio 2 project to celebrate Railway 200. OWEN HAYWARD

Two power units for new first diesel

THE Ivatt Diesel Re-creation Society, which aims to recreate Britain's first main line diesel electric locomotive, has taken a significant step forward with the purchase of two English Electric 16SV power units.

The units were offered by a contractor which was dismantling a military base in Lincolnshire. One was seen running and has run for 1500 hours while the other, which has not been commissioned from rebuild, has a total of 74 hours.

A society statement said: "These units give us the long-wished-for goal of having a reserve historical unit and many spare parts, and both units are now in dry storage. There is another 16SV in a separate military base which we continue to pursue.

"We were able to afford this purchase thanks to the regular donations. We need further funding for future development, such as design acceptance and bodywork."

The not-for-profit group, which is based at Centenary Works at Wirkworth on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, plan to recreate No. 10000 and operate it. Along with sister No.10001, they were designed by HG Ivatt and built by the LMS at its Derby works in 1947/8. Both were allocated to Willesden. No. 10000 was withdrawn in 1963 and scrapped at Cashmores, Great Bridge, in April 1968, while No. 10001 was withdrawn in 1966 and scrapped at Cox & Danks, North Acton, by December 1968.

To become involved with the project, visit https://lms10000.com

One of the two English Electric 16SV power units taken by low-loaders to Wirksworth following purchase. PHIL STANBRIDGE/IDRS

The 12-year external restoration of the cab of scrapped Class 37 No. 37290 (37411) by the Alexandra Hotel in Derby, which acquired it in 2013, was completed in time for The Greatest Gathering. Located in the hotel car park, the cab now has working headlights and horn, with vinyls supplied by Railtec Transfers. The hotel, a five-minute walk from Derby station, has a strong railway theme, and manager Ralf Edge has collected a range of memorabilia that decorates its walls. Outshopped from English Electric's Vulcan Foundry in 1965 as D6990, the 37 has carried the names *Institution of Railway Signal Engineers*, *Tŷ Hafan*, *The Scottish Railway Preservation Society* and *Caerphilly Castle*. It was scrapped at CF Booth of Rotherham's yard in 2013. STEVE DONALD

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Suffolk celebrations as extension opening doubles 'Middy's' length

By Owen Hayward

Cutting the tape at Brockford Station ahead of the first train on August 1 were (left to right): Ian Meigh (MSLR chairman), Mark Pendlington (Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk) and MSLR president Tony Alston. JAMES KINDRED/MSLR

***Sir Berkeley* departs from the site of what will become Aspall Halt, the limit of the extended MSLR's operations.** JAMES KINDRED/MSLR

AUGUST 1 was a momentous day for the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway when, after years of perseverance and hard work, its 550-yard extension was opened for public passenger services, thus doubling the length of the line previously available for operation.

Running on what was once a route that came about thanks to efforts in opening up central areas of Suffolk to both county and country, the seeds of the revived MSLR began in the 1990s with the formation of the preservation society and the first open days at Brockford station over the August bank holiday of 1991. The site was gradually restored and track laid down for 550 yards to Doverbrook, which was the heritage line's terminus until this summer.

Ambition realised

While any major extension is fraught with challenges, the MSLR had long held an ambition to take its line beyond the halt it erected there. Planning permission was granted in 2017, with the requirement of installing a crossing where it intersected with a public footpath.

The new terminus is at Aspall Halt, where construction of a platform and building is currently ongoing.

The result of this expansion is that visitors now get a 1.2-mile return journey through the countryside along the original route alignment first laid out in 1908 and which lasted until 1958.

Following the necessary granting of the Transport & Works Act Order to enable trains to run, a special launch took place on August 1, at which Lord Deben (former MP for Suffolk Coastal and Lewisham West), Adrian Ramsay (MP for Waveney Valley) and many other dignitaries from county and district councils witnessed the momentous occasion, with the guest of honour and keynote speaker being the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Mark Pendlington.

Following an introductory ceremony, guests were given a ride along the extension in the MSLR's genuine Victorian four-wheeled coaches, hauled by Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1210 *Sir Berkeley*.

Step back through time

MSLR press officer John Reeve said: "This development makes the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway, always affectionately known as the 'Middy,' a great railway journey for Suffolk, particularly for the younger generations.

"This extension more than doubles the length of the line which had been in use until now and will give visitors a real feel of train travel during the early part of the 20th century, enhancing the railway's position as a Suffolk tourism attraction.

"Roadworks and a poor weather forecast meant the Saturday was slightly quieter than expected, but the Sunday was very well attended, at times being standing room only!

"MSLR volunteers are now on with building the planned 'destination' station, Aspall Halt, which will be ready to be opened for next season."

The MSLR will see out this summer with its Everything Goes gala on August 31, with all available traction pressed into service, a real ale bar, and the restoration shed open for viewing.

For details, visit www.mslr.org.uk

Basildon miniature line back in action after six-year wait

THE Basildon Miniature Railway has officially reopened after a £50,000 refurbishment following a six-year closure.

Volunteers restored the mile-long 10¼in gauge line at Wat Tyler Country Park in Pitsea, Essex, and the first passengers rode on July 27. On Sunday, August 10, a grand reopening took place, with civic dignitaries cutting a cake and ribbons.

Basildon Miniature Railway company owner Daniel Harrison, 51, who works in financial services, told the BBC: "When I took it over, it was in a deplorable state; you could hardly see most of the track. It was overgrown and there were lots of rotten sleepers – there was quite a lot to do!" He said that he began volunteering for the previous owners when he was 12 years old. As a teenager in the 1980s, he helped lay the original track.

At the reopening, the station was named in honour of his late father, David Harrison, a former mayor of Basildon who served on the local council for more than half a century.

"I'd like to also thank Hastings Miniature Railway and Ropley Miniature Railway for their support," Daniel added.

The railway, which last ran trains in 2019, will now run on weekends and during school holidays between April and September.

Having been located in Basildon Zoo until 1986, the locomotive, rolling stock and rail were relocated to the 125-acre park with the aim of laying a longer railway.

More work is needed before the northern loop line towards the main entrance can open.

Gavin Callaghan, the leader of Basildon Council, said: "I was honoured to join the Deputy Mayor of Basildon and the Harrison family for the official opening.

"It was a privilege to stand alongside the wife and son of former councillor David Harrison, who have worked tirelessly over the past few years to get the railway renovated and reopened.

"Their dedication, together with the brilliant efforts of all the volunteers and council officers, has brought this much-loved attraction back to life.

"The railway is buzzing every day with families bringing their children to enjoy Wat Tyler Park. I am looking forward to working with the team to see how we can support plans to extend the track, add stations and create even more fun along the way.

"As a thank-you to Dan Harrison, I have nominated him and his volunteers for an Alf Dove Award for an outstanding contribution to the local community."

Staff and volunteers in front of the on-loan Hastings Miniature Railway 0-6-2DH No. 6 *Cornish Pixie*, built by RVM Engineering in 2016 and fitted with Walschaerts valve gear, at the official reopening of the Basildon Miniature Railway at Coun Harrison Junction on August 10. BMR

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Setting records at the other end of the scale!

By Robin Jones

TWENTY miles from where The Greatest Gathering was being hailed at the world's largest railway festival, one of the smallest was taking place at the same time – and also aimed to set a record.

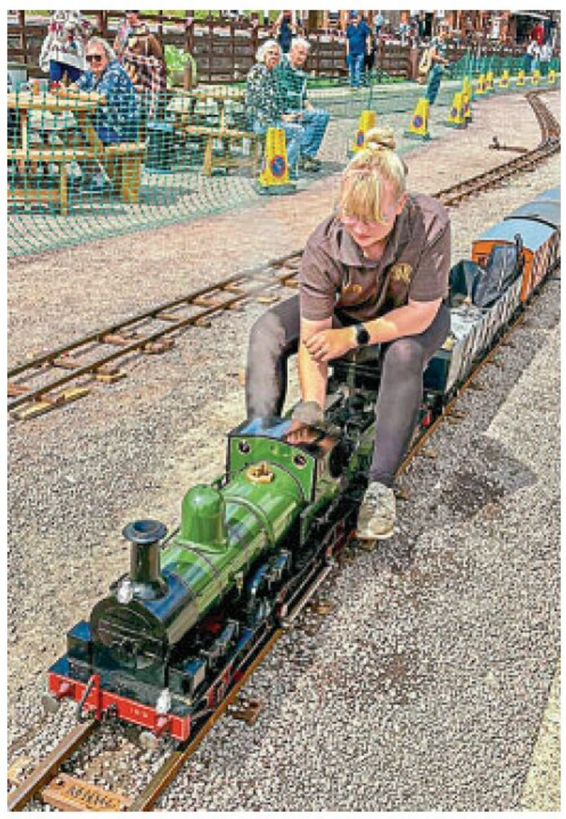
In the goods yard at Quorn & Woodhouse station on the Great Central Railway on August 2/3, the Portable Railway Club laid 1476 feet of temporary 7¼in gauge track for its annual Miniature Railway Spectacular event. Six miniature railway track owners from around the UK joined forces to create the longest line of its type seen in decades.

The event, staffed and organised by volunteers, attracted more than 1000 visitors, most of whom had day rover tickets, thus giving about 4000 train rides in total.

The Portable Railway Club, which is based in Kirkby In Ashfield, supplied about 100 track panels. Members Darren Morton, Lee Talbot and Jordan Andrews each brought roughly 40 panels each – and the Top Field Light Railway supplied 100 track panels all the way from Norfolk. In total there were about 300 panels on site.

Left: The Miniature Railway Spectacular in progress at Quorn & Woodhouse, with the full-size Great Central in the background. MRW

Below: A busy day at Quorn & Woodhouse as trains pass on the miniature line. HEATHER ALLISON



Right: In operation on the portable track was a Great Central Railway 12A 2-4-0, a type designed by Charles Sacré for the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, the last example of which, No. 169B, was withdrawn in June 1923. HEATHER ALLISON

Air and vacuum-braked

Passenger stock consisted predominantly of seven Miniature Railway Workshop Edmundson-style articulated coaches which ran intensively on both air and vacuum braking systems, depending on the requirements of the locomotive. Two goods trains were in regular service, operated by juniors and other visitors.

The railway was first laid out in the computer-aided design programme SCARM, with the dimensions of the MRW Jubilee lightweight portable track uploaded into the software. The track is a lightweight solution which means an entire railway as big as the one at Quorn & Woodhouse can be built in just one day. The track range includes straights, points and curves, meaning the railway can be built in a different layout design almost every time.

After a quick team meeting on the Friday morning, the group of volunteers worked together to lay the panels as per the plan and drag it into position to ensure that the railway would fit in the space. The design of the track plan included a large passing loop acting as the line's station before a 30ft radius loop.

Once round the loop, trains would run parallel with the GCR main line for a long straight piece of track, with a set of managed level crossing gates.

One of the objectives was to have parallel running trains, and in so doing mimic the GCR in being a double-track main line.

The portable railway was laid in just one day and operated an intensive service for two days, following which it was then taken up completely on the Sunday evening, with hopes of a repeat as soon as next year.

Two tramcars offered for free following Crich fleet review

CRICH Tramway Village, home of the National Tramway Museum, is seeking new homes for two trams after reviewing its collection

It is relinquishing ownership of the pair free of charge in the hope of another organisation in the public sector giving them a new life.

Halle an der Saale (HAVAG) tramcar No. 902, a single-deck all-enclosed bogie electric vehicle built in 1969, was imported from Germany in 2005 in the hope of converting it into a wheelchair-accessible tram at Crich.

For various technical reasons, this has not been possible, and No. 902 has not operated since 2006.

In 2023, the museum acquired Blackpool Centenary tram No. 645 to convert into 'Access Tram 2,' so No. 902 is now surplus to requirements.

The second vehicle looking for a home is Blackpool Corporation Transport Works Dept No. 2 'Railgrinder,' a single-deck works car built in 1935. After operating at Crich from 1965 to 1975, it was stored for 50 years and is incomplete without a truck or any electrical equipment.

NTM chairman Andrew Pendleton said: "Removing trams from our collection is a difficult decision, but we have considered all options and believe this is the right thing to do to give the vehicles a chance to be appreciated by the public under someone else's ownership."

All removal and transport costs will be the responsibility of the acquiring organisation. For further information about the vehicles or to express an interest in taking custody of them, contact curator Kate Watts at kate.watts@tramway.co.uk

Blackpool Corporation Transport Works Dept No. 2 'Railgrinder.' CTV

Halle an der Saale tramcar No. 902. CTV

Left: Backed by Class 20 No. 20142, A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* crosses the newly rebuilt section of line at Mor Brook with the official opening train on July 25.

Right: No.60103 running round its train at Bridgnorth. BOTH: JOHN TITLOW

Flying Scotsman comes out on top yet again... and again!

By Robin Jones

THE Severn Valley Railway had an extra double reason to celebrate its 60th anniversary – when 4300 visitors rode behind A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* as it hauled services for the full length of the line between Kidderminster Town and Bridgnorth for the first time this season.

As featured on the website www.therailwayhub.co.uk, the A3 hauled the official reopening train on July 25, marking the completion of repairs to the January 29 landslip at Mor Brook Bridge which had isolated Bridgnorth, The first light engine movement over it ran on July 16, followed by a full-length diesel-hauled test train on July 22, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 335.

Many thousands more attended the railway's Swinging Sixties event on July 26/27, at which the A3, fresh from its recent successful crowd-pulling visit to the West Somerset Railway, hauled return services. It also ran on July 28 prior to its departure to The Great Gathering.

SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "We simply could not have wished for a better way in which to celebrate not only the reunification of our line after the landslip repair, but also the milestone of our 60th anniversary as a preserved railway.

Perfect celebration

"These factors in themselves are hugely important, but to mark them both with a rare visit from *Flying Scotsman* – well, it just doesn't get any better than that.

"We are indebted to the National Railway Museum, Northern Steam Operations Limited and DB Cargo for facilitating the visit.

"The crowds of visitors we've seen have brought in much-needed passenger revenue, and, of course, business has been booming in our pubs, cafes and shops throughout the past four days.

"This is a very welcome effect, following a 30% slump in passenger figures for the first part of this year due to the fact that we've only been able to operate along 12 miles of our usual 16-mile route.

"It's wonderful to see the whole line reunited and we want to say a huge thank-you to everyone who has contributed to making that happen, from our volunteers and staff to the professionals who did such a swift job of repairing our damaged bridge, and individuals who donated to the SVR Resilience Fund. All of this has got us to where we are now and we are very, very grateful."

In order to reduce fire risk, with the lineside vegetation still very dry due to the recent heatwaves, on July 25 No. 60103 ran its three trains with Class 20 diesel No. 20142 coupled immediately behind to save the A3 from having to work excessively hard.

However, the diesel was removed from the train for the second day onwards, the decision taken after observing how things went on the first day and in full consultation with the NRM and Northern Steam.

Operations manager Matt Robinson said: "The plan was to let the Class 20 do a large proportion of work on the first trip; if all went well, ease back the diesel and work more in tandem on the second trip, and if that was okay, remove the diesel for the third.

No obvious risk

"The first and second runs went as planned and on the first run No. 60103 was opened fully up in the tunnel to see what sparks were emitted from the chimney, but there was nothing of note, giving confidence to let the loco work a bit more.

"We didn't remove the Class 20 for the third trip because we needed to consult with the owner and operator

With the first train on its last day, No. 60103 departs Kidderminster on July 28. JOHN TITLOW

A3 No. 60103 and Class 20 No. 20142 cross the rebuilt section of Mor Brook bridge and embankment with the second train on the opening day, July 25. JOHN TITLOW

Pre-order Issue 337: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Severn Valley Railway managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster talks to the media at Bridgnorth station on the reopening day. JOHN TITLOW

Driver Paul Fathers and fireman Andy Stringer prepare *Flying Scotsman* to come off shed at Bewdley for the reopening train. KEITH WILKINSON/SVR

of *Flying Scotsman*. Just like us, they are very keen to ensure the locomotive is not seen to be the cause of a fire starting. This is due to the national concern of fire risk from steam locomotives, with unaided steam operations still banned in some parts of the country.

"They confirmed that they were happy for the diesel to be removed following the runs that had already taken place, but it was too late in the day to actually do it by this point! It was therefore decided to set up unassisted running from Saturday morning, which went well for the remainder of the weekend."

Volunteers working on the restoration of CCT DB94796. NVR

Project Octopussy: Nene Valley launches major partnership to empower future events

THE Nene Valley Railway has partnered with Amey to mark Railway 200 with a major project to restore a carriage so it can house a bigger generator to power special events.

Project Octopussy, a nod to the James Bond film Octopussy which was partly filmed at the NVR in 1982, has seen volunteers from Amey and its supply chain regularly attending the site to assist with the scheme involving four-wheeler CCT DB94796.

So far, 70 volunteers have signed up to help, with support, materials, and resources being contributed by more than 30 rail companies.

The restored carriage is due to be unveiled at an event hosted by Speedy Hire this November. With the bigger generator, it will enable the NVR to host bigger and better events such as Christmas at the Railway, keep the site running efficiently, and ultimately raise more funds to support the restoration and conservation of rail heritage.

Amey is a leading provider of full life-cycle engineering, operations and decarbonisation solutions for transport infrastructure and complex facilities. Seeking to do something big and bold to mark this milestone year, Amey approached NVR to identify a major project that could be the focus of the partnership throughout 2025.

➜ For details of how to volunteer for the project or make a donation, visit https://nvr.org.uk/product.php/668/project-octopussy

Flying Scotsman to star in Barrow Hill's major Railway 200 celebration gala

By Robin Jones

FOLLOWING its appearance at The Greatest Gathering, A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* is set to become centrepiece of another landmark celebration of Railway 200.

Tickets are now on sale for the Barrow Hill Roundhouse gala on October 10-12, with *Scotsman* heading a star-studded line-up of locomotives from the steam and diesel/electric eras.

The event is an opportunity to see the A3 up close, as well as ride behind it prior to its autumn visit to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on October 25-29 and on November 1-5 and 8-12, as reported last issue. It will be joined by other guest locomotives including a Class 55 Deltic and LMS 3F 'Jinty' 0-6-0T No. 16440.

No. 60103 will be on display to visitors at the UK's only-surviving operational railway roundhouse on Friday, October 10, and hauling trains on the following two days.

The gala will also be the venue for the world premiere of I am George Stephenson, a play created by the young people of Graves Youth Theatre in Sheffield and Paul Whitfield.

A humorous look at the life and achievements of the railway pioneer, the performance has been devised using letters, newspaper articles and other historical sources as inspiration.

Visitors will be invited to enjoy the imaginative physical storytelling the young people have employed to share George Stephenson's story as part of Railway 200.

There will be performances at 2pm and 3pm on the Saturday and Sunday, with no additional fee for visitors to watch these them. However, seat reservations are compulsory and should be reserved alongside entry tickets.

Roundhouse general manager Mervyn Allcock said: "We are delighted to be putting on such a great show to celebrate this significant anniversary for the railways, particularly as George Stephenson, who played such an important part in the events of 200 years ago, made Chesterfield his home in later life."

National Railway Museum director Craig Bentley said: "Barrow Hill Roundhouse has a remarkable story and demonstrates the determination needed to keep the UK's railway heritage alive. In this milestone year for the railway, we are delighted to offer our support by bringing the world's most famous locomotive to the nation's last-surviving operational roundhouse".

Tickets are on sale now at www.seetickets.com/event/barrow-hill-presents-a-celebration-of-200-years-of-railways/barrow-hill-roundhouse/3457337

For group bookings of 20 people or more, email enquiries@barrowhill.org.uk. Children under 16 years must be accompanied by an adult.

➜ A £6 million railway research and innovation centre is currently under construction on the roundhouse site, which dates from 1870. Funded by the Government under the Staveley Town Deal programme and supported by the East Midlands Mayoral Combined Authority and Chesterfield Borough Council, the building will be completed next spring.

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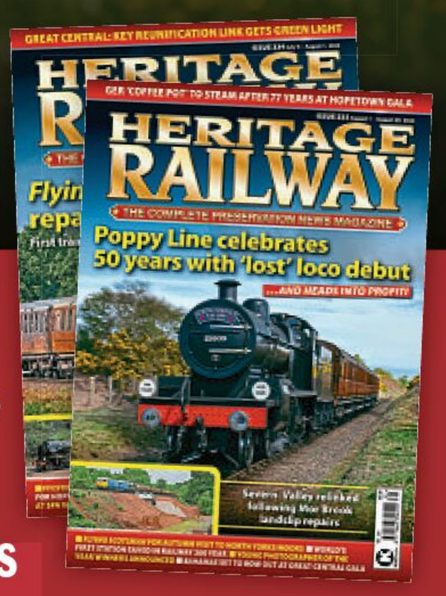
ROBIN JONES, EDITOR

Buttercups carpet the field as GWR 1400 0-4-2T No. 1450, coupled to autotrailer No. 232, starts the long climb out of Boscarne Junction on the Bodmin Railway during its fleeting visit to Cornwall for the May 16-18 steam gala. OWEN HAYWARD.



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Wensleydale launches £100k appeal to safeguard long-term future and steam

By Robin Jones

ONE of the UK's longest heritage lines, the 22-mile Wensleydale Railway has appealed for £100,000 to ensure its long-term survival.

The Securing Our Future appeal has two primary goals, firstly to raise fund to secure sufficient track materials to support a plan to restore passenger services to Redmire and meet ongoing maintenance needs for years to come.

Secondly, the railway hopes to build a service and ash pit at Leeming Bar to support plans to operate steam services, improve visitor experience, and generate new income.

The railway faces the constant challenge of balancing increasing operating and maintenance costs with the need to generate and secure new income. The Wensleydale Railway Association (Trust) Limited chairman and Wensleydale Railway plc director Richard Leathley said: "There has been a slight deviation from our goal of restoring passenger services to Redmire this year.

"This shift in focus has come about because of a very welcome opportunity that has arisen to acquire vital track materials and our plan to install service and ash pit facilities at Leeming Bar in support of future steam locomotive operations. Both things will be of significant benefit to secure our railway's future.

"As a result of these opportunities, and the timescales and logistics involved, it has therefore been necessary to slightly adjust our current Redmire programme of track repair work accordingly.

"We will, however, continue with ongoing sleeper replacement and drainage work on the Leyburn to Redmire section of our railway, and we remain committed to our goal of restoring passenger services to Redmire as soon as possible."

Track, points and signalling items worth about £500,000 have just been donated to the railway from the site of the former Eggborough power station, in North Yorkshire.

WR fundraising and marketing manager Nick Keegan said: "We must clear the site and pay to transport the materials to our railway and anticipate that this will cost up to £50,000.

"Securing the track will support our Redmire plan and ongoing maintenance needs into the future. It will enable us to replace track at Leeming Bar as part of the proposed ash pit project, and it will allow us to create a storage siding at Wensley station. I urge people to support this appeal and join us in securing our railway's future."

The abandoned track at Eggborough power station. LAMPITT RAIL SERVICES

➜ **Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/campaign/securingourfuture**

John Craven, third from left, meets Wensleydale Railway volunteers. WR

BBC Countryfile filmed at Wensleydale

THE Wensleydale Railway hosted a team from BBC Countryfile at Leeming Bar and Scruton stations for one day of filming.

Presenter John Craven visited the volunteer-led railway in May to learn about the line's rich history and meet some of the dedicated volunteers. The episode was broadcast on August 3 at 6.20pm on BBC One.

WR marketing and fundraising manager Nick Keegan said: "It was our pleasure to host John and his production crew. We enjoyed having the opportunity to showcase our railway's rich heritage, stunning scenery and the passionate volunteers who keep the railway alive for thousands of visitors to enjoy every year.

"Our railway has featured in a number of television productions, including an episode of crime drama Vera and Michael Portillo's Great British Railway Journeys.

"From our award-winning restored Edwardian and Victorian stations at Scruton and Leeming Bar to stunning Yorkshire Dales scenery, we have much to offer our visitors and TV and film production companies."

Unique Lincolnshire Wolds Peckett back running again

THE sole-surviving Peckett E class 0-4-0ST, No. 1351 of 1914 *Lion*, is back in service on the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway after a major overhaul.

Lion was delivered new from Peckett's Atlas Locomotive Works in Bristol to the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich and worked alongside its sister *Tiger*, pulling gun sleds and ammunition wagons on the extensive internal railway system. It was here that *Lion* acquired its large back cab windows to aid with shunting.

In 1950 it moved to the Wallsend Slipway and Engineering Company, working on the River Tyne quayside, and was converted to oil-firing in 1959.

In October 1974, *Lion* entered preservation at the Chasewater Railway, before relocating to the Foxfield Railway in January 1975. In early 1998, it moved to the LWR to become the first steam locomotive to operate passenger trains on the newly-opened line at Ludborough.

After five years' service, it bowed out of traffic, but after a long-running overhaul costing nearly £65,000, it returned to traffic 22 years after last hauling a passenger train.

A full bottom-end overhaul was needed, with the tyres turned, axle boxes overhauled, new die blocks and all motion pins replaced. The side rod bearings have also been remachined, the cab rebuilt to its original state, and the boiler has had a full re-tube, new tubeplates, and part of the backhead was replaced.

"I'm proud to say that apart from the boiler work, virtually everything else has been done by our small team of volunteers here at Ludborough engine shed," said the LWR's engineering director, James Wilson. "Being the only E class in existence, we felt returning *Lion* as near as possible to its original Peckett livery was the fitting thing to do. We did this by referring to old pictures and colour samples found under the layers of paintwork. It certainly looks smart, and hopefully *Lion* will once again give many years of service".

Peckett E class 0-6-0ST *Lion* roaring again after 22 years. LWR

Reunited: Penrhyn quarry pair meet again after 60 years

By Owen Hayward

Former Penrhyn quarry workmates Ruston & Hornsby 4WDM No. 382820 (left) and Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT *Eigiau* (right) together for the first time in 60 years at the Great Bush Railway in Tinkers Park. In between is O&K 0-6-0T *Sao Domingos*, which was imported to Britain in 1972 from the Douro Valley coal mines in Portugal. COURTENAY FORDER

JANUARY 1965 saw the final steam workings run over the complex network of lines at Penrhyn Quarry in North Wales, following which many of the locomotives were sold off and found new homes elsewhere. Sixty years on, two of those locomotives were reunited for the first time since their quarry days as part of a summer gala at the private Great Bush Railway, next to Hadlow Down, in Sussex.

Built in 1912 by Orenstein & Koppel in Germany, 0-4-0WT No. 5668 *Eigiau* of 1912 was originally sent to Cheshire contractor CL Warren for use during the construction of Port Sunlight village in Merseyside, then four years later was bought by the Aluminium Corporation of Dolgarrog for use on the Llyn Cowlyd tramway. Having been replaced by a petrol locomotive in 1922, it was offered to the Ffestiniog Railway, which declined to purchase it, and so it was instead bought by the Penryhn Quarry Railway.

Its small size saw it perfectly suited for levels of the quarry where larger locomotives could not run, though it would also make occasional forays down to the Port of Penrhyn. Withdrawn in 1955, it remained at the quarry until 1963 when sold into preservation.

Ruston & Hornsby 4WDM No. 382820 entered service at the same quarry in 1955, when it was the 24th and final locomotive (which saw it become Penrhyn No. 24) in the company's diesel fleet. Due to its size, it was too heavy to work within the quarry itself and so was employed shunting the quayside exchange sidings at Port Penrhyn, although it would occasionally undertake journeys along the main narrow gauge line between them. Despite that link being closed in 1962, rail activity at the port continued until August 1963, with the quarry owned by Sir Alfred McAlpine & Sons.

The Ruston temporarily moved to contract at Deanhead Reservoir between January and July 1967 and left Penrhyn for the final time in 1968. Along with some other ex-Penrhyn diesels, it briefly went to a metal works in Cheadle, Staffordshire, before going into private storage solo at the Foxfield Light Railway, the rest of the locomotives it had been stored with being scrapped. In 2007, it finally joined the Downpatrick & County Down Railway GBR in Tinkers Park.

The August 9/10 gala weekend saw *Eigiau* visit from its usual base at the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway in Kent, marking the first time these two former Penrhyn workmates had been seen working together in six decades.

In addition to rides on the 2ft gauge railway, several vintage buses were also present, along with vehicles from a local classic car club, a small funfair for children, traction engine trailer rides around the 25-acre site and cab rides in a 1956 Bedford fire engine.

The railway and park are open to the public only on select dates throughout the year, with the next taking place on September 27. For full details, visit www.tinkerspark.com

Donegal museum runs true to type with heritage stylised posters

DONEGAL Railway Heritage Museum is running true to type, with the typeface used by the County Donegal Railways 100 years ago on its public notices and handbills being used today to publicise National Heritage Week events at the museum.

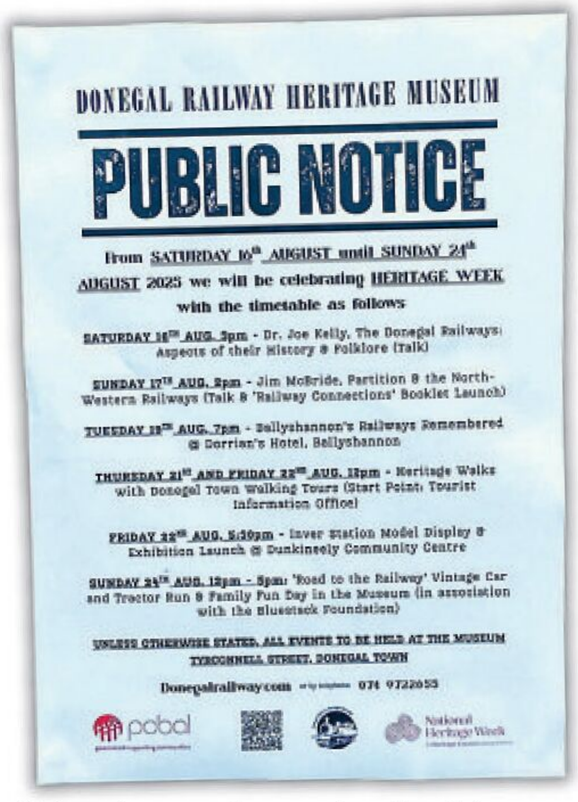
National Heritage Week was celebrated in the Republic of Ireland on August 16-24, and the museum is always keen to take part in it.

"We decided to make our posters look as much as possible like those the County Donegal Railways used a century ago, and we've posted these up on the museum noticeboard at Donegal station, just as the real ones would have been displayed in the past," said museum manager Marty Gilroy. "It's all about giving an authentic railway feel to the posters, while making them quite distinct from the normal posters of today, to get our message across.

"It's the first time we've done this, and it's gone down very well locally and with visitors.

"I'd have to say, though, that the CDR had an easier task by not having to include so many logos on their posters!"

It was the busiest National Heritage Week to date for the museum, with talks on the railway both in Donegal and Ballyshannon, while the museum's operating 7mm gauge model of Inver station, gifted to the society by the late and talented railway modeller John Seward, was on public show not far from Inver itself, at Dunkineely on the Killybegs line.



DONEGAL RAILWAY HERITAGE MUSEUM

PUBLIC NOTICE

From SATURDAY 16th AUGUST until SUNDAY 24th AUGUST 2025 we will be celebrating HERITAGE WEEK with the timetable as follows

SATURDAY 16TH AUG. 3pm - Dr. Joe Kelly, The Donegal Railways: Aspects of their History & Folklore (Talk)

SUNDAY 17TH AUG. 2pm - Jim McBride, Partition & the North-Western Railways (Talk & 'Railway Connections' Booklet Launch)

TUESDAY 19TH AUG. 7pm - Ballyshannon's Railways Remembered @ Dorrian's Hotel, Ballyshannon

THURSDAY 21ST AND FRIDAY 22ND AUG. 12pm - Heritage Walks with Donegal Town Walking Tours (Start Point: Tourist Information Office)

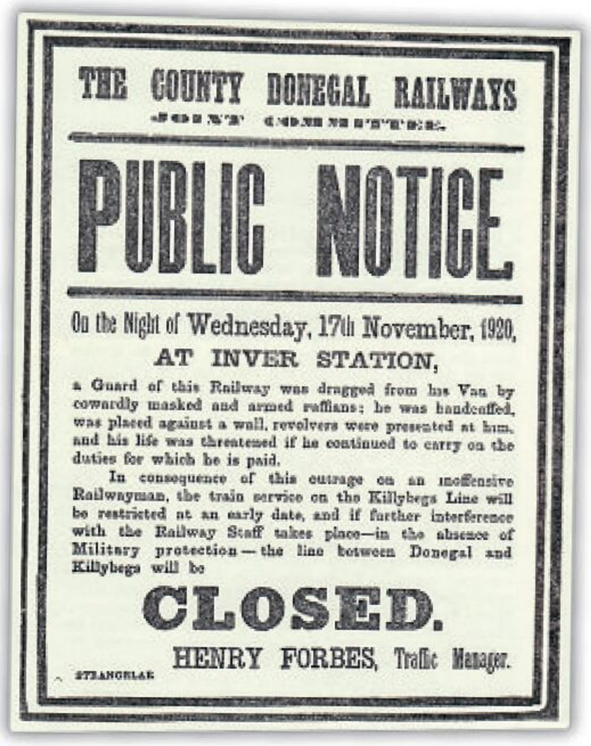
FRIDAY 22ND AUG. 5:30pm - Inver Station Model Display & Exhibition Launch @ Dunkineely Community Centre

SUNDAY 24TH AUG. 12pm - 5pm: 'Road to the Railway' Vintage Car and Tractor Run & Family Fun Day in the Museum (in association with the Bluestack Foundation)

UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, ALL EVENTS TO BE HELD AT THE MUSEUM TYRCONNELL STREET, DONEGAL TOWN

Donegalrailway.com 074 9722053

Using the typeface and style of the CDR posters of 100 years ago gets the programme timetable across. DRHM



THE COUNTY DONEGAL RAILWAYS

PUBLIC NOTICE

On the Night of Wednesday, 17th November, 1920,

AT INVER STATION,

a Guard of this Railway was dragged from his Van by cowardly masked and armed ruffians; he was handcuffed, was placed against a wall, revolvers were presented at him, and his life was threatened if he continued to carry on the duties for which he is paid.

In consequence of this outrage on an inoffensive Railwayman, the train service on the Killybegs Line will be restricted at an early date, and if further interference with the Railway Staff takes place—in the absence of Military protection—the line between Donegal and Killybegs will be

CLOSED.

HENRY FORBES, Traffic Manager.

An original CDR public notice of 1920, recalling the difficult times faced by the line during the War of Independence. DRHM

Marty added: "Railway heritage is a key part of Ireland's national heritage, and we are very proud to play our part in ensuring that it's represented in the annual nationwide programme."

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End of the line for UK's prototype hovertrain?

By Owen Hayward

THE future of a unique piece of transport history is hanging in the balance after work to dismantle experimental high-speed hovertrain Research Test Vehicle (RTV) 31 began at Railworld Peterborough in July, following concerns about the supporting beam on which it has stood for nearly 30 years.

RTV 31 was developed as part of plans to produce a functional train system that could reach speeds of 250mph, combining the technologies of both the hovercraft and the linear induction motor (LIM). It was hoped the resulting method of transport would provide an inter-city service with lower capital costs than other proposed solutions.

The LIMs were devised to create a magnetic field that would give the vehicles motion and levitation, reducing the need for a wheel-to-rail contact that, at the time, was known to experience 'hunting oscillation' at high speeds, whereby wheelsets would move side to side as inertial and adhesion forces equalised. The hovertrain project quickly picked up on this technology and incorporated it into the plans, but it was found that at high speeds, LIMs too were prone to issues such as motor and platework cracking as magnetic forces varied while in motion.

Despite this, RTV 31 successfully completed a test on February 7, 1973, during which it reached 104mph on a one-mile section of track. By this time, however, BR's plan for the Advanced Passenger Train (APT) was well advanced, with the likelihood that it would be ready for service by the end of the decade.

By comparison, the hovertrain would still be in testing at the same time and would not have been able to enter service until the guideways had been constructed.

A review undertaken by the government at the time concluded just a week after the successful test that the project would be cancelled, identifying a number of problems with the proposal. RTV 31 ended up at Cranfield University for students to experiment with, remaining stored in the open there for more than 20 years.

Could this be the end of the line for Britain's prototype hovertrain? With the beam it rests on now condemned, the removal of RTV 31's body panels is underway at Railworld Peterborough ahead of an inspection of the vehicle's structural stability to determine whether it can be lifted off in one piece. If not, then this prototype of a cancelled part of transport history may be scrapped. BRIAN PEARCE

RTV 31 being craned into place after arriving at Railworld nearly 30 years ago. RAILWORLD PETERBOROUGH COLLECTION

Following news in 1993 that the unique vehicle was going to be broken up, volunteers and ex-employees rallied to save the experimental pioneer. In 1996 it was donated to Railworld and moved there for display.

For years it has stoon on a specially erected concrete beam, but a recent inspection revealed that this is now life-expired.

Furthermore, supporting components on RTV31 itself have failed at some point, resulting in the body coming to rest directly on the surface of the beam, which has led to decay of the structure of the cabin. At more than 50 tons, craning the delicate remains of RTV 31 off in one piece are thought not to be feasible and so it is being gradually dismantled in-situ, with body panels being marked up as they come off while the full structure of the vehicle is assessed to see whether there is any hope of saving it.

An independent assessor will liaise with a local crane hire company and between them a judgement will be made as to whether or not RTV 31 can be lifted safely and in one piece.

Whether that is possible or not, what is known is that RTV 31 must come down from its current position by the end of the year.

Didcot gets a second GWR lorry

DIDCOT Railway Centre has taken delivery of a second Thornycroft A1 lorry, which was built in 1930 and was once owned by the GWR.

The lorry was pushed into the centre's display garage by a team of volunteers with Rosie Walker-Jones steering on August 9 during a Steam Days weekend.

The vehicle, registration UW9825, joins another Thornycroft (UU5008) dating from 1929.

Both need considerable restoration and are typical of the lorries used in the 1920s and 1930s for local deliveries from stations.

At the time, the lorries were rapidly replacing horse-drawn vehicles – bad news for the 1880s provender store at Didcot which provided the horse feed for the complete GWR system, with ingredients sourced from farmers in the area. The provender store was demolished in the 1970s and is now the site of Didcot Parkway station's multi-storey car park.

The garage in which the two lorries are displayed was constructed for the purpose about a century ago at Wantage Road station. With a steel frame and corrugated iron cladding, it was dismantled several years ago and re-erected at the railway centre.

Wantage Road station closed to passengers in 1964 and there has been lobbying for many years to reopen it to serve the increase in population of the locality during the past half-century.

Didcot Railway Centre has a growing collection of GWR road vehicles, both horse-drawn and petrol-driven. They include a prize bullock cart, built of timber to withstand the kicks of an angry animal, and a fire engine used at the company's locomotive works at Swindon.

Volunteer Rosie Walker-Jones with the latest former GWR Thorneycroft lorry to arrive. FRANK DUMBLETON

The two Thorneycroft lorries in the garage at the centre. FRANK DUMBLETON

Most of the vehicles are housed in a fabric-covered building known as the hangar.

The wooden floor at the centre of the hangar is segments of the centres of Mansell wooden wheels, used in the 19th century for carriages, mainly first and second class because they were supposed to give a quieter and smoother ride than all-steel wheels. When the wheels went out of use in the early 20th century, presumably for safety reasons with increased speeds, the segments were recycled for the floor of a carriage shed at Old Oak Common. That shed was demolished at the beginning of this century to make way for Elizabeth line works and the wooden segments were offered to Didcot, where they have been recycled again for a third life.

Celebrating a 'last' in this year of the first

By Robin Jones

THE centenary of the opening of the last standard gauge steam-operated branch line to be built in England was celebrated with the presentation of a plaque on July 27.

Running from Torrington to Halwill Junction, the North Devon & Cornwall Junction Light Railway was intended to connect towns in north Devon with the lines from Okehampton to Bude, Launceston, Wadebridge and Padstow. It opened in 1925, 100 years after the historic first modern train run on the Stockton & Darlington Joint Railway.

The route incorporated that of the narrow gauge Torrington & Marland Railway, built to serve the area's ball clay workings at Meeth and Marland.

Its construction was partly government-funded in a bid to provide employment in a depressed economy following the end of the First World War, and it was the last project to be completed by the well-known light railway promoter Lt Colonel Holman Fred Stephens, who engineered the route and obtained the necessary Light Railway Order authorising construction.

He subsequently stepped in to complete the construction after the principal contractor went into administration and then served as the first managing director of the railway company.

A short life

The line remained legally independent until Nationalisation in 1948, although the trains were operated by the Southern Railway from the outset. The railway operated for only 40 years before closure by BR, although freight continued on part of the line until 1982. Much of the route is now part of the Tarka Trail long-distance footpath and cycle track.

Above: The centenary plaque for Torrington. CHRIS JACKSON

Left: The plaque being presented to Doug Smith in front of the Colonel Stephens Society stand by Chris Jackson. MATTHEW GOLTON

To mark the centenary, the Tarka Valley Railway CIC, which is working to develop a heritage railway and has a short running line at Torrington station which it hopes to expand, hosted a gala weekend, with historical artefacts on display including the headboard from the last train in 1965, alongside several stalls for local charities.

Regular train services were operated on the short line using preserved Class 143 'Pacer' DMU No. 143617.

Above: The headboard for the last BR passenger service in 1965. MATTHEW GOLTON

Left: Class 143 'Pacer' No. 143617 in service at Torrington station on July 27 carrying a Railway 200 plaque. CHRIS JACKSON

Plaque presentation

Two committee members of the Colonel Stephens Society manned an information stall; the society commissioned the commemorative plaque to be displayed at the station.

The plaque was presented to Coun Doug Smith, of Torridge District Council, a former mayor of Torrington and current TVR chairman, by the society's Chris Jackson, who also edits it magazine, *The Colonel*, and curator of the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum based at the Kent & East Sussex Railway in Tenterden. He was accompanied by society secretary John Ball.

Gartell staff member injured after alighting from moving train

THE Rail Accident Investigation Branch has issued a Safety Digest after a Gartell Light Railway staff member sustained serious injuries when he tried to get off a low-speed maintenance train.

The incident occurred on Thursday, April 17, at about 9.35am, when the 2ft gauge line was closed to the public and the diesel-propelled three-wagon train was heading to a worksite at Common Lane level crossing.

The two leading wagons carried materials, tools and equipment for a maintenance task. Next to the locomotive was a well wagon regularly used to convey volunteer staff, which was carrying five people at the time.

Witnesses stated that the train was moving slowly and was slowing down in readiness to stop. The volunteer seated on the leading end of the well wagon alighted from the train to open the crossing gate. As he did so, the boot caught on either a track fixing or signalling equipment, dragging a leg under the wagon's leading left-hand wheel.

When the other volunteers heard the injured person shout, they immediately alighted and instructed the train driver to reverse to release the his leg. As the train did so, the leading bogie of the incident wagon fully derailed.

Operating rules are contained within the GLR's Rule Book, in which one states 'you must not get off a moving rail vehicle'. As there is no qualification on this requirement regarding train speed, it applies however slowly a train may be moving.

An RAIB statement said: "This accident demonstrates the importance to heritage railways of using appropriate vehicles to transport staff, staff not boarding or alighting from moving trains in circumstances where it is prohibited by rules and operating procedures, and staff continuing to work in accordance with rules and operating procedures when the railway is not open to the public.

"The accident is also a reminder that regardless of the size of the vehicles or the track gauge involved, there is the potential for serious injury when working with trains."

The wagon showing derailed leading bogie and signalling equipment fitted between the rails. RAIB

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Mid-Hants 'Sprints' into the 1980s following 'modern' DMU acquisition

By Owen Hayward

HERITAGE classification is constantly changing, with what was classed a modern DMU in the 1980s becoming the latest traction to join the Mid-Hants Railway stock list after it announced the acquisition of a Class 150 'Sprinter' as it looks to improve its service offering, while simultaneously showcasing another part of the railway story.

The announcement came at the start of The Greatest Gathering in Derby (see feature, pages 44-49), where unit No. 150231, which has been donated to the railway by Porterbrook, was displayed, having been freshly turned out in its original 1987 livery. It is the first of its type to enter preservation and the latest from BR's second generation of DMU to do so, with various designs of 'Pacers' already present at a number of lines. The Great Central Railway also houses two Class 153 units, although these are part of a main line crew training scheme and not normally employed on public services.

Class 150 DMU No. 150231 on display at Alstom's Litchurch Lane depot in Derby for The Greatest Gathering. The Mid-Hants Railway is looking to use it offer a better service for those starting their visit via the main line interchange at Alton. MHR

Fleet replacement

By the beginning of the 1980s, BR began replacing its fleet of first-generation DMUs from late 1950s and 1960s as the cost of the extensive refurbishment that the aging fleet required was considered uneconomical.

For the second generation, BR looked at two styles of trains, one being the lightweight four-wheeled railbus style 'Pacer' type, which predominantly used bus technology, while the second was a more substantial DMU that could operate longer-distance services and relied on longer-bogied vehicles. The latter were branded as the 'Sprinters' and consisted of Classes 150, 153, 155, 156, and 158. The biggest obvious change was the move away from traditional slam doors to the now common power sliding doors.

The Class 150 were built at York in 1984-87 by British Rail Engineering Ltd, using the same steel bodyshell as the Southern Region Class 455 EMUs, with a total of 137 units constructed. Each coach is equipped with a six-cylinder 286hp Cummins four-stroke diesel engine, driving a Voith transmission, giving the units a top speed of 75mph.

The Class 150s were built into three specific batches which became sub-classes (150/0, 150/1 and 150/2), with the 150/2s standing out by having end gangways for use on longer-distance services where two units could be coupled together. Examples of the class can still be found in use with Transport For Wales, Northern Trains and First Great Western, although they are gradually being phased out as newer stock is introduced.

No. 150231 was delivered new to Newton Heath depot, Manchester, in February 1987, passing to Regional Railways Central in 1992 under BR sectorisation. In 1994 it was transferred to BR Anglia (Norwich) for regional services and that September was named *King Edmund* at Bury St Edmunds station. Apart from a spell with Silverlink Trains in April 2004, the unit remained at Norwich until May 2005, when it moved to Central Trains and then onto Arriva Trains Wales in November 2007.

No. 150231's last working was the 6.35pm Shrewsbury to Swansea service on Wednesday, July 9, before it returned empty Swansea to Cardiff Canton Depot. On July 17, it moved by rail to Litchurch Lane for The Greatest Gathering, prior to which it was vinyl-wrapped to mask its final corporate colours with the livery it wore at its entry into service.

Fittingly for the MHR's acquisition of the unit, if the line had not been closed in 1973, the Class 205 'Hampshire Unit' DEMUs would have eventually been replaced with more modern traction that may have included a Class 150. The arrival of the unit will enable the MHR to offer an earlier departure from Alton to meet main line connections than the current 11.50am steam service run on most operating days.

Perfect opportunity

Watercress Line CEO Rebecca Dalley said: "Since our previous multiple unit, the Class 205 'Hampshire Unit', came out of service in 2004, we have been looking out for an opportunity to fill in the service for our visitors from the Alton and London end of the Watercress Line. We hope to start restoration of the 1959 Class 205 to be our mainstay for the Alton service, with this Class 150 in support."

Porterbrook chief investment officer Stefan Rose said: "The Watercress Line is a fitting new home for this Class 150 unit that has served communities reliably for decades. We are proud that this train will continue to be enjoyed by the public and play a role in educating future generations about the UK's railway heritage."

The Class 150 will arrive in Hampshire for operational induction and training at the end of the summer holidays and is expected to enter service later in the year.

Hull Trains helping to look after the smaller side

MAIN LINE operator Hull Trains is supporting a miniature railway which runs through the grounds of a National Trust property.

The 500-yard 7¼in gauge line at Lincolnshire's Belton Estate, which has drawn visitors for more than 20 years, has launched an appeal for a significant upgrade to make it bigger, more accessible, and to power it by electric locomotives for the first time instead of diesel.

Hull Trains, which serves nearby Grantham station, was part of the inspiration for the upgrade, with its state-of-the-art bi-mode trains which are powered by electricity when it's available on their route. It secured the services of legendary Yorkshire broadcaster and meteorologist Jon Mitchell to create a video to raise awareness of a fundraising drive for the upgrade.

The video can be accessed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxrnSYhIlwo and shows Jon exploring the estate's 1300-acre deer park, historic house, quaint café, and the National Trust's largest outdoor playground.

The two trains currently in operation are prone to breakdowns, with a new electric model vital to ensure that future generations can enjoy the attraction.

Jon said: "Thank-you to Hull Trains for asking me to help it shine a spotlight on this fundraising drive. I'd urge people to donate what they can or simply share the video we've made to spread the word!"

The two trains currently in operation on the Belton Light Railway are prone to breakdowns, with a new electric model vital to ensuring that future generations can enjoy the attraction. KARL ANDRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Paul Jackson, head of customer and stakeholder engagement at Hull Trains, said: "We are really proud to support the communities we serve on a daily basis. Sustainability and accessibility are two things we are very passionate about at Hull Trains.

"When we heard that Belton Estate was in need of support with its new miniature railway, we were keen to do something a little different to help, as well as making a donation."

Visitors can donate £5 towards the new locomotive by texting Belton to 70525 or contribute in person at the estate's Info Hub or trainshed.

To find out more about the estate, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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Above: Two enthusiastic passengers enjoy the Prosecco on offer during their Spa Valley Railway journey between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge. PENNINGTON PR/DARRYL CURCHER

Left: Public favourite: Caledonian Railway No. 828 heads a four-coach Spa Valley Railway Eridge-Tunbridge Wells West train at Lealands, near Groombridge. ANDREW SHAPLAND

Varied menu as Spa Valley welcomes autumn

By Geoff Courtney

A MENU of cream teas, fish and chips, and a selection of local cheeses and gin is being dished up on Spa Valley Railway services as the rays of summer turn into autumnal hues.

Afternoon teas will be available on steam-hauled return trips from Tunbridge Wells West to Eridge on September 6 and five dates in October, while cream teas for two with a bottle of Prosecco will be served on September 7 and 14, and on September 13 and on three dates in October a selection of local cheeses will be on offer.

That quintessential English dish of fish and chips will be the on-board lunch offering on September 13 and 20, and the taste buds of gin lovers will be tempted on September 27 and October 11 by three different locally distilled gins and also the appearance of an occasional guest gin.

Although the motive power has yet to be rostered, the railway's steam mainstay is 1899-built Caledonian Railway 812 class 0-6-0 No. 828 (BR No. 57566), which is on long-term loan from the Strathspey Railway.

Jonnie Pay, the heritage line's general manager, said: "We have endeavoured to cover as many food and drink favourites as possible with our summer and early autumn on-board offers, and I'm delighted to report they have gone down – literally – very well.

"There is intense competition for the public's attention while our overheads are ever-increasing, so simply running trains without the occasional added attraction is out of the question. Heritage lines today must be innovative, welcoming and alert to today's public expectations. It's a challenge, but we are up for it."

Jonnie said that he expected No. 828 would feature regularly in the autumn locomotive schedule, in addition to fellow Spa Valley resident SR Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park*.

"No. 828 is a really attractive steam locomotive and has become a firm favourite with passengers, footplate crews and indeed everyone," he added.

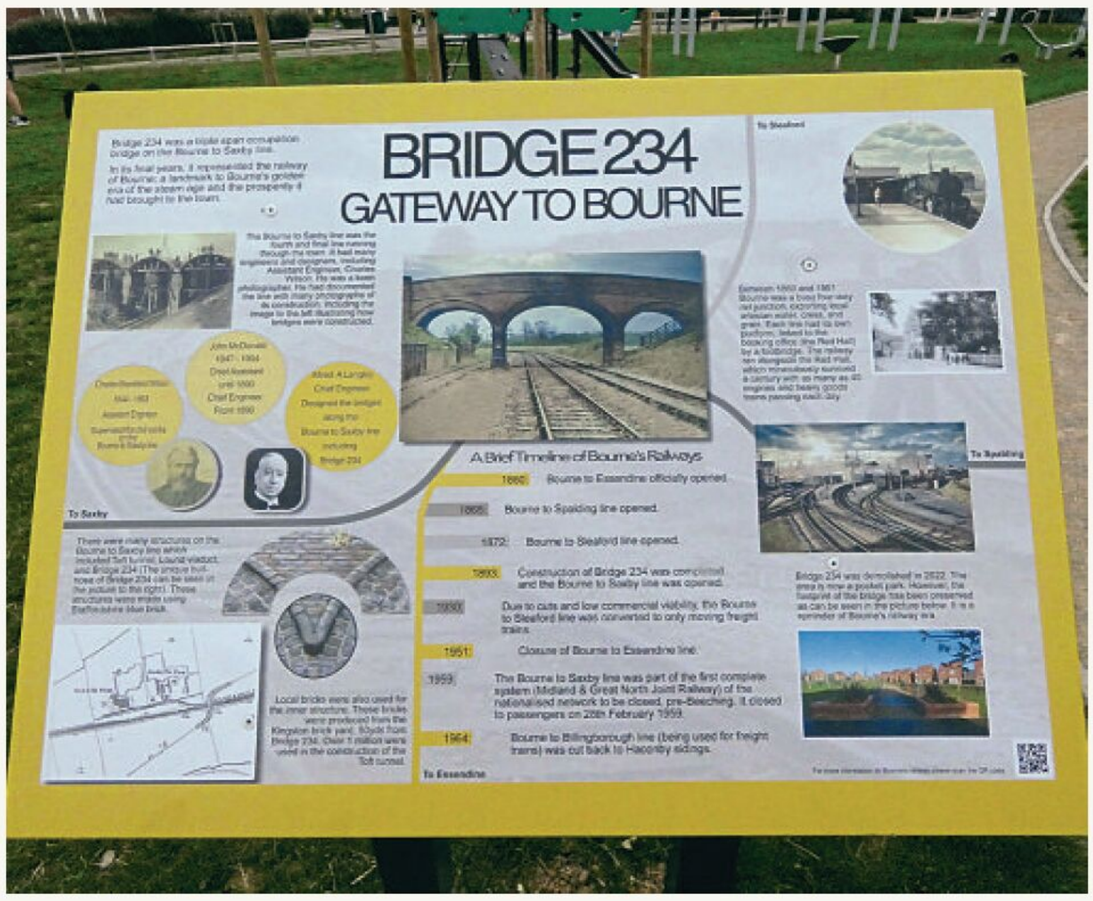
Youngest guard on Buzzrail – and possibly in the country!

LEIGHTON Buzzard Railway volunteer of several years Jack Palmer, who turned 18 in May, has become the youngest full guard that the railway has ever had. Passing his guard's assessment with flying colours on July 31, Jack is also possibly one of the youngest qualified heritage railway guards in the UK.

His family have been part of the LBR for generations, including his parents and grandparents, one of whom still runs the craft shop at the Stonehenge Works terminus, and Jack has been attending the railway since he was just two years old. He began assistant guard training as soon as he turned 16, and declared he was ready to take his test almost before the candles were blown out on his 18th birthday cake!

The railway recently founded its Junior Railway Club, a volunteer-led group encouraging young people to get involved, passing on skills and knowledge for future generations, and helping to forge career aspirations in both employment and volunteering.

Left: Newly-qualified Leighton Buzzard Railway guard Jack Palmer. TIM PARSONS



Housebuilder Bellway Homes has, as agreed, installed an information board marking the site of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway's Bridge 234 in Bourne, Lincolnshire, which it demolished on August 3, 2022, after campaigners including Bourne History Group members lost their bid to save it. The board, situated in a play area in the Abbey View development in the town's Elsea Park housing estate on the site of the bridge, outlines the history of the structure which was completed in 1893 as a crossing of the Bourne to Saxby line using bricks baked from material extracted from an adjacent clay pit, several of which have been saved by the campaigners for potential reuse. ROBIN JONES

Little engines provide big entertainment at Amberley

By Geoff Courtney

THEY may be small in stature, but three diminutive 0-4-0 saddle tanks provided big entertainment to families and enthusiasts alike at Amberley working museum's annual rail gala on July 19/20.

The trio comprised 1918-built Bagnall *Peter*, a long-time resident at the West Sussex visitor attraction, and two guest locomotives, *Woto*, a fellow Bagnall dating from 1924, and the youngster of the pack, *Jennie*, a replica of the Kerr Stuart Wren class constructed by Hunslet Engine Co in 2008.

Left: Ready for duty, the driver of 0-4-0ST *Jennie* awaits his next turn at Amberley Museum's rail gala on July 19/20. AMBERLEY MUSEUM

Mix of ages

Woto was built by Bagnall for operating on the Callender Cable Co's 3ft 6in gauge internal railway near Erith, Kent. It cost £875, and its distinctive name was derived from the initials of the company's founder, William Ormiston, and his son Thomas Octavious. On withdrawal in 1968, it was saved for preservation, regauged to 2ft, and is now a resident of the Apedale Valley Light Railway, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, in Staffordshire.

At 17 years of age, *Jennie* is a mere youngster in comparison to 101-year-old *Woto,* but as a faithful replica of the Kerr Stuart & Co Wren class, its design origins can be traced back to 1903. This 0-4-0ST is also a Staffordshire resident, being a member of the Amerton Railway stable.

In addition to this trio operating public rides on Amberley's 2ft gauge line, which has three stations, attractions at the gala included demonstration freight trains and model railway displays, while the museum's Grade II-listed former LBSCR Billingshurst signalbox was also open throughout the weekend.

Right: Working centenarian: *Woto*, a 101-year-old 0-4-0ST, defies its age at Amberley Museum's annual rail gala on July 19/20. AMBERLEY MUSEUM

Living history

Marketing officer Joe Meacher said: "The gala blended heritage locomotive operation with model railway artistry, and the synergy of *Woto* and *Jennie* with *Peter* provided a compelling narrative of industrial locomotive evolution that offered an experience of living industrial railway history. The railway came alive."

Amberley is a heritage transport and crafts working museum near Arundel in a 36-acre former quarry and includes among its exhibits a collection of more than 30 steam, diesel, petrol and battery-driven locomotives in 13 gauges from 1ft 6in to 5ft 3in.

'Rocket' replica in miniature: pioneer copy built at waterworks line for Railway 200

A WORKING 'copy' of Stephenson's *Rocket* has been built from scratch by volunteers at the Hampton Kempton Waterworks Railway to celebrate Railway 200.

The replica is the 2ft gauge Middlesex line's Hunslet 4wDH No.9357 of 1995 No. 52 *Spelthorne* in disguise, created using reclaimed wood and metal. A three-man team led by former BBC set and production designer Roger Harris turned the diesel's rectangular base into a cylindrical shape, imitating the motion of Rocket's pistons and driving wheels, and creating smoke effects.

Most of the budget went on yellow paint, and even the barrel was obtained free via Gumtree.

A shortened version of *Rocket*'s chimney was created so that the locomotive could fit beneath trees on the line.

The 'new' *Rocket* featured in the line's Railway 200 family fun weekend on August 16/17 and was set to appear in another on September 16/17.

The Hampton Kempton Waterworks Railway's version of Stephenson's *Rocket*. HKWR

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Wartime Drewry relaunched on Derwent Valley

Words and pictures by Sally Clifford

DIGNITARIES and special guests gathered at Murton Park station on the Derwent Valley Light Railway for the launch of a former War Department locomotive into service.

It was a year since guests gathered on the platform for the official unveiling of Drewry 0-4-0DM DC2164's nameplate in memory of the late York Normandy veteran Ken Smith by his widow Gloria, accompanied by Ken Cooke, the surviving member of the York Normandy Veterans Association.

In similar proceedings on July 27, RAF veteran Bryan Airlie read Kohima Epitaph and the eulogy, and bugler David Ventress played the Last Post and Reveille.

Two minutes' silence was observed, and a wreath was laid on DC2164 by Gloria and Ken, accompanied by event organiser Nick Beilby, chairman of York Area Group of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and life member of the Derwent Valley Light Railway, and Warrant Officer Class 2 Reggie Perrin, from headquarters York Garrison.

Welcoming the invited guests, Nick said: "It is almost a year since many of us stood here for the dedication of this loco. One year on, following work by the DVLR, the loco has been equipped so it can work passenger trains with vacuum brakes, and this evening will be its official launch into passenger traffic."

Flags in commemoration

The surprise presentation included the flag of the Yorkshire Regiment (incorporating Ken's regiment, The Green Howards), and a slate plaque made by John Pletts, former member of The Green Howards and an instructor to the York Cadet Force, commemorating Ken's centenary in August from York Cadet Eddie Pletts, who, along with fellow cadets, formed a guard of honour along the platform during the ceremony. A pair of socks – in reference to Ken's comment about his wet socks when coming ashore on Gold Beach on D-Day – proved to be an emotional moment.

Drewery Car Company 0-4-0DM No. DC2164, officially launched into passenger service on the Derwent Valley Light Railway.

During the ceremony, Nick and Craig Benton, managing director of Murton Park, also paid tribute to the railway's former archivist and author Jonathan Stockwell.

Jonathan's son, Stuart, unveiled a special plaque on the station building in his father's memory.

Afterwards, driver Edward Fisk, who was involved in the locomotive restoration, transported special guests along the half-mile line in a formation comprising DC2164, Ruston & Hornsby 88DS 4wDM No. 441934 of 1960 Rowntree & Co Ltd No 3, BR brake van No. B951144 and the DVLR observation coach.

DC2164 was originally given Ministry of Defence Works No 37 and shipped to the Middle East, spending time during the Second World War in the military department in Egypt.

While it did not do much work, primarily due to its small size for what was required, its sisters were used in places like Cherbourg.

In 1947, it was returned to the MoD depot at Kings Norton, Birmingham, and sold the following year to Shell-Mex at Trafford Park, Manchester, staying there until 1964 when it moved BP at Saltend near Hull.

In 1984, it was donated to the York Area Group of the NYMR by BP. Until about 1995, it was used by the line's permanent way department until mechanical failure saw it taken out of service, and four years ago it arrived at the DVLR.

Team resotration

A full mechanical assessment was carried out by Richard Gibbon OBE, former head of engineering at the National Railway Museum, and Tony Simons. Richard and Tony were among the team, including Jim Wright and Edward Fisk, who undertook the restoration.

DC2164 has been repainted in Middle East green livery, which it would have carried during its service overseas. It is dedicated to the memory of those who served in the region during the Second World War.

Special nameplates were cast for the locomotive commemorating the York Normandy Veterans Association and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, for which Ken Smith served. He spent some of his time serving in the Middle East.

York Normandy veteran Ken Cooke and Ken Smith's widow, Gloria Smith, attending the special launch ceremony.

WO2 Reggie Perrin, from HQ York Garrison, with event organiser Nick Beilby and RAF Veteran Bryan Airlie during the launch.

Reunification progress at borehole stage!

THE literally ground-breaking scheme to relink the two heritage era Great Central railways to create an 18-mile heritage line as a national attraction has taken a major step forward – with sample pits and boreholes up to 100 feet deep dug along the course of the planned connecting embankment.

Fresh from the granting of planning consent which will allow the GCR to go ahead with the work, contractors moved on to the site for the ground investigation programme north of Loughborough station to carry out three weeks of work, with the soil samples being analysed.

The work is being led by internationally renowned railway bridge specialist Cass Hayward.

Richard Clough, partner at Cass Hayward, said: "The ground investigation is logged, and we use it to determine how strong the ground is to help us design the foundations.

"The samples are tested in a lab, and it all helps to give us a picture of how the ground is likely to behave.

"The more we know, the fewer surprises and less risk, and the cost is likely to be better for everybody."

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "This is the next essential step on the road to reunification. We have an outline design of the new embankment, urban viaduct and bridge required, but until we know what's under the ground we can't arrive at a final design. In turn, this will allow us to ascertain a final cost for the project."

Andy Fillingham, of GCR (Nottingham), said: "We have had so much support from people living locally, nationally, and around the world.

"There was a flurry of donations after the news about planning consent came through, and we know people will be excited to see orange jackets back on site! It's now down to raising the money, so we hope people will consider a contribution at www.gcrailway.co.uk/unify – because every pound helps push this project forward."

The project already has £2.5 million banked for the project, but the final cost is expected to be in the tens of millions. You can see the work in progress on the GCR YouTube channel GCROfficial.

Ground investigation work underway in July for the Great Central Railway Reunification project. In the background is the new Midland Main Line bridge, which is part of the project; the new line will travel on a bridge over the car park to the immediate south of it. GCR

Discover how Ironbridge paved the way for the railway revolution

By Robin Jones

THE Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust has created a new multi-site trail and displays of rail-related monuments and objects from its collections to celebrate Railway 200.

For Making Tracks: Celebrating 200 Years of the Modern Railway, specialist artefacts from its collection are being displayed at seven of the trust's museums – Blists Hill Victorian Town, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Coalport China Museum, Enginuity, Jackfield Tile Museum, the Museum of the Gorge and the Old Furnace – until December 31.

The Ironbridge Gorge UNESCO World Heritage Site is widely regarded as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, where Abraham Darby I perfected the technique of using coke instead of charcoal to smelt iron ore, laying the path to large-scale manufacturing and engineering feats. These included the construction of the world's first iron bridge in 1779 and ultimately the development of rail transport.

The trust's collection is designated by Arts Council England in recognition of its national importance.

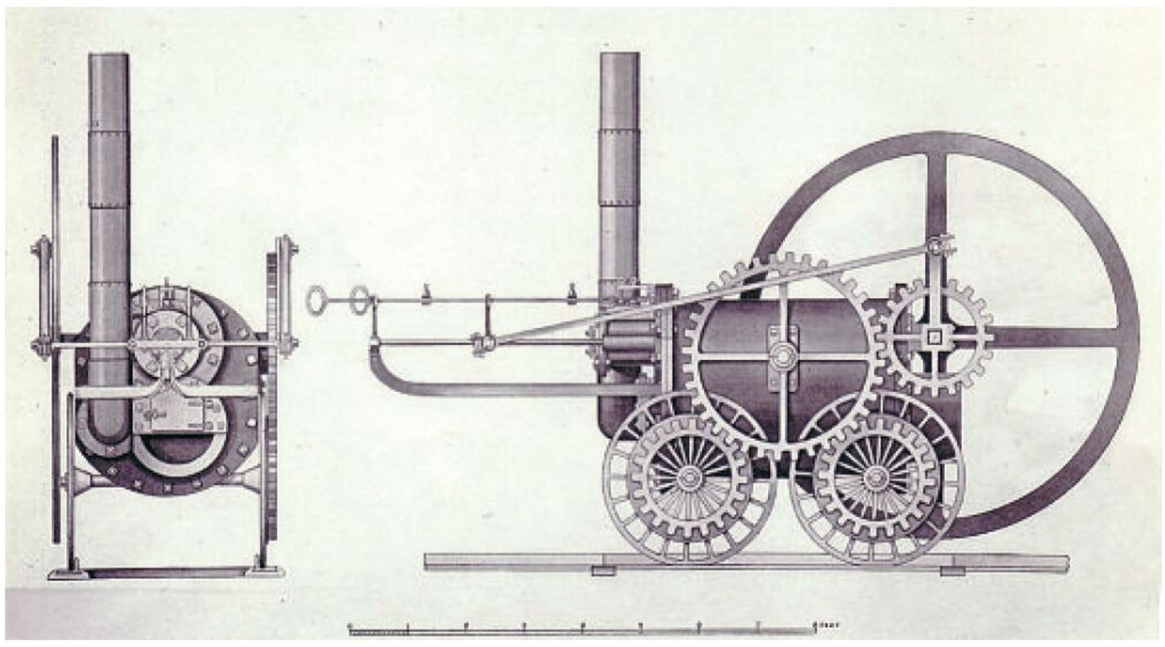
Artefacts on display range from satirical prints from the Elton Collection, a unique record of historical artistic and architectural depictions of railways, to a decorative vanity set inspired by a train reflecting Railway Mania and how trains slowly but surely impacted on all aspects of everyday life.

They include a reconstruction of Covent Garden Underground station at Jackfield Tile Museum, showcasing the role of decorative ceramics in railway heritage, and a GWR commemorative plate made by Coalport Chinaworks in 1835 celebrating Isambard Kingdom Brunel's 'masterpiece.'

Rail development

By the early 18th century, Coalbrookdale had wooden wagonways used for transporting coal that were gradually being replaced with cast-iron plateways, and in 1767 the Coalbrookdale Company cast the first iron rails, itself a landmark leap step toward the modern railway system.

Ironbridge's contributions to rail also extended to locomotive development. In 1802, Cornish mining engineer Richard Trevithick, a British engineer and inventor, took his ideas for a high-pressure steam locomotive to the Coalbrookdale Company. His prototype laid the groundwork for the steam engines that would power Britain's expanding railway network, while the advancements in iron production and early rail technology at Ironbridge helped set the stage for the railway boom of the 19th century, transforming industry, trade and transportation in Britain and beyond.



Trevithick's pioneer steam locomotive, said to have been built in Coalbrookdale. The only known information about it is this drawing preserved in the Science Museum and a letter which the inventor wrote to his friend Davies Giddy. SCIENCE MUSEUM

Kyla Hislop, the trust's acting head of interpretation at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, said: "We are delighted to be taking part in the nationwide celebrations of 200 years of modern rail.

"Entrepreneurs in the Ironbridge Gorge had a big impact on the technological advances that made the development of rail travel possible. Through the collections in our museums, we can help tell the story of the social history of rail travel and the impact rail travel had on people's lives.

"The trail will offer fascinating new insights into how Ironbridge shaped the development of the railway, and how in turn the railways impacted the Gorge and the wider world, giving visitors a unique look at an often-overlooked chapter of our industrial past."

Passport trail

A trust Railway 200 Visitor Passport has been designed to guide visitors, in particular children, between the different artefacts and sites.

Holders can get their passport stamped at the sites where the objects are located, with activities that will help them uncover stories about the railways.

The display is free with museum entrance tickets.

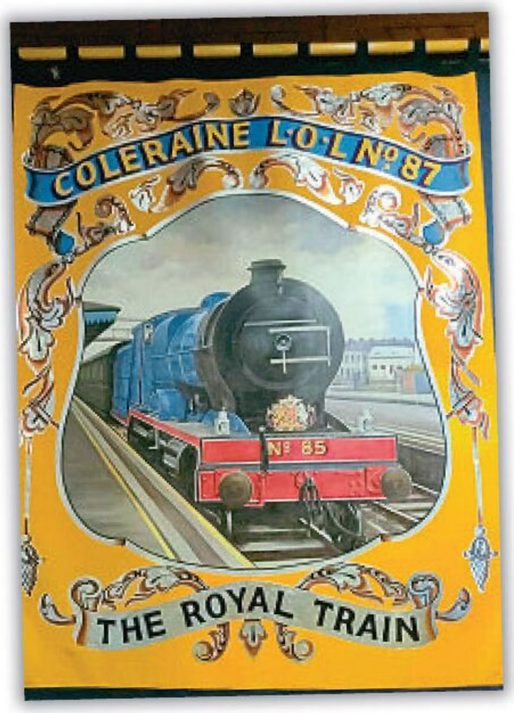
Merlin gets carried banner high on Orange Lodge march

GREAT Northern Railway of Ireland 4-4-0 No. 85 *Merlin* is being carried banner high every time Coleraine's Loyal Orange Lodge 87 takes to the streets on a march.

This is because the lodge, which has traditionally welcomed local railway staff into its membership, has placed an image of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland compound on its banner, showing the Beyer Peacock-built loco of 1932 on the Royal Train. The banner was ceremoniously unfurled at the start of the summer marching season in July.

A lodge spokesman said: "We wanted to show the Royal Train of June 28, 2016, when No. 85 conveyed the late Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh from our home in Coleraine, to Bellarena, where the queen officially opened the new station.

"It's also a reminder that the late queen and Duke of Edinburgh travelled by royal steam train in 1953, again through Coleraine on their post-coronation visit to Northern Ireland, while we have traditionally been a railway-based lodge."



The new Orange banner showing number 85 on the Royal Train at Coleraine. LOL 87

The real *Merlin* on the Royal Train at Coleraine on June 28, 2016. RPSI

The depiction of a GNR(I) 4-4-0 on an Orange banner is not new. In about 1930, the Great Northern True Blues, a Belfast, Sandy Row lodge formed by GNR staff at nearby Great Victoria Street station, had a banner showing an S class at the head of the Royal Train during a visit to Belfast in 1903. No. 85, however, is the first preserved locomotive to be so honoured.

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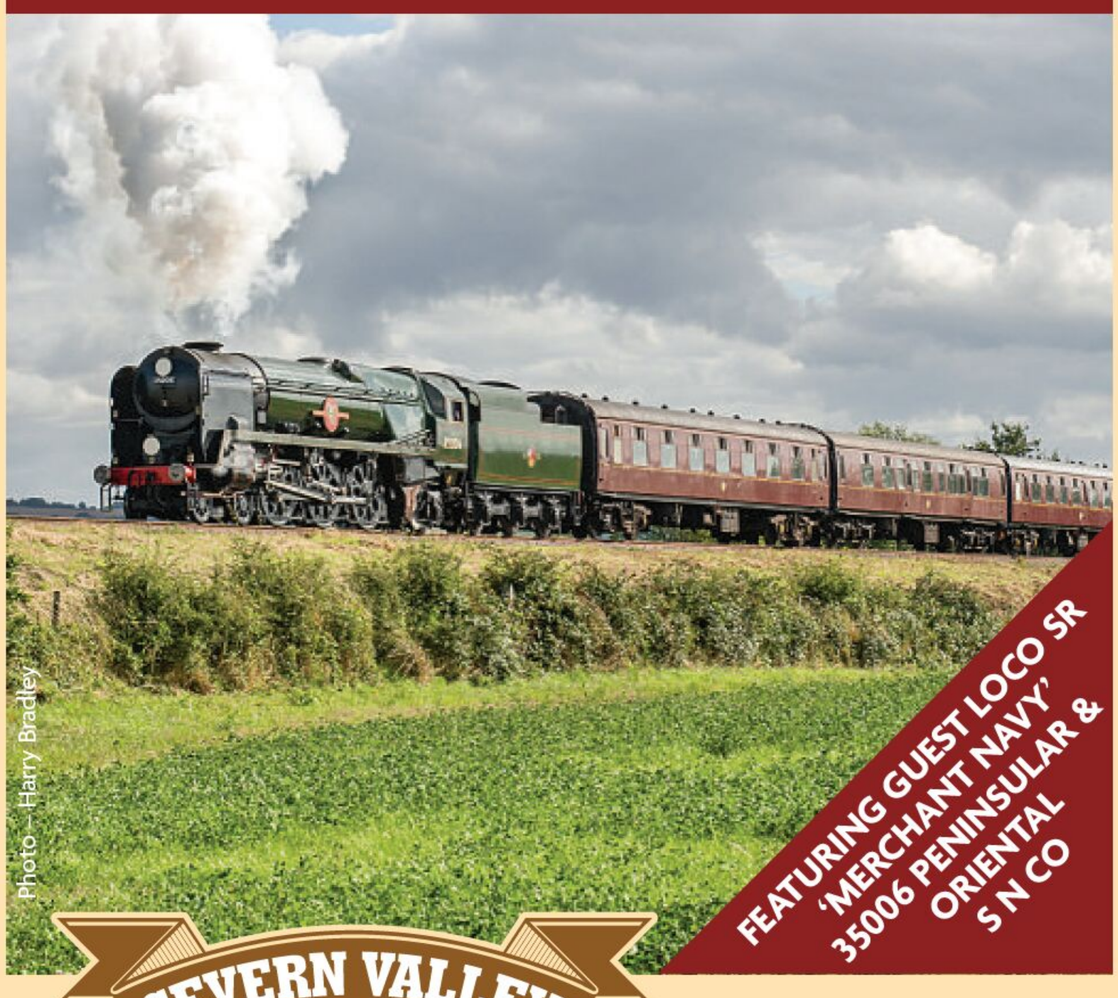

Photo – Harry Bradley

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WORTH VALLEY

SR DEMU's relocation sees KESR gain a 'Thumper' unit!

By Owen Hayward

PREPARATIONS for operations across the upcoming relinking of the Kent & East Sussex Railway with the Rother Valley Railway at Robertsbridge have seen a Class 205 'Thumper' DEMU turn from gala guest to resident.

Having arrived on June 5 from the Lavender Line as Isfield, No. 1118 was only due to star at the KESR's July 18-20 diesel gala, where it ran alongside visiting Class 50 No. 50017 (from the Great Central Railway), Class 14 D9551 (from the Severn Valley Railway) and Class 73 E6040, which is named after its home at the Bluebell Railway. However, with thoughts in mind about the service pattern the railway will need to run when relinked in future, negotiations were held with the unit's owner to discuss the possibility of the DEMU remaining based there for the long term. On August 11, a message to KESR members confirmed that No. 1118 would indeed be taking up residence in the Weald.

Unit No. 1118 was built at Eastleigh Works in 1957 and was the final of the Class 205 DEMUs of the first batch constructed for use on BR's Southern Region, originally entering service as a two-car formation but gaining centre trailers between 1958 and 1969.

The preserved formation comprises driving motor brake No. 60117 and driving trailer composite No. 60828. Both vehicles ran with centre trailer No. 60674 in service, though this

KESR diesel gala organiser George Harman (left) with Nigel Remmington, owner of No. 1118. ROBIN COOMBES

was scrapped after the unit was withdrawn, with the two driving ends entering preservation at the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway in South Wales in June 2005. Sold in 2013 and moved to the West Somerset Railway, they were restored at Williton and moved to enter service at the Dartmoor Railway by 2015.

Following a brief return to the WSR for a repaint, No. 1118 arrived on the Lavender Line in September 2016, where it joined four other Class 205 vehicles, including two operational examples that form unit No. 1133.

Future resilience

The agreement between the KESR and owner Nigel Remmington for No. 1118 is part of the railway's ongoing objective to strengthen service resilience, particularly during periods of potential fire risk in the summer months. It also forms part

Thumper No. 1118 has joined the KESR's resident fleet on long-term loan, offering resilience for future services including the eventual relinking with Robertsbridge. THE SR unit will offer an alternative option to the KESR's already resident Class 108 DMU (right). ROBIN COOMBES/KESR

of the KESR's longer-term strategy of preparing for the line reopening to Robertsbridge, which will involve additional shuttles between Robertsbridge, Bodiam and Northiam to augment regular steam services to and from Tenterden.

In preparation for the gala, the Thumper first underwent some minor repairs and received a repaint, expertly undertaken by the team at Tenterden.

It will be seen out and about on the line operating some services as part of the necessary training for drivers and guards, with a full integration into services planned to take place next year.

"We are extremely grateful to Nigel for agreeing to an arrangement that enables Thumper No. 1118 to become part of our regular home fleet," said the K&ESR chairman Derrick Bilsby. "As one of the first of its class to be built in 1957, No. 1118 has huge significance in diesel heritage. Had the railway survived as part of the national rail network, it is undoubtedly one of the units that would have been a regular sight here in the Weald due to the proximity of the St Leonards depot. It was also one of the last units to operate the Ashford-Hastings line.

"We look forward to the Thumper being part of a bright future here at the K&ESR."

Royal visit for repatriated Castle at Didcot Railway Centre

PRINCE Richard, Duke of Gloucester, visited Didcot Railway Centre at the conclusion of a day-long tour of Oxfordshire on July 24 and boarded the footplate of repatriated GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* for a short trip along demonstration line.

His tour included stops at the University of Oxford's vaccine research labs and the Bee House at Milton Park.

A patron on the Severn Valley Railway, the duke, first cousin to the late Queen Elizabeth II, was welcomed to the centre by Great Western Society members who spoke to him about the educational work the railway centre undertakes, including its school outreach and interpretive displays linking young audiences with the story of steam travel. Long-time volunteer Kevin Dare gave him a guided tour of the site and its extensive collection of locomotives and rolling stock.

➜ **A botanical survey has been carried out at Didcot Railway Centre to improve its green spaces for wildlife and visitor experience. The survey was undertaken in July by a nature group called Wild Oxfordshire, which will use the collected data to help the railway centre come up with ways the site can be enhanced.**

The duke and Tim Part (left), project manager of the Heyford station rebuilding project, on *Pendennis Castle* with Lionel Robbins, Robert Heron, Alan Wiffen and Ian Kinloch, of the Heyford team, in front. As an architect, the duke was particularly interested in the project to rebuild the Brunel-era stone station to form the central feature at Oxford Road station, the terminus of the main demonstration line. FRANK DUMBLETON

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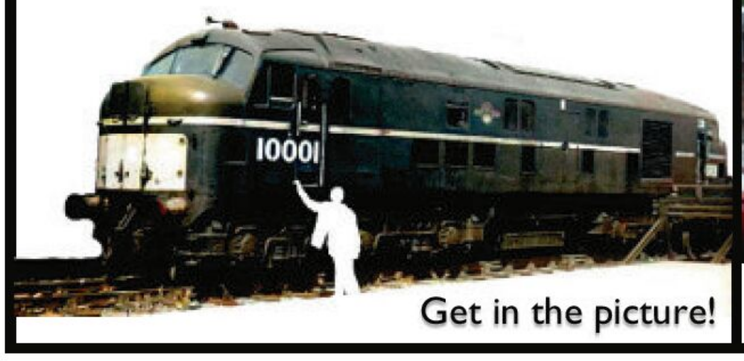

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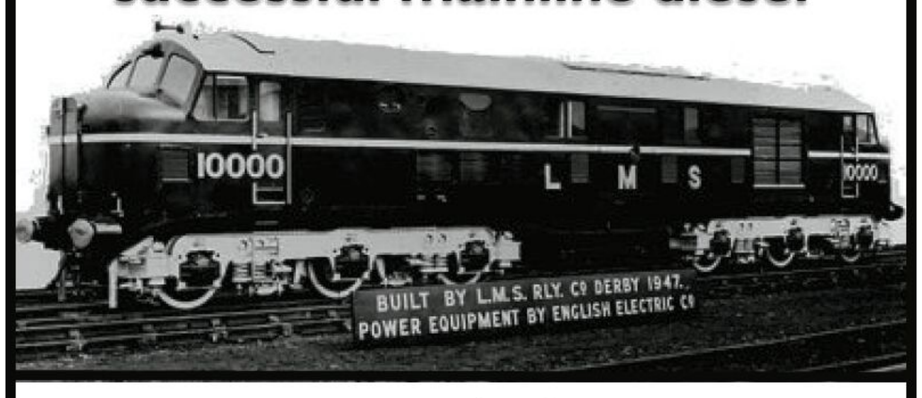

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THE GREATEST GATHERING: A RAILWAY 200 LABYRINTH OF HISTORY AND MARVELS

More than 40,000 visitors, some from as far afield as New Zealand, attended the sell-out three-day Greatest Gathering at Alstom's Litchurch Lane Works in Derby for what has been hailed as the world's largest-ever collection of historic and modern rolling stock – and a pinnacle of the Railway 200 programme proudly celebrating the bicentenary of the world's first modern passenger railway, reports **Robin Jones.**

Phenomenal. Superb. Intriguing. Stupendous. Tremendous. Awesome. We could go on, and on, and on… but for me, no words can truly describe one of the most successful public events in railway history, staged at the UK's biggest train manufacturer Alstom's Litchurch Lane Works in Derby.

During the August 1-3 festival, the first time that the 30-acre works site had opened its doors to the public in nearly 50 years, visitors – some of whom arrived on special charter trains – were afforded the rare glimpse of the interior of a rolling stock factory where, as the result of an unprecedented joint effort by the heritage and main line sectors, more than 140 historic and modern locomotives and vehicles were on display, including A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman*.

Litchurch Lane Works is one of the biggest of its kind in the world and the only UK facility that designs, engineers, builds and tests trains for domestic and export markets. The factory was opened by the Midland Railway in 1876, and Derby has been building trains continually since 1839. Indeed, in 2022, Derby was chosen by the Government as the home of Great British Railways following a vote by the public between contender cities.

Rob Whyte, managing director UK and Ireland at Alstom, said: "Alstom's roots in the UK go right back to 1825, when *Locomotion No. 1* made its historic journey on the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

"Through successive mergers, the locomotive's builder – Robert Stephenson and Company – became part of Alstom in 1989, and we are beyond proud to carry that legacy of ingenuity forward.

"The Greatest Gathering is a once-in-a-generation celebration of Britain's railway heritage and future, and it simply wouldn't have been possible without the extraordinary support of so many. I extend my heartfelt thanks to every Alstom colleague, organisation, rail operator and exhibitor who has helped bring our vision spectacularly to life.

"Together, we have created the world's largest gathering of historic and modern railway vehicles, a truly unforgettable experience for tens of thousands of visitors, alongside those watching online at home."

Opened from 10am to 4pm each day, the sheer variety of the contents of the festival was mesmerising. Handed on entry a splendid 82-page glossy brochure containing colour-illustrated details of all the exhibits, it seemed that at every twist and turn there was another object at close hand, to marvel at, with another fascinating story to relate.

Many visitors arrived early and waited for at least two hours before the 10am opening time. Queues snaked up the length of Litchurch Lane in both directions to Osmaston Road and London Road.

A hoped-for line-up of LNER classes A1-4 didn't quite become a reality. Instead, BR(E) A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* (left) and A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* (right) create a steam sandwich, with LMS 'Jubilee' No. 45596 *Bahamas* at the centre, during a night shoot on August 2. IAN NIGHTINGALE

Steam locomotives on display at Litchurch Lane Works on August 2. TOM MCATEE

The works itself was far more than just a venue; it was not just a backdrop, but a major part of the experience. Visitors could ride along the factory's 1.4km test track in a Derby-built Class 345 Aventra, explore the production shop floors, and visit newly-installed exhibition spaces like the STEM Hub, and interactive space designed to ignite curiosity and ambition and promote careers in rail, engineering, and sustainable transport.

Each day, a packed timetable of talks and performances from famous faces and industry insiders took place in the specially-constructed Mobility Theatre, which also hosted the UK premiere of feature-length documentary An Unlikely Fandom: The Impact of Thomas the Tank Engine on the Saturday. Another workshop hosted the Model Railway Village, with 38 layouts including music mogul Pete Waterman's Making Tracks, plus stands from leading model manufacturers.

The Railway 200 exhibition train, *Inspiration*, curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum, was

Above: The BBC Radio 2 Jeremy Vine show was broadcast live from a Greater Anglia Class 755 unit. On board, the broadcaster interviewed Ken Davis, an Alstom employee who has spent 50 years working on the railway and is the third generation of railway workers in his family. Following the interview, singer-songwriter Bill Ryder-Jones performed a bespoke song about Ken's life and career live on board the 755. Pictured is Jeremy interviewing Alstom's communications director Ben Goodwin and his colleague Yasha Siddiqui. ALSTOM

Above: Former cabinet minister Michael Portillo, presenter of BBC's series Great British Railway Journeys, is filmed for a new documentary before the event opened on August 1. ROBIN JONES

Right: The Railway 200 travelling exhibition train *Inspiration*. ROBIN JONES

open as part of its year-long tour of the UK, highlighting rail's impact over the last two centuries inside a series of redesigned Mk. 3 carriages that were originally built at Litchurch Lane.

Heritage lines and restoration groups set up a multitude of stands around the site, hoping to attract new visitors and members, while fairground attractions, family entertainment, street food and live music also contributed to the festival feel.

On the Saturday, the event featured the world's first Pride parade on a train. Alstom LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies from the UK rail industry marched in a procession across the 90-acre site, the colourful cavalcade being led by a drag performer, pausing for a photoshoot in front of Avanti West Coast's Pendolino No. 390119 *Progress*, the first train in the UK to be fully wrapped in the Pride flag. The procession then continued on to the train itself and moved toward the mile-long test track which curves around the site, before boarding Class 345 Aventra No. 345055, which was designed, engineered, manufactured and tested at Litchurch Lane for the Elizabeth line, and which returned to offer rides for visitors to The Greatest Gathering. The parade was co-ordinated by Journey, a not-for-profit organisation for LGBTQ+ professionals working in the transport sector.

Architects of success

Severn Valley Railway managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, one of the main architects behind The Greatest Gathering, praised former colleague James Dobson, operations delivery manager at Avanti West Coast, who came up with the idea for the landmark event.

Gus said: "The Greatest Gathering was achieved due to the many people and organisations who understood the vision and saw the possibilities for the rail industry in what we were trying to create.

"Thanks to the enormous levels of support and engagement from around the industry, I think we certainly achieved what we set out to do and in particular have hopefully inspired the younger generations to consider a career in railways.

"I'd like to pay a personal tribute to one individual for his foresight, vision, energy, enthusiasm and drive – my co-conspirator and the person who had the initial idea for The Greatest Gathering, James Dobson.

"I first met James in 2014 when he joined Virgin Trains as an apprentice train planner. I was immediately impressed by his breadth of railway knowledge, his self-confidence, his willingness to learn, and his determination to develop himself and to succeed in this industry.

"In every role since, he has absolutely excelled, and I was pleased to be able to create a secondment for James into the control team at Avanti West Coast back in 2021, where his skills in real-time operations, service delivery, people management and leadership quickly shone.

"I have no doubt he will continue onwards and become an outstanding senior leader in the not-too-distant future.

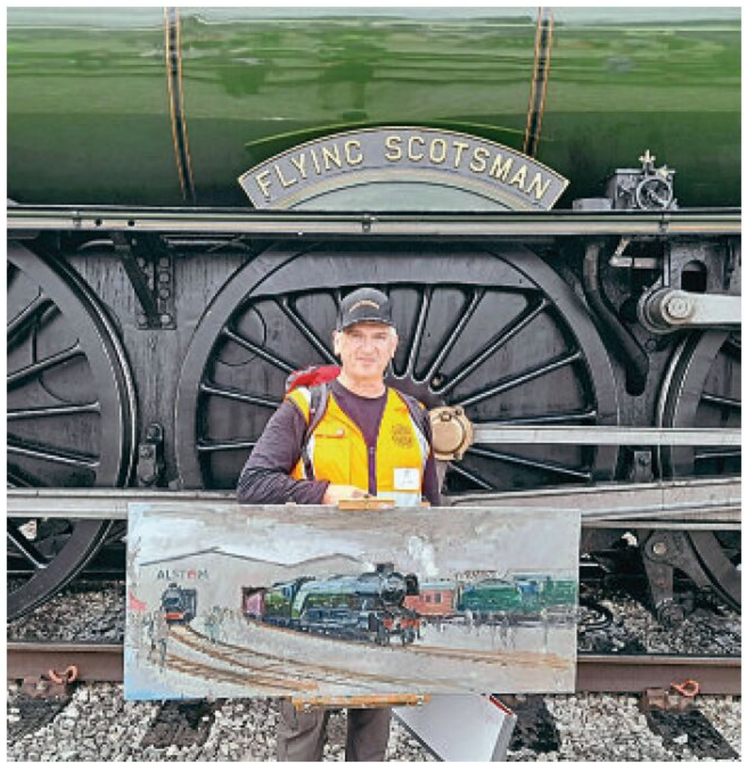
"On a personal level, I have always found James's energy and enthusiasm to be infectious and inspirational in equal measure, and his 'can do' attitude is one of his greatest attributes. He is very difficult to say no to! When James had the initial idea for The Greatest Gathering and asked if I'd assist him organising the event, saying no wasn't really an option!

"I then came away with the first 'action' for the project, which was to secure a suitable venue.

"The past 18 months working together have been inspiring and energising, and although it's been all-consuming at times, it's been great fun. Thank-you, James Dobson, for the opportunity to be part of something really special. It's been a privilege to work alongside you again."

The SVR was the largest single exhibitor, with 21 steam, diesel and experimental

Pete Waterman OBE, who had a layout on display in the event's popular Model Railway Village, meets official artist in residence Tim O'Brien. ALSTOM



Award-winning Nottingham-based artist Tim O'Brien with his newly-completed painting of the A3 *Flying Scotsman*. "I feel very privileged and honoured to be invited by Alstom to be its official artist in residence and capture this bicentennial celebration in art," said Tim. "I have always been a fan of Terence Cuneo's railway art. As a child, I practiced drawing using my Hornby OO gauge steam engines as subjects, so this opportunity is off the scale." ALSTOM

Class 37 No. 37401 and Class 47 No.47739 took part in the after-hours charity evening and night shoot on the Saturday of The Greatest Gathering, organised by Richard Stanton and Jason Cross with the support of Ben Goodwin, from Alstom. CHRIS GEE

The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Preservation Socity's 0-4-0T *Katie*, built by Sir Arthur Heywood in 1896, and usually kept on static display in the museum at Ravenglass, hauled passenger trains on a specially-laid length of 15in gauge track at Litchurch Lane. JOHN TITLOW

High-speed line-up on August 1: Left to right are Eurostar Class 373 power car No. 3999; High Speed Train Class 43 power car No. 43004; Avanti West Coast's Pendolino No. 390119 *Progress*; LNER Class 91 No. 91101 *Flying Scotsman*, *Commemorating 50 years of the National Railway Museum at York* and Class 55 Deltic D9015 *Tulyar*. IAN CASTLEDINE

locomotives and its Class 108 two-car DMU arriving by rail, including five Class 50s Nos. 50007 *Hercules*, 50033 *Glorious*, 50035 *Ark Royal*, 50044 *Exeter* and 50049 *Defiance*, all part of the Class 50 Alliance fleet.

Buzzing with positivity

The Great Gathering has been universally praised as a pinnacle of the Railway 200 year.

Railway 200 programme manager Emma Roberts, from Network Rail's communication teams, said: "The Greatest Gathering has been a wonderful event. It symbolises what Railway 200 is all about – the past, present, and future of rail.

"Seeing families enjoying the experience while learning about our railways was the highlight, and it wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for Railway 200 and the momentum and support built up.

"The positivity was buzzing around Alstom's site, and it showed what can happen when the railway family come together.

"During Railway 200, we wanted to lift the curtain on the rail industry, reaching more young people and inspiring them to consider a career in rail, and this event delivered this opportunity and then some! It will be talked about for years to come and the set the bar high for Railway 250!

"Railway 200 came about because Lord Peter Hendy, while chairman of Network Rail, wanted to make sure the industry used the anniversary to celebrate the past, present, and future of the railways.

"I led the early development of the programme, speaking to the industry to find out what would be a meaningful way to commemorate 200 years of the modern railway, so it all started with a team of two people and a proposal. What followed was a lot of hard work and a huge amount of stakeholder engagement and outreach to make it a reality.

"We decided to take a partnership-led approach so individuals, communities, heritage railways and the rail industry could all contribute under the umbrella of Railway 200. By identifying themes, providing the branding and building a national profile, it gave partners the framework and opportunity to tell their own stories and celebrate their own milestones as part of the anniversary year.

"It's been an amazing year so far of collective pride, celebration, and shared storytelling. It all began on New Year's Day with a global whistle-up of more than 200 locomotives blowing horns and whistles on five continents to welcome in the anniversary year (as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 328).

"Since then, thousands of events and activities have taken place, and the nation has really got behind it.

"Some of my personal highlights have been a Railway 200 badge for Guides and Brownies around the world, our Great Rail Tales Podcast Series, the ART UK competition to vote for the world's favourite UK rail art, the commemorative coin from the Royal Mint, our charity partnership to protect

Steam for a third century: The Standard Steam Locomotive Company proudly displayed the 80% complete bogie and one of the six-coupled driving wheels from new-build BR Standard 6P/5F Clan Pacific No. 72010 *Hengist*, which is being built at CTL Seal in Butterthwaite Lane, Ecclesfield, Sheffield, for £5.5 million. For more details, visit www.72010-hengist.co.uk ROBIN JONES

Above: London Transport Metropolitan Vickers Bo-Bo No. 12 *Sarah Siddons* is the oldest operational electric locomotive in the UK. ROBIN JONES

Left: Hunlset 0-4-2ST No. 3902 of 1971 *Trangkil No. 4*, hailed as the last steam locomotive built in the UK for non-heritage purposes, was repatriated from the Trangkil Sugar Mill, Pati, Central Java, by Statfold Barn Railway founder Graham Lee in 2004. At the event it hauled passenger trains on a short length of 2ft gauge track. ROBIN JONES

Hornby's OO gauge model of *Locomotion No. 1* running on the manufacturer's layout in the model village.

The oldest operational standard gauge locomotive in the UK is 1863-build Sharp Stewart 0-4-0 *Furness Railway No. 20.* Following restoration, it returned to steam in 1999 on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway and is now based on the Ribble Steam Railway. It is pictured in front of GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* and Stanier mogul No. 13268 at Alstom on July 31 during the preview evening. JOHN TITLOW

What may be the next new-build standard gauge steam locomotive to run in Britain, Severn Valley Railway-based Riddles BR Standard 3MT 2-6-2T No. 82045 was displayed next to *Locomotion No. 1*. The 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust is hopeful that the 3MT could steam near the end of 2026, and it has been conjectured that as an ideal type and size for regular heritage railway use, it could be a perfect candidate for a small batch production in future years. JONATHAN 'GUS' DUNSTER

The newest: Class 99 dual-mode Co-Co electro-diesel No. 99001, designed to haul freight on both electrified and non-electrified lines. Built by Stadler Rail Valencia, it was one of the first delivered to GB Railfreight in July. ROBIN JONES

The Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society team with No. 35028 *Clan Lane* at the festival. JAMES CUMMINS

Members of The Greatest Gathering organising committee are pictured, left to right: Simon Turner, head of drivers at Avanti West Coast; Richard Stanton, retired; Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, managing director at the Severn Valley Railway; James Dobson, operations delivery manager at Avanti West Coast; Kathryn Lancaster, Alstom communications manager; Joey Lam, communications administrator at Alstom; and Ben Goodwin, communications director UK and Ireland at Alstom. Not pictured are Andy Doyle, head of operational readiness at Avanti West Coast, and Jason Nash, retired. ALSTOM

rail memories for the future, winning the outstanding contribution to tourism award at the Visit England Excellence awards, and there's even been a giant maze created in the shape of a steam engine in Leicestershire.

"Train and freight operators, heritage railways and Community Rail Partnerships have also joined in by putting on a huge number of events and activities up and down the country. And there's still lots more to come, including the National Railway Museum's 50th birthday, the anniversary weekend in September which is part of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 200 Festival (see pages 52/53), and plenty of documentaries that will be broadcast on national channels.

"It's also been great to see that heritage railways and community groups have benefitted from National Heritage Lottery Fund grants, using Railway 200 as a catalyst for investment."

'The people made it happen'

Among the exhibits was Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line*.

"The Greatest Gathering was more than just a showpiece for *Clan Line* – it was the result of months of planning, hard graft, and precise co-ordination by the Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society," said its spokesman, James Cummins.

"From the moment the idea was confirmed, our operations team, engineers and support crew worked to ensure the locomotive would arrive at the event, be showcased, and return home safely. Getting a main line express engine to such an event is no small feat – it means securing paths, arranging crews, preparing the loco to exacting standards, and having contingency plans in place for every stage of the journey.

"On the ground at Derby, the reception was superb. Thousands of visitors came to admire *Clan Line* up close, ask questions, and learn more about the society's work. New members signed up, old friends stopped by, and we met countless enthusiasts whose first sight of a Merchant Navy in steam left them amazed and impressed – by our locomotive and our team. Meanwhile, our behind-the-scenes team ensured water, coal, maintenance checks, and presentation were all seamlessly handled, so that from a visitor's point of view, *Clan Line* simply shone.

"Events like this remind us that the locomotive is only part of the story – it's the people who make it happen. Every volunteer, every member of the support crew, and everyone back at Stewarts Lane keeping things ticking deserves credit for the part they played. The Greatest Gathering wasn't just a celebration of Britain's steam heritage – it was a celebration of teamwork, dedication, and pride in what we do."

Among the visitors on the Saturday was West Somerset Railway sales and marketing assistant Laura Standerwick. She said: "What a privilege it was to attend this once-in-a-generation event. Everything was absolutely incredible, from the organisation of the event to the range of locomotives, coaching stock and stalls available, to the atmosphere.

"Words simply cannot do this event justice; those who were lucky enough to attend will know what I mean. In hindsight, I wish I had purchased tickets for multiple days as there just wasn't enough time in one day to see the vast amount that was on offer. Thank-you to everyone who made this event possible – the memories made will last a lifetime."

A resounding success

Ben Goodwin, communications director UK and Ireland at Alstom, said: "I think it's safe to say it's been a resounding success.

"There has been so much love for the event. As organisers, Kathryn Lancaster and I have received letters and cards from members of the public, as has Rob Whyte, our UK and Ireland managing director, and Andy Butters, managing director for Litchurch Lane Works. This has been echoed with similar messages from exhibitors and industry colleagues.

"When we set out to organise The Greatest Gathering, we really hoped we'd create an event to be worthy of this important year in railway history. Hopefully, we achieved that and showed what the 'railway family' is capable of showcasing our proud history but also paving the way for our industry's bright future.

"For me, it was all about meeting young Oliver on Sunday morning. Just four years old, he was dressed in a homemade The Greatest Gathering-branded hi-vis vest and told me he wanted to work for the railways in the future. My heart melted because that's what it was all about – celebrating our past but inspiring the new great leaders of our wonderful industry.

"I don't think my career will ever be topped by this. I'm just blessed to be able to be part of the organising team. It was a unique moment in time – something we are all incredibly proud of."

Ben said that Alstom has returned to building trains, so it was unlikely that a similar event would be held at Derby in the near future as the firm was going to be "too busy in the factory."

Baggy Shanker, MP for Derby South, said: "The Greatest Gathering has rewritten the rulebook for rail events. The world's largest collection of heritage and modern rail vehicles stood side by side, telling a 200-year story in a single weekend.

"Forty thousand people came to Derby to see it – not just to remember the past, but to experience the energy and ambition that drives forward Britain's railways today. Heritage isn't a museum piece; it's living engineering, inspiring the next generation and advancing the future of the industry. That's why Derby – with its unrivalled rail expertise and proud history – is the natural home of Great British Railways, and why our city will continue to lead the story for the next 200 years."

As a charity event, all profits from The Greatest Gathering will be split between Railway 200's five chosen charities: Alzheimer's Research UK, Railway Benefit Fund, Railway Children, Railway Mission and Transport Benevolent Fund CIO – and railway heritage partners.

A full list of rolling stock exhibits at The Greatest Gathering can be found at www.alstom.com/greatest-gathering

Polmadie in October

As part of Railway 200, Alstom will open its Glasgow Traincare Centre to the public to celebrate the historic depot's 150th anniversary on Sunday, October 12.

Originally opened as Polmadie shed in 1875 by the Caledonian Railway Company, it was later rebuilt and extended for the maintenance of steam engines and rolling stock.

Located about two miles south-east of Glasgow Central, the facility is currently the main base of the iconic Caledonian Sleeper service, where it is maintained and cleaned by more than 100 staff who provide a round-the-clock service.

Polmadie Depot typically welcomes 17 trains per day, including Avanti West Coast's fleet of Class 390 Pendolinos which were built by Alstom.

The depot will be open from 10.30am to 4.30pm, advance booking being required.

Details of the event will be released at www.alstom.com/alstom-uk-and-ireland HR

Plaque marks society's three Deltics attending gathering

The commemorative plaque is unveiled on August 2. DPS

Deltic Preservation Society president Neville Davies unveiled a brass plaque on the nose end of No. 55009 *Alycidon* at Litchurch Lane on August 2.

The society's other two Deltics, D9015 *Tulyar* and No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier,* will each have a commemorative plaque on one nose end.

The unveiling has a link with the past. When Neville was divisional maintenance engineer, King's Cross, who oversaw Finsbury Park depot, he unveiled the plaque on the nose end of *Tulyar* to mark its participation in the Rocket 150 celebrations at Rainhill in 1980.

For the ceremony, the brass plate from *Tulyar* was copied, changing the words to reflect Rail 200 and The Greatest Gathering, and painted in the same original colours.

Newton Replicas undertook the casting of the plates. An extra plate was cast, to be raffled to raise funds for the ongoing maintenance of the society's three 55s.

The brass plaque for *Tuylar.* DPS

HERITAGE RAILWAY
THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Making what is a seemingly rare appearance on main line duties during the hot dry spell, B1 No. 61306 *Mayflower* climbs away from Blackburn towards Wilpshire Summit, heading northwards to Carlisle with a Saphos Trains 'Fellsman' tour on August 6. ROBERT FALCONER

№ 61306

COMETH THE HOUR, COMETH *LOCOMOTION NO.1*!

The record-setting Greatest Gathering is about to be followed by the raison d'être of Railway 200: the replica of the world's first modern train running over the route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway as it did on September 27, 1825 – and this time the entire globe will be watching. Robin Jones outlines the celebratory events in what is set to be an ultimate landmark event for British heritage.

Five years in the making, the Stockton & Darlington Railway 200 celebrations climaxes on September 26-28 when visitors from home and abroad will witness the bicentennial re-enactment of a train journey that changed history forever.

During an anniversary journey spread over the three days, the restored replica of *Locomotion No. 1*, accompanied by the newly-built passenger carriage *Experiment* and a rake of traditional coal waggons, will run on sections of the original Stockton & Darlington Railway line, cheered on by thousands of spectators who from designated locations can safely view it on its journey.

The S&DR was established as a 26-mile-long main line to transport coal and other mixed goods from the mines of south Durham to the River Tees at Stockton via Shildon, Darlington and Yarm. *Locomotion No. 1* was first steam locomotive to run on the line and the first in the world to haul a passenger carriage, on September 27, 1825.

S&DR200 has rolled out a packed programme which continues until the end of the year. This autumn, visitors can also explore a whole host of indoor and outdoor activities and expect once-in-a-lifetime experiences

On the morning of Friday, September 26, the replica *Locomotion No. 1* and its train will set off on the first of three days of the anniversary journey, leaving the Locomotion museum at Shildon to access the main line and Shildon station, passing Heighington, the world's oldest station, before arriving at The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's base at Hopetown Darlingon.

Locomotion will run an exhibition, Rail Futures: A Look at the Future of Rail in the UK, from September 20 until October 1, with the chance to visit *Inspiration*, Railway 200's unique exhibition train which is touring the country. The museum will host a weekend of celebrations and free family activities on September 26-28, including waving off the replica *Locomotion No.1*. There will also be a host of free family craft activities and the Next Generation Loco to explore the future innovations in passenger and freight rail, with a line-up including the Class 93 Tri-mode locomotive, the sustainable Revolution Very Light Railway vehicle and the UK's first digital iwagon.

There are multiple free official viewing points of the anniversary journey along the 26-mile route, but advance tickets will be required for the two areas at Locomotion and Hopetown Darlington, which can be booked at https://tinyurl.com/SDR200-viewing

On the morning of Saturday, September 27, the anniversary of the historic journey 200 years ago, the replica train will depart the A1 Trust shed for Darlington North Road station and pass Skerne Bridge, the landmark depicted in the famous images of that first trip, before returning. This will be transmitted for public viewing on a big screen in Darlington's market place.

During the day there will be an anniversary picnic at Hackworth Park in Shildon, with performances from The Auckland Shanty Singers, the Easington Brass Band, Sam Slatcher and Railway Institute Singers and STEAM, the newly-commissioned piece by Southpaw Dance Company. There will also be drop-in craft activities, vintage funfair rides and stalls. On the same day, there will be viewing and celebrations at Hopetown, again with ticketed access.

On the Sunday, the replica train will depart Dinsdale station for Eaglescliffe station (which will not have any viewing galleries) and then run to Stockton and Rochester Road. The official public viewing locations are expected to include Rochester Road, Roseworth and Stillington. No tickets are required for these areas as the viewing points are large enough to welcome significant numbers.

In Stockton, there will be two High Street performances of STEAM: Ghost Train: The Arrival, and in the evening, the show will be staged at Stockton Riverside.

Having performed Ghost Train: The Departures in Darlington Market Square on Saturday, September 20, with interactive performances followed by a spectacular evening parade to Hopetown, the free show includes what is described an amazing reimagining of *Locomotion No. 1*, complete with illuminated carriages.

In Market Square, a replica of the locomotive will be installed on a large plinth, its cogs and wheels moving as they did 200 years ago. The locomotive will lead eight large-scale chaldron wagons, each mounted on a customised Nissan

Above: An Alfred Rankley painting of 1823 showing George Stephenson giving lessons in embroidery to Stockton & Darlington Railway main promoter Edward Pease's daughters, on display at Hopetown Darlington. IMECHE/S&DR200

Left: The replica of *Locomotion No. 1* being tested on the Weardale Railway on April 10.
GRAEME WATT/S&DR200

The original *Locomotion No. 1* heads a replica train at the Stockton & Darlington Railway centenary in 1925. BR

The cavalcade of locomotives at the Stockton and Darlington Railway 100th anniversary in 1925. SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

Micra and containing performers and artists in a carnival-style procession.

A 75-strong cast of national and local performers travelling with the convoy will bring each moving structure to life using sound, music, and mechanical inventions.

At about 7pm, the installations will reassemble in Market Square and proceed via Northgate, North Lodge Park and Bartlett Streety to Hopetown Darlington, where the will be on display the following day.

In Stockton, the STEAM show will last 45 minutes, exploring the remarkable ingenuity and determination of figures such as George Stephenson, the 'Father of Railways', and Edward Pease, the daring investor who envisioned a new era of commerce and connectivity. Through a blend of contemporary dance, compelling narrative and striking visual elements, the production captures the essence of an era where steam power began to shrink the world.

Audiences in both Shildon and Stockton will be transported through key moments of triumph and challenge, experience the exhilaration of the railway's inaugural journey, engineering marvels and societal shifts it triggered – all brought to life through Southpaw's signature dynamic choreography and immersive storytelling.

Ghost Train has been commissioned by the S&DR200 Project and is created and produced by Avanti Display Ltd and Walk the Plank, and is part-funded by the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

Avanti Display produces and performs accessible outdoor shows that combine comedy, music, and inventive engineering. For each project, the company brings together a bespoke team of artists. The creative team for Ghost Train includes Andy Plant, Bryan Tweddle, Chris Squire and Jane Revitt.

Tornado for entire Titans event

As highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 334, Hopetown Darlington will host the free-to-enter Titans of Steam event from September 20 until October 5.

LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* will be in light steam on September 23-28, with footplate tours on September 26 and 28. A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* will be on display for the entire event and, as reported last issue, GER (LNER) Y5 Coffee Pot 0-4-0ST No. 299 may steam for the first time in eight decades. Other locomotives on display will include LNER Q6 0-8-0 No. 63395, LNER J27 0-6-0 No. 65894, NER J72 0-6-0T No. 69023 *Joem,* which was built at nearbyDarlington North Road Works in 1951, BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78018 (September 20-28 only) and the venue's own Class 37 D6898. Other guests were due to be announced.

Footplate tour tickets for several of these locomotives will be on sale – visit https://tinyurl.com/titans-of-steam for full details.

Tracks of Change at new Stockton museum space

In Stockton, Preston Park Museum's new multi-million-pound exhibition space, The Spence Building, will open on Sunday, September 13. Its first exhibition will be Tracks of Change, as part of S&DR200. Stockton-on-Tees Council said it will allow visitors to "play and learn while exploring the impact and legacy of the birth of modern railways"

It will include Corridors, a new installation by artist Rebecca Louise Law, which will see thousands of preserved flowers – many grown in the museum's own walled garden – suspended from the ceiling. The immersive display takes inspiration from the fact that the original S&DR Railway line ran through Preston Park until 1852.

All Aboard is a new interactive exhibition specially created for children, with wheels to turn, coal to shovel and pistons to pump in a giant replica train.

Thousands of decorated peg doll designs will also be showcased in a unique exhibition at the museum. Community groups, school pupils, care home residents and visitors to S&DR200 festival venues across Tees Valley and County Durham have been involved in this mass participation art project, representing their favourite train journey.

The opening weekend will also see free events within the museum including Trainsville, a drop-in creative activity to learn about the S&DR through crafting, cutting and folding a paper template to create a paper model of a railway architectural landmark to take home. At the Victorian photographic studios, visitors can dress in period attire and take a family portrait.

And there's still much more to see and do!

Other S&DR200 exhibitions in County Durham include Coal, Canals and Carriages: The Story of Raby and the Railways, running at Raby Castle near Staindrop until November 30; Fuelling the Railway Revolution at The Mining Art Gallery, Bishop Auckland, until December 21; and Dressed for Departure: Fashion in the Age of Rail at the Bowes Museum, running from September 25 until January 26. All Change explains how the railway redefined life for local people and communities, by making travel faster, more comfortable and more accessible to communities and is running at The Story in Mount Oswald, South Road, Durham.

Steve Davies MBE, managing director of International Railway Heritage Consultancy and chairman of The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, said: "The railways are central to our lives and hold a special place in our collective memories. We hope that the 200th anniversary celebrations mark the extraordinary achievements of the early S&DR pioneers and what their ideas and engineering skill signified for the community and country as a whole."

*Celebrating Railway 200: see page 90. HR

The Ghost Train, set to enthral spectators in Darlington, Shildon and Stockton-on-Tees in September. AVANTI DISPLAY LTD WITH WALK THE PLANK

Poster for STEAM, to be performed by the Southpaw Dance Company.

Rare metals and a seaside jaunt

By Tim Hobman

UK Railtours will be running a tour along the Barton-upon-Humber branch, with the chance to visit Immingham freight terminal or spend time at the seaside in Cleethorpes on Saturday, October 25.

'The Brick and Tile' aims to recognise the part that Barton-upon-Humber played in the history of British brick and tile manufacturing following the abolition of the brick tax in 1850 and the subsequent boom in production.

The train will start from Finsbury Park behind Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* and a classmate supplied by the Class 50 Alliance. Heading north on the East Coast Main Line, the first passenger pick-up point is booked to be Potters Bar, followed by Stevenage, St Neots, Peterborough, and Newark Northgate.

From there, the tour will take the line towards Lincoln, passing through Collingham, Swinderby, and Hykeham, before turning onto the line towards Doncaster at Pyewipe Junction. Approaching Doncaster, a brief pause at Doncaster Down Decoy is scheduled to attach a Europhoenix Ltd Class 37 to the rear of the train.

Seaside rendezvous

Following the final passenger pick-up at Doncaster, the train is planned to take the South Humberside Main Line, through Scunthorpe to Cleethorpes. Passengers who decide to alight here will have more than three hours to explore the resort before the journey home. Those who choose to remain on the train will get the chance to partake in a mini tour. Departing Cleethorpes with the Class 37 leading, the route will be direct to Barton-upon-Humber via Ulceby.

Unfortunately, due to the short platforms at Barton, there will not be a chance to alight, so the Class 50s are booked to take the train back towards Cleethorpes through the Immingham complex. This route is planned to include a circular route through the Grimsby District Light Railway, and past the former Immingham locomotive depot.

Exiting the complex, the train will pass through Ulceby again and return to Cleethorpes, where passengers will get a half-hour leg-stretch.

The journey home will see the Class 37 in charge of the train and take a slightly different route via Stainforth Junction to the East Coast Main Line at Joan Croft Junction, before heading north to Temple Hirst Junction and diverting towards Selby, avoiding the station on the Canal Goods Curve. This route is designed to see the train head back via Ferrybridge and Knottingley to Doncaster to set down passengers.

50s go solo

While at Doncaster, the 37 is expected to be uncoupled, which will leave the 50s to take the tour south on the ECML, setting down passengers at their joining stations en route back to Finsbury Park.

Tickets are available in First-Class non-dining and Standard Class on this tour, with a discount for junior travellers and a supplement for the mini tour. For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

Last PCA wagons to be withdrawn may enter heritage sector

HERITAGE railways may be given the chance to obtain examples of the PCA wagons which have just made their final journey after hauling alumina Port of Blyth to ALVANCE British Aluminium's Fort William plant.

PCA wagons are pressure-discharge vehicles which feature a distinctive inverted 'V' shape. During their decades of use, they mainly transported dry bulk materials such as cement, alumina and various chemicals.

On July 9, GB Railfreight hauled the last PCA rail wagon from Fort William behind Class 66 No. 66302. After a brief stop at the Port of Tyne, the train reached its destination at the Port of Sunderland, where the wagons are now being decommissioned.

After 37 years and more than 50 million miles, the PCA rail wagons have travelled the equivalent of 2000 laps of the globe, 105 return trips to the moon, or nearly halfway to Mars. ALVANCE British Aluminium has entered early discussions with an historical rail organisation regarding the possible donation of selected PCA wagons, with the aim of preserving a small part of the UK's industrial heritage for future generations.

Tom Uppington, managing director of ALVANCE British Aluminium, said: "These wagons have been part of the rhythm of life at Fort William and the Port of Blyth for almost four decades. Their retirement marks a significant moment for everyone who's worked with them."

Phil Amos, head of energy and industrial at GB Railfreight, said: "The PCA wagons have served as a stalwart on the railway, moving alumina powder between Blyth and Fort William, which is rolled across the country for various products and goods. We are now looking ahead to the next chapter, with a more modern wagons and a continued focus on reliable, sustainable service."

GBRf Class 66 No. 66733 heads a PCA train near Shotts, North Lanarkshire, on July 7. GBRF

Step aboard 'The Peak Forester' for a journey from London to Peak Rail!

THE Railway Touring Company is to run a trip steam hauled throughout from London to Peak Rail heritage railway on Sunday, October 19.

Starting from King's Cross, the tour will head north on the East Coast Main Line, picking up at Potters Bar, Stevenage, and Peterborough.

From Peterborough, the tour will via Stamford and Oakham on the Peterborough to Leicester Line. Taking the Midland Main Line at Syston Junction, the train will pass through Loughborough and Trent Junction, to Derby.

After Derby there is planned to be a brief stop at Duffield for any passenger who wishes to alight here and travel on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. Continuing north on the Derwent Valley Line, the tour is scheduled to take the Matlock Branch at Ambergate Junction past Cromford and Matlock Bath, to Matlock.

At Matlock, passengers have the option of alighting from the train or continuing on Peak Rail through Darley Dale to Rowsley.

Leaving Rowsley in the late afternoon, the tour will once again stop at Matlock to pick up those passengers who have been visiting the town, before continuing to Duffield for passengers who alighted there. From Duffield, the train will retrace the route of the outward journey, setting down passengers at their joining stations back to King's Cross.

Tickets are available in Premier Dining, First Class, and Standard Class on this tour, with a discount for junior travellers. For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Pre-order Issue 337: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* celebrated a return to main line operation as it heads the Belmond British Pullman's 1Z92 8.24am London Victoria to Derby 'The Greatest Gathering' special on the approach to Barrow upon Soar on August 2. *Flying Scotsman* left the festival site at 8am to meet the train, but as the A3 passed through Northamptonshire for a rendezvous with a road water tanker, the supply truck broke down and the locomotive could not be refilled at Kettering as planned. A rail employee called Northants Fire and Rescue Service for help, and a water bowser was summoned from Towcester to deliver the essential supply. *Scotsman* was then able to head the tour from Wellingborough as planned, and it arrived at Derby at 2pm, before returning to Alstom to be displayed. Belmond contributed £50 to The Railway Children charity for each ticket sold for this journey. At Derby station, East Midlands Railway created special viewing areas so that people who could not get a ticket for the sell-out festival could monitor train movements throughout if they wished. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Mermaid swimming again in Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway livery

A LISTED building at Cleethorpes station has undergone a full restoration and interior refit and has been repainted in the original colours of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway.

The Mermaid Café was constructed in 1874 as a waiting room for the station. Over the decades since, it has been used for various food and beverage businesses and is now a fish and chip shop.

The work on the exterior of the building cost £395,000 and was partly financed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Railway Heritage Trust, with the leaseholders paying for the interior of the building to be restored. Conservation work was carried out to the Victorian cast iron framework, as well as full restoration and conservation of the timber parts of the building. The cafe was also reroofed, and its iron gutters and downpipes replaced.

Townscape Heritage Project manager for North East Lincolnshire Council, Carol Heidschuster, said: "All of the cast iron is original from 1884, and as part of the restoration the windows have been double-glazed. We had to replace all of the timber.

"With a heritage project in a resort, you get early postcards as well as early images, which is a real bonus."

Charles Crawford and Craig Brown, who hold the lease for the building, said the interior refit was something they had wanted to do since getting listed building consent in 2021.

Tim Hedley–Jones, of The Railway Heritage Trust said: "We are really happy to be working collaboratively with both the leaseholders and the council and provide this additional funding to help restore this former railway building."

Council leader Coun Philip Jackson said: "This is one of the key buildings that people see as they arrive in Cleethorpes on the train, and to have it restored to its former glory is fantastic!"

Leaseholders Charles Crawford and Craig Brown outside the Mermaid Café, repainted in Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway livery. Alongside the restoration, the pair have completed an internal building refit, including new kitchen equipment and furniture. CCLR

Andania to head 'The Oban Bucket' outing from Carlisle

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society has organised run from Carlisle to Oban on Saturday, September 27, under the title of 'The Oban Bucket'.

Leaving Carlisle, the tour is planned to be hauled by Class 40 No. 40013 *Andania* and head towards Lockerbie, Motherwell, Robroyston and Westerton, picking up passengers at each station.

From Westerton, the route will be to be along the north banks of the Clyde and then onto the West Highland Line at Craigendorran Junction. After skirting Gare Loch and Loch Long, the tour continues through Arrochar and Tarbet, before passengers will catch a glimpse of Loch Lomond.

At Crianlarich, the train will take to take the junction towards Oban, passing through Tyndrum, Dalmally, and along the northern end of Loch Awe.

The remainder of the route to Oban will see the train passing through the Pass of Brander, with the railway signals known as 'Andersons Piano,' then via Taynuilt and Connel Ferry to Oban where passengers will have three hours to look around the gateway to the isles.

Tickets are available in First Class and Standard Class on this tour.

For more details and to book, visit www.srpsrailtours.co.uk

West Coast ends A1 Trust tours operating agreement

By Robin Jones

WEST Coast Railways has cut short its operating agreement with The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust reached in March for running new-build Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* on the main line.

An A1 Trust statement said: "Since our return to the main line in the spring, we have enjoyed operating a variety of tours, many helping to cover for the current shortage of available steam locomotives. Indeed, we have run an additional eight railtours, covering more than 2000 miles, to assist the Railway Touring Company and West Coast Railways, in addition to already-planned tours.

"The A1SLT team have been content with the operating arrangements thus far, enjoying working with the WCR crews, and finding the agreement reached with RTC and WCR to be both fruitful and balanced.

Parting ways

"However, WCR management has subsequently advised that they are not content with the way the relationship has evolved and has now informed us that they do not wish the trust to continue as an operating partner.

"Our well-established operating policies, procedures and governance, including our prioritisation of maintenance time and compliance with our maintenance regime, were recently at variance with the demands WCR placed on us. We have found the arrangement until just recently to be balanced for all parties and we would be happy to continue working with WCR going forward, should a compromise be reached.

"We are open to further discussions with WCR at any time. However, until the issue is resolved, the locomotive will not be operating with them. Naturally, we intend to develop alternative partnerships with other Train Operating Companies."

The trust thanked DB Cargo and the organisers of The Greatest Gathering at Derby for facilitating movement of *Tornado* to the event on August 1-3.

Meanwhile, an additional challenge to the trust's main line operation has been damage to support coach No. 21249, which suffered from a significant wheel flat caused by an unsolicited brake application via the distributor when working in Scotland on July 10. This application was initiated by vegetation encroachment on the lightly used Longannet freight route near Alloa, and No. 21249 had to be detached in the nearby loop at Alloa.

Repairs under way

With the support of the trust's insurance company and the Scottish Railway Preservation Society, the coach was moved to Bo'ness by Direct Rail Services on July 22, after a wheel skate had been fitted by Rail Support Services. The coach will now be repaired as swiftly as possible and returned to traffic with *Tornado*.

Tornado is set to be on display at the trust's AGM at Darlington Locomotive Works on October 4.

Listed Sydney Gardens footbridge needs more repairs, says Network Rail

NETWORK Rail has applied for permission to repair the Grade II*-listed footbridge in Bath's Sydney Gardens, which crosses the Great Western Main Line.

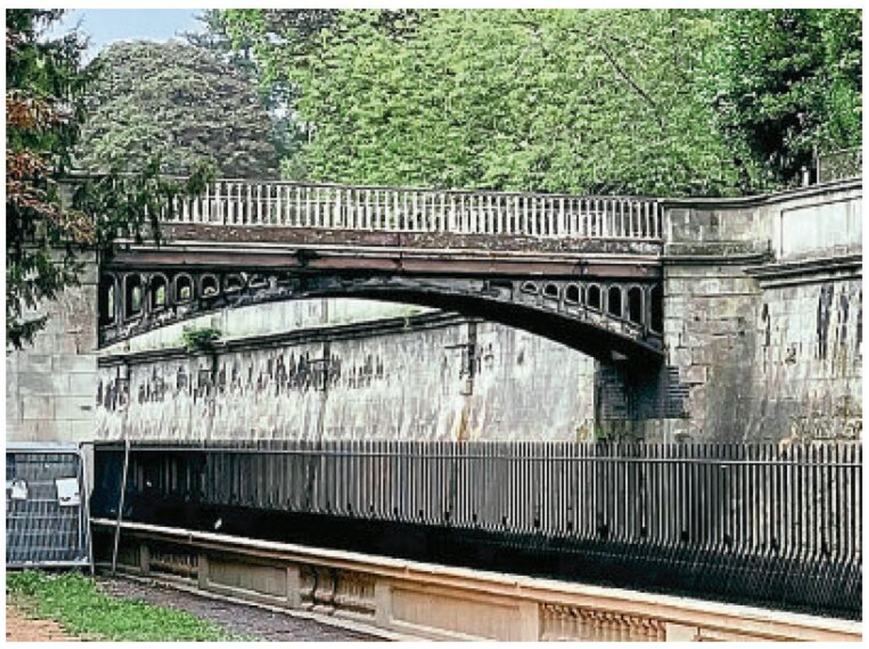
Dating from 1841, it is the only remaining Brunel cast iron footbridge on the line from London to Bristol.

In 2022, Network Rail undertook masonry repairs on the parapets and abutments, and shortly afterwards Historic England added the bridge to its at-risk register due to the surface rust on the span.

Bath & North East Somerset Council has been considering Network Rail's application for listed building consent to carry out more repair and maintenance works following a structural assessment.

The proposed scheme includes the replacement of the deck with one that is more durable, along with grit-blasting and painting the footbridge, which will be painted in the original colours of pale brown, cream and black-brown, as discussed with Historic England.

Vegetation growing out of the footbridge will be removed using hand tools, and further masonry repairs will be made where necessary.



The Sydney Gardens footbridge after repair work was completed in 2022. NR

GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* steams past Coryton Cove on the Dawlish sea wall working the Down 1Z72 6.11am Colchester to Kingswear Steam Dreams tour on August 9. THOMAS MILLS

'First' train from Hexham to London

A ONE-OFF Christmas railtour is to run from Hexham to London for the first time to mark the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* will head its namesake, the 'Festive Capital Thunderer,' on December 6, stopping at Stocksfield, Prudhoe, Wylam, Blaydon, Newcastle, Chester-le-Street, Durham, Darlington, Northallerton, Thirsk and York on the way from the Northumberland market town.

Pasengers will have about five hours to explore London and its Christmas markets, light displays, shops and theatre before returning home the same evening.

Luke Allan Holmes, CEO of Excursions By Rail, said: "To offer a direct train from towns like Hexham, Prudhoe and Wylam all the way to London in the year of Railway 200 with a rare Class 50 traction is exactly the sort of thing I founded this business to deliver. It's meaningful and magical – and completely unique."

Passengers will travel in Mk. 3 coaches and can pre-order seasonal refreshments to be served at their seats.

A second locomotive will be involved in part of the journey.

For tickets, visit www.excursionsbyrail.co.uk, telephone 01388 661394, or call at Bishop Auckland station.

Pre-order Issue 337: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* crosses the Grand Union Canal at Fenny Stratford while returning from The Great Gathering at Derby on August 4. PHIL MARSH

Network Rail's free Railway 200 photographic exhibition is open now at Liverpool Street

NETWORK Rail has set up a new free exhibition on railway photography and history at Liverpool Street station.

The exhibition space has been created as part of Railway 200 and can be found on the upper level, next to the Leon restaurant.

Created in partnership with Landscape Photographer of the Year, the exhibition features 17 railway images from around the country. Network Rail has a long partnership with Landscape Photographer of the Year, and many passengers will have seen the award-winning pictures on show at major main line stations.

However, the unique display at Liverpool Street, called Lens on the Line, is the first ever such exhibition to be dedicated to the railway, with the photographs having been selected from previous years of the competition.

An exhibition on the history of the station itself is also available to view. This was originally created for the station's 150th birthday last year but has been refreshed and relaunched for Railway 200. The story includes the former Bishopsgate and Broad Street stations, the building of Platforms 11-18, Liverpool Street's role in the Kindertransport rescue mission, and the pioneering Jazz Services of the 1920s. The exhibition space is completed with a series of seaside-style cut-out boards to inspire young people to put themselves in the frame for a future role on the railway.

Lady Linda Reich with the Kindertransport section of the Liverpool Street exhibition. NR

Passengers have the chance to win a station retail voucher by posting a photograph on Instagram with the careers cut-out boards and tagging @networkraileastern in posts.

Kate Snowden, head of communications for Network Rail Anglia, said: "We wanted to create a great new exhibition space where passengers and station visitors can spend a few minutes while waiting for a train or for someone to arrive.

"The photographs all give remarkable perspectives on railway scenes, while the history exhibition will almost certainly tell you something you didn't know about our station's past."

Lady Linda Reich, whose late husband Sir Erich Reich is depicted as a little boy in Liverpool Street's Kindertransport memorial, said: "The history exhibition is fascinating, and it includes a section on the Kindertransport mission, which rescued Erich from Nazi Europe aged four and brought him to this country.

"Liverpool Street station was the last stop on a long journey to safety for almost all of the nearly 10,000 children who, like him, came on the Kindertransport."

She added: "I'm glad that passengers have the chance to discover such a remarkable chapter of their station's history."

Bring the Borders Railway back to Carlisle?

THE Scottish Borders Council has appointed consultant Turner & Townsend to lead the feasibility study and business case development for extending the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Hawick and Carlisle.

The original 98-mile Waverley Route closed in 1969, but the 30-mile Edinburgh to Tweedbank section was successfully reopened as the Borders Railway on September 6, 2015, boosting regional connectivity.

In February, the Department for Transport gave its approval for the project to begin assessing the feasbility of the extension, is backed by funding commitments of up to £10 million from the UK and Scottish governments.

Poor bookings see Forth circular axed

THREE planned tours to Forth and Aberdeen this August with A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* were cancelled by the Scottish Railway Preservation Society as they failed to attract sufficient bookings. "These decisions are never taken lightly, and every effort was exhausted in attempting to run these trains," a statement said.

Enjoy a Castle over Shap this autumn

VINTAGE Trains' 'The Shap Mountaineer' from Birmingham to Carlisle and over the famous incline will be headed by one of its Castle 4-6-0s.

On Saturday, September 27, the train will call at Birmingham New Street and at Wolverhampton, Stafford, Crewe, Warrington Bank Quay and Preston (alighting at Blackburn on the return journey).

The train will be diesel-hauled to Carnforth, where a Castle will take over. Both on the outward run via Shap and the return over the Settle and Carlisle line, the Castle will be unassisted by a diesel.

On the return, the train will be diesel-hauled from Hellifield back to Birmingham New Street.

A Tourist Enthusiast ticket is being offered, allowing holders to sit in the first passenger carriage behind the locomotive in at least one direction.

➜ For more details and to book, visit https://vintagetrains.co.uk

WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* approaches Abbey Junction, Nuneaton, hauling the Vintage Trains 1Z73 10am Leicester to Stratford-Upon-Avon 'Shakespeare Express' on August 10. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Steam shortage sees 'Dorset Coast Express' rescheduled

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company has announced the revised date of its rescheduled 'Dorset Coast Express' tour.

It was originally planned for Thursday, August 14, but had to be postponed due to a shortage of steam traction. The new date is Thursday, September 18, and because of the change, some places are available.

Starting out steam-hauled from London Victoria, the tour is to take the route over the Thames at Battersea, before turning west and crossing the river again at Barnes to pass through Kew and Feltham for the first passenger pick-up at Staines.

Crossing the River Thames for the third time, the tour is expected to take the South Western Main Line at Byfleet Junction for the next passenger pick-up at Woking. Following a water stop at Winchfield, the final passenger pick-up point will be Basingstoke.

Taking the West of England Line through Andover to Salisbury, the train will take the Wessex Main Line via Romsey to Southampton for a change of locomotive and a reversal. Having swapped steam for diesel, with the steam locomotive at the rear, the remainder of the journey to Weymouth will be along the South West Main Line via Bournemouth.

The train will stop at Bournemouth for any passengers who wish to alight there. Those who do will have just over five hours to explore the seaside resort. The tour will then head to the final destination of Weymouth, where passengers will have about three hours to look around.

Leaving Weymouth steam-hauled, the train will retrace the route back to Bournemouth to pick up those who chose to alight there, before taking the South West Main Line back to Southampton for a water stop.

The route back to the capital will be via Winchester to Basingstoke, setting down passengers here and also at their joining stations en route back to Waterloo.

Tickets are available in Premier Dining, First Class and Standard Class, with a discount for junior travellers and family bookings on this tour.

For more details about the journey and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Three-day 'Lord of the Isles Pullman' trip on a luxury HST

MIDLAND Pullman is to run a three-day tour to the Scottish Highlands on board its luxury High Speed Train set.

Starting out from Rugby on Saturday, September 13, the 'Lord of the Isles Pullman' will head north to pick up additional passengers at Nuneaton, Tamworth, Lichfield Trent Valley, Stafford, Crewe, Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western, Preston, and Lancaster. A sprint up the West Coast Main Line will then see the train cross the border and run through the Scottish Lowlands towards Edinburgh and cross the Forth Bridge to pick up the Highland Main Line at Perth. Heading still northward, the tour will stay on the Highland Main Line, via Pitlochry, Kingussie and Aviemore to Inverness for an overnight stay.

The next day, the tour leaves Inverness after breakfast and head towards Dingwall to join the Kyle of Lochalsh line.

The breathtaking scenery unfolds as the train is scheduled to climb towards Achnasheen, before descending to the sea at Kyle of Lochalsh, with views across to the Isle of Skye. There will be time to explore before the return journey to Inverness for another overnight stay.

The final day of the trip involves the journey home, but not before a further bit of exploration. Leaving Inverness, the train will to retrace the route along the Highland Main Line to Perth but then take the Glasgow-Dundee Line towards Stirling and on to Glasgow. From here, it will retrace the route of the outward journey down the WCML, setting down passengers on route back to Rugby.

Tickets are available in Pullman Dining or First Class non-dining, with passengers required to book their own accommodation.

For more details and to book, visit midlandpullman.com

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A rare sight for members of the Class 33 fleet on the Midland Main Line, West Coast Railways duo Nos. 33025 and 33029 pass Hasland at the start of the return from Barrow Hill to Eastleigh on August 2, working Pathfinder Tours' 'The Bicentennial & Peak District Explorer' back to Eastleigh. ROBERT FALCONER

August

30 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Hull, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

30 'English Riviera Express'
Bedford, Kingswear and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.
Loco: 5029 *Nunney Castle*. ST

31 'The Royal Duchy'
Bristol Temple Meads, Par and return.
Loco: TBA. RTC

31 – 'The Shakespeare Express'
Birmingham, Derby, Leicester or Worcester to Stratford-upon-Avon.
Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* or 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

September

2 'Pendle Dalesman'
Lancaster, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. WCR

3 'The Fellsman'
Blackpool North, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. ST

4 'The Dalesman'
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Hellifield (outward) and Carnforth (return).
Loco: TBA. WCR

5 'The Cambrian Coast Express'
Cardiff Central, Pwllheli and return.
Locos: 2x class 97s TBA. PT

6 'The Stratford Flyer'
Norwich, Stratford-upon-Avon and return. Diesel-hauled Leicester-Norwich (return only).
Loco: TBA. RTC

6 'English Riviera Express'
High Wycombe, Kingswear and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.
Loco: 5029 *Nunney Castle*. ST

6 'The Whistling Clansman'
Linlithgow, Inverness and return.
Loco: D213 *Andania*. SRPS

6 'The Mayflower'
Birmingham New Street, Plymouth and return. Steam-hauled between Bristol Temple Meads and Plymouth.
Locos: 7029 *Clun Castle* + 45596 *Bahamas*. VT

7 'The Waverley'
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

9 'The Lakes Express' (Outward)
London Victoria to Oxenholme only. Steam-hauled from Crewe to Carlisle.
Loco: 60532 *Blue Peter*. SD

10 'The Swanage Belle'
London Victoria, Swanage and return. Diesel-hauled Swanage-Southampton (return only).
Loco: TBA. RTC

11 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour of Kent from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

12 'The Cambrian Coast Express'
Oxford, Pwllheli and return.
Locos: 2x Class 97s TBA. PT

12 'The Lakes Express' (Return)
Barrow-in-Furness to London Victoria only. Steam-hauled from Oxenholme to Chester.
Loco: TBA. SD

13 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Liverpool Lime Street, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

13 'West Somerset Steam Express'
Paddington, Minehead and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

13 'The Lakelander'
Euston, Penrith and return.
Loco: Class 125 HST TBA. UKRT

15 'Edinburgh Summer Explorer'
Chester, Edinburgh Waverley and return. Steam-hauled between Carlisle and Edinburgh.
Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. ST

18 'The Dorset Coast Express'
London Victoria, Weymouth and return. Diesel-hauled from Southampton to Weymouth.
Loco: 45212. RTC

18 'Welsh Marches Express'
Woking, Shrewsbury and return. Steam-hauled between Bristol Temple Meads and Shrewsbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

18 'The Dalesman'
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Hellifield (outward) and Carnforth (return).
Loco: TBA. WCR

20 Stratford-upon-Avon Excursion
Hastings, Stratford-upon-Avon and return.
DEMU: 1001. HD

20 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Telford, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. NB

20 'The Atlantic Coast Express'
Dorridge, Newquay and return.
Locos: 2x Class 47s TBC. PT

20 'The Cumbrian Coast Express'
Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Locos: Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*.
Steam: TBA. RTC

20 'The Worcester Steam Express'
Liverpool Lime Street, Worcester and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

20 'The Cambrian Coast Explorer'
Dorridge, Aberystwyth and return.
Locos: 37240 + Class 97 TBC. VT

21 'The Spirit of Summer'
Circular tour from London Paddington.
Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

21 'Sunset Steam Express'
Circular tour from London Paddington.
Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

23 'The Golden Arrow'
Poole, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Canterbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

25 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour of Kent from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

26 'The White Rose'
Hereford, York and return. Steam-hauled between Crewe and York.
Loco: TBA. ST

27 Railway 200 Special
Carnforth, Stanhope and return. Steam-hauled from York to Stanhope (outward) and Darlington to York (return).
Loco: TBA. RTC

27 'The Oban Bucket'
Carlisle, Oban and return.
Loco: D213 *Andania*. SRPS

27 'Welsh Marches Express'
Woking, Shrewsbury and return. Steam-hauled between Bristol Temple Meads and Shrewsbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

27 'The Ulster Express'
Barking, Morecambe and return.
Locos: 50008 *Thunderer*. Class 92 TBC + 4TC. UKRT

27 'The Shap Mountaineer'
Birmingham New Street, Carlisle and return.
Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. VT

27 Lune Rivers Trust Charity Excursion
Carnforth, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. WCR

28 'The Royal Duchy'
Bristol Temple Meads, Par and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

29 'The Golden Arrow'
Worcester Shrub Hill, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Canterbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
BLS	Branch Line Society branchline.uk
HD	Hastings Diesels hastingsdiesels.co.uk
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PT	Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR	West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

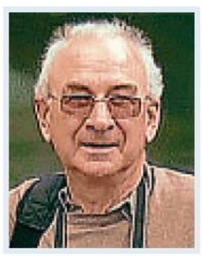
Regular Tours

Daily until October 24 – 'The Jacobite'
Fort William, Mallaig and return.
Loco: 44871 or 45407. WCR

D1021 *Western Cavalier* approaches Dawlish with the 8.15am Bristol to Paignton service on September 5, 1970. DON BENN

WITH FULL REGULATOR

LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



In his latest column, **Don Benn** looks at the work of the Western Region's diesel hydraulic Classes 42, 43 and 52 on express services from 1968 to 1974, including a very fast run with D805 *Benbow* being compared with No. 34013 *Okehampton* on the South Western main line.

INSPIRED by my visit to the excellent Mid-Hants Railway diesel gala on July 12, primarily for Western Region diesel hydraulics D821 *Greyhound* and D1015 *Western Champion*, I looked back through my notebooks for the many modern traction-hauled runs I had on the Western Region, mainly at my time of two spells at Paddington and working on diagram analysis for the 1968 grant claims; in those days, the railway knew how much each line cost to run. But my interest in 'God's Wonderful Railway' (the GWR) went back much further to my early days visiting Paddington, where some of my earliest railway photographs were taken in 1960, and later in 1963, when many days were spent linesiding on the Paddington to Reading stretch.

Even then, I included the diesel hydraulics in my photograph selection. Unfortunately, I did not time any runs until 1968, by which time steam had gone.

The Warship'hydraulics comprised two types: those built at Swindon (Class 42s D800-D832 and D866-D880) and the later versions built by the North British Company (Class 43 numbered D833-D865). Most were rated at 2270hp, and interested readers can explore the details of the engine types and other differences in available literature. Warships started to take over the Waterloo to Exeter services from 1964, although none ever worked the down 'Atlantic Coast Express' (which was steam-worked until its last day on September 4 that year). They lasted until October 1971, when the less powerful Class 33s took over the service, the last Warship withdrawn in 1972.

On June 5, 1975, D1067 approaches Ealing Broadway with the 6.03pm Paddington to Oxford working. DON BENN

High speeds

I start the train running logs with two extraordinary runs, as shown in Table One. On December 1, 1965, a problem with the rolling stock meant that West Country class No. 34013 *Okehampton* resulted in it only having six coaches to take forward from Basingstoke to Salisbury on the 6pm Waterloo to Salisbury service, instead of the normal 11. Nine Elms crew driver Frank Mathews and fireman Davis took full advantage of the late start from Basingstoke and using full regulator and 30% cut-off reached no less than 100mph in the dip over the viaduct at Hurstbourne before easing for a speed restriction prior to the Andover stop, reached in 18 minute 28 seconds for the 18.60 miles, net 16¼ minutes – probably a record for steam. Compared to this is a run with Class 42 D805 *Benbow* on the 9.10am Waterloo to Exeter on March 21, 1970. I'm not sure what the hurry was, but with the usual load of eight coaches for 305 tons, the Warship reached 96mph at Hurstbourne and 97mph before the Andover stop, which was reached in 16 minutes 45 seconds. Both trains had speed restrictions at Grateley, though the one with the Warship'was less severe and both had near identical net times of just over 17 minutes for the 17.31 miles, No. 34013 touching 95mph down Porton bank and D805 96mph. The overall speed restriction on the West of England main line west of Basingstoke was 85mph and, in theory, the Warship was restricted to 90mph.

In September 1970, we had a short break at Dawlish, reached by the 1.30pm from

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On July 12, 2025, D1015 *Western Champion* departs Ropley with the 11.07am from Alresford to Alton. DON BENN

TABLE ONE: BASINGSTOKE TO SALISBURY

Date	Wednesday, December 1, 1965						Saturday, March 21, 1970			
Train	6pm Waterloo to Salisbury						9.10am Waterloo to Exeter St Davids			
Loco	Rebuilt West Country class 4-6-2 No. 34013 *Okehampton*						Class 42 hydraulic D805 *Benbow*			
Load	Six coaches, 201 tons tare, 215 tons gross						Eight coaches 280½ tons tare 305 tons gross			
Crew	Frank Mathews and fireman Davis, Nine Elms MPD						Not recorded			
Recorder	Don Benn						Don Benn			
	miles	**sched**	**mins**	**secs**	**speed**		**sched**	**mins**	**secs**	**speed**
Basingstoke	0.00	0.00	00	00		9¼ mins late	0.00	00	00	½ late
Worting Jct	2.55	5.30	04	08	58½	full regulator and 30%	4.00	04	12	54
MP 51	3.35		04	52	63	cut off all the way to		04	59	58½
Oakley	4.63		06	02	74½	Hurstbourne		06	14	70
MP 53¼	5.55		06	46	77			07	02	67½
Overton	7.80		08	28	87			08	47	80
Whitchurch	11.35		10	52	95			11	16	90
MP 60	12.35		11	29	97			11	55	92
Hurstbourne	13.39		12	02	100			12	30	96
MP 62½	14.85		12	57	93/95	eased		13	27	93/97
MP 64¼	16.60		14	42	19*/36	tsr half mile		14	23	95
Andover	18.60	23.00	18	28			18.30	16	45	
	0.00	0.00	00	00		3¼ mins late	0.00	00	00	R/T
Red Post Jct	1.30		03	15	50			02	52	51
MP 68¾	2.50		04	28	64/69			04	05	63½/65½
Grateley	6.35		08	01	27*	tsr half mile		07	40	49* tsr
Allington Box	9.25		12	39	64			10	24	74
Porton	11.90		14	42	89			12	18	90
MP 81	14.75		16	30	95			13	28	96 #
Tunnel Junction	16.21	19.30	18	07	52*		17.30	15	41	37*
Salisbury	17.31	22.00	20	26		1¾ mins late	20.00	18	20	

Net times Basingstoke to Andover: 16¼ minutes
Andover to Salisbury: 17¾ minutes
Basingstoke to Andover start-to-stop average: 60.43mph

MP 80
net time Andover to Salisbury 17½ minute
Basingstoke to Andover start-to-stop average 66.45mph

TABLE TWO: EXETER TO TAUNTON

Date	Monday, September 7, 1970				
Train	9.55am Paignton to Paddington				
Engine	Class 43 hydraulic D864 *Zambesi*				
Load	Eleven coaches, 378 tons tare 400 tons gross				
Recorder	Don Benn with stopwatch				
Weather	Fine				
	miles	**sched**	**mins**	**secs**	**speed**
Exeter St Davids	0.00	0.00	00	00	¾ min late
Cowley Bridge Jct	1.24	2.30	02	43	47½
Stoke Canon LC	3.70		05	12	58½
MP 188	5.90		07	41	62½
Silverton	7.14		08	54	63
Hele LC	8.39		10	03	66½
MP 184	9.90		11	25	66
MP 183	10.90		12	19	67½
Cullompton	12.56		13	45	70
MP 180	13.90		14	59	64
Tiverton Jct	14.74		15	49	62½
MP 178	15.90		16	59	68
Sampford Peverell	16.58		17	26	67
MP 176	17.90		18	37	64½
MP 175	18.90		19	36	60
Burslecombe	19.15		19	52	56½
Whiteball	19.90	19.00	20	43	54½
MP 173	20.90		21	42	70
MP 172	21.90		22	30	78
MP 171	22.90		23	12	87
Wellington	23.70		23	41	89
Poole Siding	24.90		24	46	86
MP 167	26.90		26	00	90
MP 166	27.90		26	40	92
Norton Fitzwarren	28.85		27	18	86½
Taunton	30.74	30.00	30	16	1 late

* brakes or speed restriction

"Many days were spent linesiding on the Paddington to Reading stretch..."

TABLE THREE: TAUNTON TO EXETER

Date	Friday, September 4, 1970
Train	1.30pm Paddington to Paignton
Loco/unit	Class 52 hydraulic D1017 *Western Warrior*
Load	Ten coaches, 346 tons tare 370 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn with stopwatch
Weather	Sunny periods, light wind

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Taunton	0.00	0.00	00	00	12¾ late
Norton Fitzwarren	1.95		03	03	55½
MP 166	2.84		04	02	62
MP 167	3.84		05	00	62½
Poole Siding	5.84		06	54	63½
Wellington	7.04		08	04	65½
MP 171	7.84		08	46	65
MP 172	8.84		09	45	60
MP 173	9.84		10	50	53
Whiteball	10.84	12.00	12	00	51½
Burlescombe	11.59		12	54	60
MP 176	12.84		13	48	78
Sampford Peverell	14.16		14	40	86½
MP 178	14.84		15	13	90
Tiverton Junction	16.00		16	07	87
MP 180	16.84		16	36	82½
Cullompton	18.17		17	33	82
MP 183	19.84		18	51	75*
MP 184	20.84		19	36	82
Hele	22.35		20	39	86½
Silverton	23.60		21	27	90
MP 188	24.84		22	22	92
Stoke Canon	27.34		24	05	83
Cowley Bridge Jct	29.50	29.30	25	48	60*
Exeter St Davids	30.75	32.00	28	48	9½ late

* brakes or speed restriction

Paddington behind Class 52 D1017 *Western Warrior* (which had 10 coaches for 370 tons), changing at Exeter to 2.36pm to Dawlish behind Class 46 D146, both nine minutes late. After visiting the Dart Valley Railway (where GWR 2-6-2 small prairie No. 4555 was working), we returned to Paddington on the 10.32am on Monday, September 7, which I was delighted to see was hauled by Class 43 D864 *Zambesi*, which had 11 coaches for 400 tons full – well over the load limit of 280 tons. It lost time throughout, arriving 15 late, though most of it not the fault of the locomotive, which battled hard. Table Two shows the Exeter to Taunton section where D864 all but kept time, losing a minute and three quarters to Whiteball, minimum 54½mph and mostly recovered by a 92mph dash downhill afterwards.

Class 52s

Now onto the Type 4 Class 52 diesel hydraulics, of which 74 were built at Swindon and Crewe between 1961 and 1964. They were more powerful than the Class 42s and 43s, being rated at 2700hp and lasting until 1977. They worked more trains which I used than the Warships in the 1970s, being rated in the top load limit lists which ran from one (highest) to seven (lowest). Table Three shows a typical run behind D1017 *Western Warrior* on the 10-coach 1.30pm Paddington to Paignton between Taunton and Exeter, with 370 tons, well within the 540-ton load limit. Leaving more than12 minutes late in this era of poor timekeeping, the schedule was kept exactly to Whiteball (12 minutes precisely) with 53mph minimum and then with a clear run down to Exeter – 30.75 miles was reached in 28 minutes 48 seconds, maximum 92mph.
By comparison, BR standard Class 7 No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* had nine coaches for 345 tons on August 5, 2012, and reached Whiteball in 13 minutes three seconds, minimum 49½mph, and then was stopped outside Exeter in 29 minutes 59 seconds, inside even time from Taunton, maximum speed 79mph – pretty good bearing in mind the prevailing main line steam speed limit. I always reckon a Class 7 steam locomotive is equal to a Type 4 diesel. In June 1968, we had a holiday based at Plymouth, reached on time by a 12.30pm from

On June 22, 1963, 'Warship' D870 *Zulu* passes Iver with the 8.05am from Paignton to Paddington. DON BENN

Paddington which had Class 47 D1592 on 14 for 530 tons. While there, we had a number of runs behind Class 42s and 52s, and we returned to London on the 10.15am from Plymouth hauled by D1007 *Western Talisman,* with 15 coaches for 523 tons tare and 565 tons gross – close to the load limit of 550 tons. We left 10 minutes late on a day of drizzle and just made it up Hemerden bank with a minimum of 12½mph and involving much slipping: see *Heritage Railway* issue 244 for details of this climb.

The need to pull up at Newton Abbot meant that we were 18 late off there and 21 late into Exeter due to signal checks. More checks put us 24 late off Westbury despite some decent running, which included 56mph over Whiteball and 66½ at Somerton. This was obviously a full power run

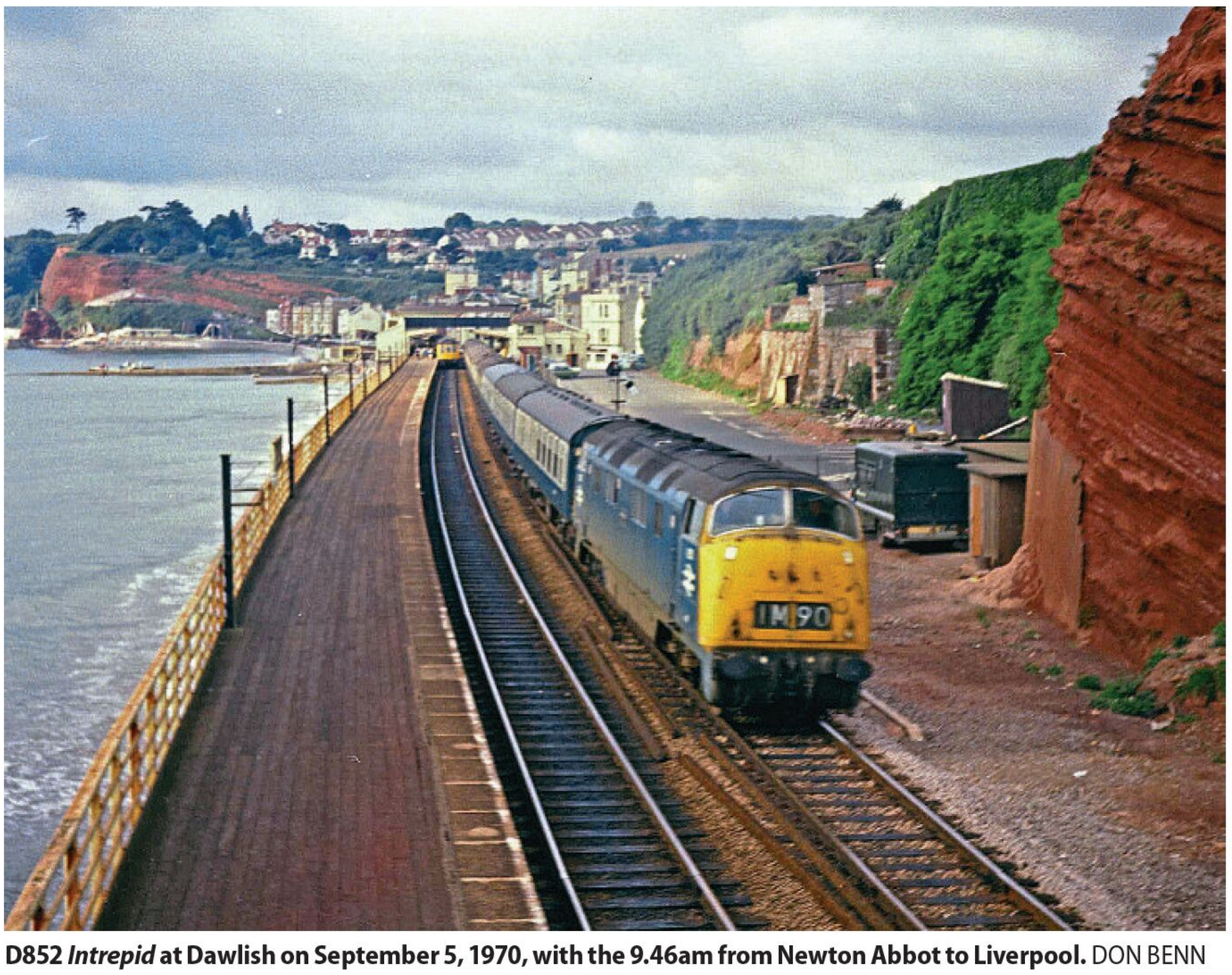
> "Using full regulator and 30% cut-off reached no less than 100mph in the dip..."

TABLE FOUR: READING TO PADDINGTON

Date	Saturday, June 22, 1968
Train	10.30am Plymouth to Paddington
Engine	Class 52 hydraulic D1007 *Western Talisman*
Load	Fifteen coaches, 523 tons tare 565 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn with stopwatch
Weather	Drizzle at times

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Reading	0.00	0.00	00	00	18½ late
Sonning	1.83		03	40	53
Twyford	4.83		06	10	70½
Shottesbrook	7.93		08	41	78
Maidenhead	11.58		11	24	84
Taplow	14.38		12	38	85
Burnham	14.88		13	43	86/83
Slough	17.38		15	30	86½
Langley	19.63		17	05	84/86
Iver	21.08		18	10	85
West Drayton	22.58		19	17	85
Hayes	24.93		20	54	85
Southall	26.73		22	18	80
Hanwell	28.48		23	38	80½
West Ealing	29.33		24	15	81
Ealing Bdy	30.13		24	51	83
Acton	31.58		25	52	85
Old Oak Common	32.58		26	36	80
Westbourne Park	34.58		28	22	51*
Paddington	35.83	40.00	31	24	9¾ late

start to to stop average 68.46 mph
Top performance from a class 52



D852 *Intrepid* at Dawlish on September 5, 1970, with the 9.46am from Newton Abbot to Liverpool. DON BENN

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as we then did the 59.55 miles on to Reading in 58 minutes two seconds, despite a signal stop at Reading West – a gain of six minutes on the easy schedule. Highlights were 66½mph at Savernake and 86½ at Thatcham. Table Four shows the concluding part to Paddington, 35.83 miles in 31 minutes 24 seconds, maximum speed 86½mph once again, so maybe the speed was reading a bit high. One of my best Class 52 runs and a great effort arriving just under 10 late.

Finally, two runs from my day trip to Paignton for the Paignton to Kingswear Railway on Saturday, April 17, 1974. Table Five shows a typical Paddington to Reading run behind D1056 *Western Sultan* on nine coaches and two vans for 390 tons. We had reached 91mph at Slough before a temporary speed restriction intervened and so took 34 minutes 11 seconds instead of the booked 32; net time was 30 minutes. After some runs with GWR 2-6-2T No. 4588, I returned home via the 4.45pm Paignton to Newton Abbot aboard three-car DMU W51077, followed by the 4.15pm Plymouth to Cardiff as far as Exeter St Davids, hauled by D1072 *Western Glory* on seven coaches and four vans for 395 tons. A nice little cameo of a run is shown in Table Six. Even time for the 20.20 miles, maximum 82mph, turning a 3¼-minute late start into a 2¾-minute early arrival. Back to London was not via the GW route, but with Class 33 No. 33028 on eight coaches for 305 tons via the SR route (or what was left of it after the WR tried unsuccessfully to destroy it), ending up just a few minutes late into Waterloo. Next time, more hydraulics, including the Class 35. HR

D1037 *Western Empress* in charge of the 9.07am service from Paignton to Cardiff on September 5, 1970, captured leaving Dawlish during that run. DON BENN

Class 42 'Warship' D821 *Greyhound* at Alresford with the 12.32pm to Alton during the Mid-Hants Railway gala on July 12. DON BENN

TABLE FIVE: PADDINGTON TO READING

Date	Saturday, April 17, 1974
Train	8.30am Paddington to Paignton
Loco	Class 52 hydraulic D1056 *Western Sultan*
Load	9 coaches and 2 vans, 360½ tons tare 390 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn with stopwatch
Weather	Cloudy

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Paddington	0.00	0.00	00	00	½ late
Westbourne Park	1.25		02	59	40
Old Oak Common	3.25		05	01	59
Acton	4.25		06	10	65½
Ealing Broadway	5.70		07	26	73
West Ealing	6.50		98	03	75½
Hanwell	7.35		08	44	77
Southall	9.10	10.00	10	04	80
Hayes	10.90		11	23	82
West Drayton	13.25		13	01	85
MP 14	14.00		13	33	88
Iver	14.75		14	02	90
Langley	16.20		15	03	89½
Slough	18.45	16.30	16	30	91
Burnham	20.95		18	09	90
Taplow	22.45		19	12	77½
			tsr		22*
Maidenhead	24.25	20.30	22	48	34
MP 26	26.00		24	58	58½
MP 28	28.00		26	45	71
MP 30	30.00		28	21	78
Twyford	31.00	26.30	29	06	80
MP 32	32.00		29	50	82½
Sonning SB	34.00		31	17	83½
Reading	35.83	32.00	34	11	2½ late

net time 30 minutes
* brakes or speed restriction

TABLE SIX: NEWTON ABBOT TO EXETER ST DAVIDS

Date	Saturday, April 17, 1974
Train	4.15pm Plymouth to Cardiff
Loco	Class 52 hydraulic D1072 *Western Glory*
Load	7 coaches and 4 vans, 366 tons tare 395 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn with stopwatch
Weather	Cloudy

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Newton Abbot	0.00	0.00	00	00	3¼ late
Hackney SB	0.70		01	36	42
MP 212	1.95		03	09	58½/67
Teignmouth	5.15		06	12	55½
MP 208	5.95		07	05	64½
Dawlish	8.00		08	51	63/65
Dawlish Warren	9.65	11.00	10	21`	64½/72
Starcross	11.70		12	06	65*
MP 200	13.95		14	18	73
Exminster	15.40		15	20	76
MP 197	16.95		16	35	82
St Thomas	18.95		18	25	56*
Exeter St Davids	20.20	26.00	20	01	2¾ early

start to stop average 60.55mph
* brakes or speed restriction

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RAILWAY CENTRE

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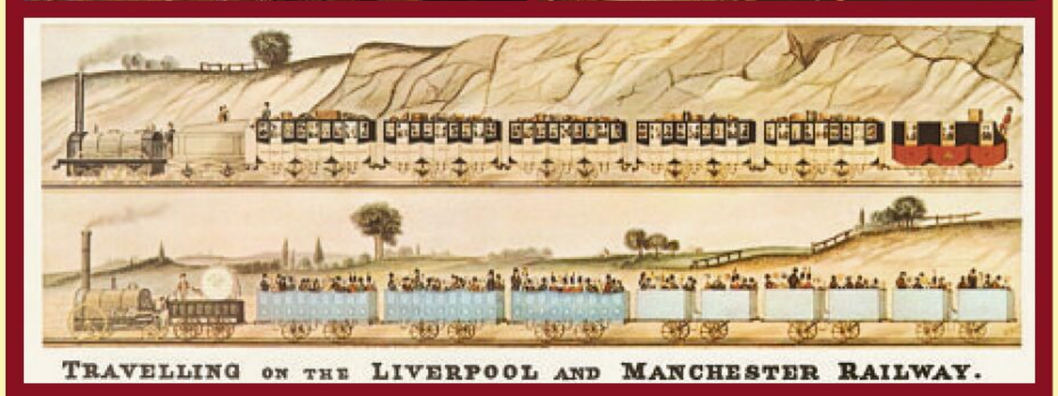
Sunday 14th September 10.30am-4pm



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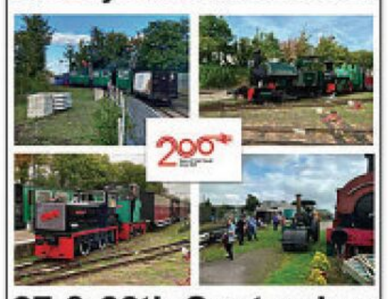

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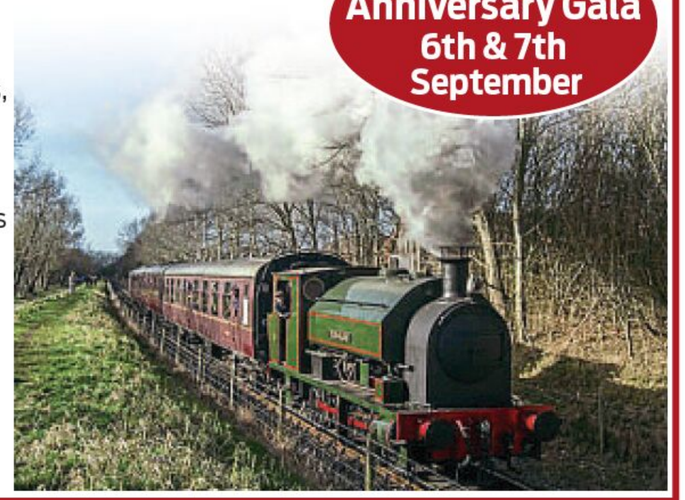

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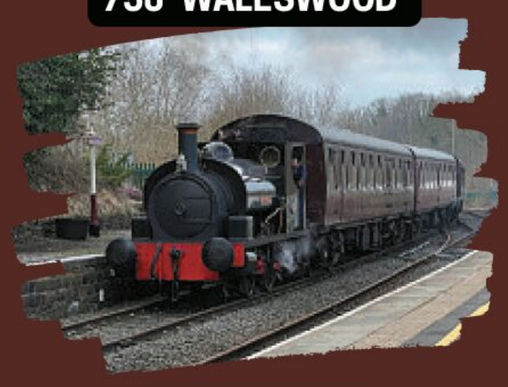

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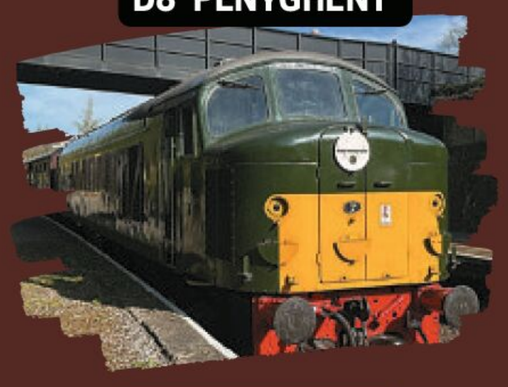

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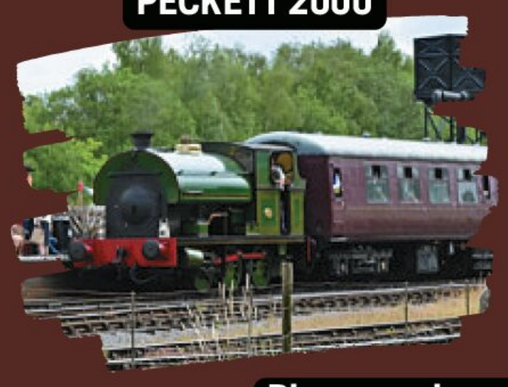

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SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF STEAMING THROUGH SUSSEX

Over a three-day weekend in early August, the Bluebell Railway celebrated its 65th anniversary by holding an all-out gala with almost everything at its disposal in use. **Owen Hayward** details the proceedings, which were rounded off with a spectacular parade of locomotives.

Less than three years after the East Grinstead-Lewes line was closed by British Railways, preservationists had revived a short section of the route for heritage operations – and this became the Bluebell Railway.

The first train departed Sheffield Park on August 7, 1960, running to a specially-constructed halt 100 yards to the south of Horsted Keynes station, which was still in use by BR for third-rail electric services running towards Ardingly and into Haywards Heath.

From those humble beginnings, the heritage line has flourished and become synonymous with Southern steam, and renowned for its strong focus on pre-Grouping era stock.

In the six-and-a-half decades since, the Bluebell has built up a strong fleet of locomotives and carriages, including new-build steam and unique survivors, expanded its undercover facilities, and extended to become a highly-successful 11-mile gem in the heart of Sussex.

Its golden jubilee in August 2010 was quite the spectacle, for despite the extension to East Grinstead not yet being completed, every available locomotive was pressed into service, with the line's pioneering locomotive, LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' No. 55 *Stepney*, being given a fast-track overhaul in time to play a part in the festivities. That gala was rounded out with a cavalcade at Horsted Keynes station starring the seven locomotives that were in steam.

It was not, however, the first time that such a parade ran on the railway; in June 1982, the centenary of the East Grinstead-Lewes line was marked with no less than 13 locomotives passing through the station in historical order – a feat billed as '100 years of history in a single day,' while such activity has been a feature of the occasional Bluebell gala since, although the 50th anniversary event was the last time when one took place.

> "Perhaps the greatest joy was seeing our fleet in full action across all three days – from our heritage steam locomotives to the beautifully restored coaching stock – working hard and looking magnificent. "

Change of scope

With the 65th anniversary penned for August 8-10, the return of the cavalcade drew much attention, and to see such mighty locomotives come together in one place is quite awe-inspiring. This year's line-up, however, marked a significant shift from those that came before it. First and foremost, of the seven locomotives that took part, one was a diesel – a first for the Bluebell in particular.

Class 73 E6040 *The Bluebell Railway*, which arrived in 2023 having been privately purchased and refurbished at Eastleigh, was due to work a diesel diagram throughout the three-day gala, but an electrical fault the day before it began saw it withdrawn for repairs. In its place, Class 33 No. 33108 was pressed into service; normally resident at the Severn Valley Railway, the 'Crompton' has been on holiday in Sussex since May, having been hired in to assist with running additional services during the visit of the Railway 200 exhibition train *Inspiration* during the summer, and it is remaining there until after the September 5-7 diesel gala.

The parade was additionally predominantly dominated by larger locomotives, whereas in years past there was an even spread, incorporating small and medium ones too.

The first cavalcade since the 50th anniversary celebrations in 2010, No. 72 *Fenchurch* leads a southward charge through Horsted Keynes, followed by Nos. 80151, 33108, 65, 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair*, 73082 *Camelot* and 32424 *Beachy Head*. OWEN HAYWARD

SECR O2 No. 65 crosses New Road Bridge with two Mk. 1s, a SR Bulleid third and LNWR observation saloon. OWEN HAYWARD

Take, for example, the 2010 line-up, which saw three 0-6-0Ts and an 0-6-2T included. Of that same event, pre-BR liveries were the most prevalent, including three locomotives in SECR and two in SR colours, whereas in 2025 it was BR that flew the flag with four of the six steam locomotives in that company's colours (plus the 'Crompton' wearing 1980s civil engineers 'Dutch' livery).

Although being built in 1960 might trick some into believing it was the youngest locomotive in service, No. 33108 is some 64 years too young to lay claim to that accolade, for H2 Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head* was outshopped in 2024 after a 24-year-long project to recreate this long-lost class of 4-4-2 locomotives. To that end, *Beachy Head* took prime position to lead the cavalcade on its northward passes, while the oldest locomotive in the line-up, A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch*, built in 1872, led its southward workings, the consist representing a timescale spanning 152 years!

BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80151 coasts past Nobles Farm with the Metropolitan Railway Chesham set on August 9 with a southward working towards Sheffield Park. OWEN HAYWARD

Standard turns 70

It is perhaps a little surprising to realise that when the Bluebell Railway began running services, BR 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73082 *Camelot* was a mere five years of age. Built at Derby Works in July 1955, it spent its life allocated to the south of England, with duties including the working boat trains to Folkestone and Dover. Its time in service after the Bluebell's opening was almost equal to that beforehand, with the locomotive being withdrawn from service in June 1966 with just 11 years of service to its name.

Bought from Barry scrapyard in 1979 by the 73082 Camelot Locomotive Society, its preservation career has therefore far outlasted its BR years; it first returned to service in October 1995 (16 years after arriving at Sheffield Park) and has since received two subsequent overhauls, the most recent being completed in 2021. In June this year, it was temporarily stopped to allow for maintenance work to be carried out, and it was returned to service on July 30, just ahead of time to star at the gala.

The remaining locomotives appearing were SECR 0-6-0 O1 No. 65 (built at Ashford Works in 1896), BR 4-6-2 Battle of Britain class No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* (Brighton Works, 1947) and BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80151 (Brighton Works, 1957, and the youngest example of the class to be preserved). With all locomotives having regional connections, they complemented one another well and told the story of the progression of Southern steam.

There was one further locomotive to be involved, albeit one that was not in steam. *Stepney* has been out of service since March 2014, known to be in need of some fairly extensive work before it can run again. Normally confined to static display within the locomotive shed at Sheffield Park station, it was extracted from its usual position by the public entrance ahead of its visit to Southeastern's Ashford works open day on August 24. Now more easily accessible to be shunted, on the Friday and Saturday it

was posed alongside *Fenchurch,* both in the yard and at the southern end of the station platforms at Sheffield Park – the first time these two 'Terriers' have been seen together in Stroudley's improved engine green colours in preservation!

Your carriage awaits

As mentioned, the Bluebell Railway is fortunate to have a broad selection of coaching stock at its disposal, be that Victorian-era four wheelers dating as far back as 1880, 1920s-era Pullman diners, or the ubiquitous BR Mk. 1. Over the course of the three days, a total of 28 carriages were in operational use – of which 18 were from pre-Nationalisation days.

For many, one highlight was the consist made up of four SR Maunsells and two of the 'Golden Arrow' Pullman cars (*Fingall* and *Christine*). Alhough perhaps commonly associated with being in full rakes of matching vehicles, Pullmans were no stranger to other consists, with other expresses and special workings occasionally seeing one or two of these vehicles included.

Travel aboard either of these two luxurious dining vehicles was available for a £15 supplement, with passengers being served tea, coffee or orange juice and either a fresh bacon roll on the first departure of the day or a slice of homemade cake on all subsequent trains.

For those looking to take a break at Sheffield Park, the award-winning parlour brake third *Car No. 54* was positioned in the bay adjacent to Platform 2 offering similar service aboard a static vehicle for just £10 per person. Normally, these Pullmans are only found on the Bluebell's premium 'Golden Arrow' dining services, and so the opportunity to enjoy their comfort as part of a service train was something that proved immensely popular.

Bound for Sheffield Park, No. 72 *Fenchurch* approaches Tremains Farm with a rake of pre-Grouping four-wheelers and SR-era bogie coaches, with No. 65 assisting from the rear. JAMES CUMMINS/BRPS

Elsewhere, the variety of carriages spanned the Metropolitan Railway with the four ex-Chesham branch carriages forming one set, a mixed rake of LCDR and LBSCR four-wheelers coupled to SECR and LBSCR bogie coaches, LNWR observation saloon and a SR Bulleid open third, all supplementing 10 BR Mk. 1 carriages; anyone looking to sample everything on offer certainly had their work cut out.

One absent part of the Bluebell's rolling stock collection (operationally speaking, at least) was the goods division's collection of freight vehicles, though these were on display in the newly relayed Platform 1 at Horsted Keynes station. Their exclusion was necessitated in part by the unavailability of a working brake van, with SR 'Quen Mary' No. 56290 stopped pending repairs.

Busy interchange

It has perhaps become a fixture of some gala events here to see Horsted Keynes become a bustling junction station just as it once was prior to closure by BR in 1963. This is perhaps most obvious at the annual branch line gala, where locomotives routinely swap stock or terminate from both directions.

Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* approaches Horsted Keynes with a train comprising Pullman cars *Christine* and *Fingall,* plus four Maunsell carriages. PAUL LAWRENCE

Above: Visiting from the Severn Valley Railway for the summer, Class 33 No. 33108 starts its train off from Kingscote on August 9, bound for Horsted Keynes. OWEN HAYWARD

Right: New-build Atlantic *Beachy Head* climbs Freshfield Bank on August 9 with a rake of BR(S) green Mk. 1 stock. PAUL LAWRENCE

When regions collide: SECR O1 No. 65 meets LBSCR H2 Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head* at Sheffield Park on August 8. OWEN HAYWARD

The East Grinstead concert band perform on the platform at Horsted Keynes on August 10 as Nos. 72 and 80151 arrive from Sheffield Park. OWEN HAYWARD

For this gala, the line was divided into two, with the southward direction to Sheffield Park run as one section and the northern end towards Kingscote and East Grinstead another. An intensive service offering six trains to sample meant there was a clockwork pattern of departures from all stations, with the largest locomotives taking on the longer section of line, leaving the smaller ones to rotate round on trips over the shortest.

All in all, the weekend proved a huge draw for visitors at a time when the school holidays mean gala events are traditionally few and far between.

Marketing and communications manager Ruth Rowatt said: "Our 65th anniversary was everything we could have hoped for – a fabulous line-up, a timetable that offered something for everyone and worked seamlessly with Horsted Keynes operations, and glorious weather from start to finish.

"It was wonderful to see the railway at its absolute best, with stations alive with activity and visitors enjoying the atmosphere from morning to evening.

"Perhaps the greatest joy was seeing our fleet in full action across all three days – from our heritage steam locomotives to the beautifully restored coaching stock – working hard and looking magnificent.

"We were also delighted to offer our luxurious Pullman service during the gala, which proved a fantastic success and added an extra touch of elegance to the celebrations.

"The whole event was a brilliant showcase for the Bluebell Railway and a perfect advert for everything we do." HR

BR 5MT No. 73082 approaches Kingscote with an East Grinstead-bound service. Built in 1955, it was just five years old when the Bluebell Railway opened and was celebrating its own 70th birthday throughout the gala. OWEN HAYWARD

Who let the dogs out? The Bluebell's first locomotive may be out of ticket and in need of an extensive overhaul, but the 'Terrier' still managed to play a part in the festivities. On August 9, No. 55 *Stepney* was posed in the platform at Sheffield Park for photographs with No. 72 *Fenchurch*. OWEN HAYWARD

Portrush, Brisbane (and Evesham) in the spotlight

OVER at Portrush on July 19, the world's top golfers were in a head-to-head in the Open Championship, and 10,500 miles away the British & Irish Lions rugby team was out-muscling Australia at Brisbane. Meanwhile, in downtown Evesham, Simon Turner was orchestrating a two-day GW Railwayana auction that featured 1005 lots, including a comprehensive selection of more than 30 nameplates and well over 100 station totem signs.

And it was those two categories that were responsible for a dead-heat at the top, when *The Foyle* and matching cabside numberplate from Northern Counties Committee of Ireland Class W 2-6-0 No. 93 and a BR(S) Greatstone-on-Sea totem each sold for £15,500. No. 93 was built by the LMS in 1935 and withdrawn in 1965, while the latter was a halt opened by the Southern Railway between Lydd-on-Sea and New Romney in July 1937 and closed by BR in March 1967.

The sale featured two other five-figure realisations – both coincidentally also in these two categories – comprising £13,500 for nameplate *Norwegian Monarch* from GWR Star class No. 4027 and £11,500 for BR(W) Bath Green Park.

At this juncture it is opportune to complete the list of main line steam nameplates that went to new homes, and we start with *East Anglian* from LNER B17 No. 61659 at £7600, followed by GWR combined name and numberplate *Tremayne* from Bulldog No. 3358 (£7300), *Alberta* from LMS Jubilee No. 45562 (£6700), and another with the same realisation, *Slieve Donard,* from a second Irish representative, Great Northern Railway (Ireland) Class S 4-4-0 No. 172, named after Northern Ireland's highest mountain.

And still it continued, with *Saint Helena* from GWR Saint class No. 2924 (£6600), one of whose cabside numberplates sold immediately after for £2800, and a clutch of four in close pursuit comprising *Madge Wildfire* from LNER A1 No. 60135 (£6500), *Skylark* (GWR Bird class No. 3454 – £6200), and at £6000 apiece, *Steady Aim* (LNER A2 No. 60512) and *Queen Elizabeth* from a second GWR Star, No. 4036. The smokebox numberplate and a worksplate from No. 60135 also went under the hammer, for £3700 and £1400 respectively.

By far the most closely fought battle in the main line steam nameplates sector was in the price range of about £5000, which comprised *County of Berks* from GWR No. 1002 (£5400) and an LNER Gresley-designed trio (£5000 each) – *Berwickshire* and *Westmorland* from D49 Nos. 62709 and 62735, and *Windsor Lad* from A3 Pacific No. 60035. Also there or thereabouts were *Rudyard Kipling* from Standard Britannia Pacific No. 70035 (£4800) and *Little Linford Hall* from GWR No. 7912 (£4300).

Down into the lower reaches of the category we find no fewer than eight plates that fetched between £3700 and £2600. I'll start with *Vulcan* from GWR Bulldog No. 3318 that went for £3700, and continue with *Holkham* (LNER B17 No. 61601) at £3500, *Cranmore Hall* (GWR No. 4914) at £3200, and at £3100 *Naworth Castle* (LNER B17 No. 61629).

That leaves us with *Longford Grange* from GWR No. 6878 (£3000), one of whose cabsides went straight after for £2200, and three more members of the GWR Hall class: *Whorlton Hall* (No. 6929), *Honington Hall* (No. 5969) and *Arbury Hall* (No. 5986), at £3000, £2700 and £2600 respectively. A cabside numberplate from No. 5986 sold after its matching plate for £900. Nameplates that failed to sell under the hammer but went after close of play were *Hampden* (GWR Castle class No. 5074) for £11,000, *King Henry VI* from GWR No. 6018 (£10,750), *66 Squadron* from SR Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34110 (£8000), *Robert H Selbie* from LNER M2 class 0-6-4T No. 6155 that sold for £4500, and *Gazelle* from B1 No. 61003 (£4000), the smokebox plate of which also sold for £2100, leaving as unsolds two LNER B17s, *Huddersfield Town* from No. 61653 and *Quidenham* from No. 61609.

Bidders' attention

It wasn't only main line steam nameplates that attracted the bidders' attention, of course, for heritage modern traction demanded its fair share of the limelight. In this sector came *Trojan* from Class 43 diesel-hydraulic 'Warship' D856 at £11,500, accompanied by *The King's Shropshire Light Infantry* (Class 45 'Peak' D50/45040) that fetched £9200, *Orion* (Class 47 D1668/47633) that went for £8200, and at £6000 *Sir Edward Elgar* from Class 50 D407/50007 (a name originally carried by GWR Castle class No. 7005).

Top dogs in three other steam locomotive categories were cabside numberplate 435 from an ex-Brecon & Merthyr Railway 0-6-2T built in 1921 and withdrawn by BR in 1954 that went for £6300, the smokebox numberplate from GWR No. 5079 *Lysander* (£4300), and finally a 1923 LNER Doncaster worksplate from A3 No. 60108 *Gay Crusader* whose £4900 realisation just pipped a similar 1928 plate from classmate No. 60093 *Coronach* (£4700).

Mention should be made at this juncture of the leading heritage modern traction worksplate in the auction, a 1957 Brush Traction example from Class 31 D5501/31001 that achieved £3700. The first of many times I logged this diesel at my local station of Ilford was on March 28, 1958, on an Up empty stock working. Modern? That's 67 years ago. Good grief.

The Greatstone-on-Sea totem was obviously a clear category leader, but BR(W) Bath Green Park was a worthy runner-up at £11,500 and indeed so too third-placed BR(M) Borrowash, which was making its auction debut and achieved £6500. On a similar theme comes the leading SR target sign Crewkerne, which sold for £3500.

Other headliners were an LSWR Preece block instrument (£3700), a Class 71 electric locomotive (E5000-23) 'Golden Arrow' headboard introduced in 1960 (£2800), and a Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway ex-Gayton Road station 14in dial clock that went for £2124, the MGNJR being the only railway company that painted the original locations on the dial. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

Musing on the two top realisations in the sale, Simon said: "*The Foyle* realisation was a surprise. It was contested by two Irish bidders and has returned to Ireland, a long way from rural Worcestershire where it resided for decades!

"Greatstone-on-Sea was contested by two bidders who had family memories of the town, and its realisation makes it the highest-priced Southern Region totem by a long way."

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Signs provide a platform for success

TOTEM platform signs are one of the flavours of the month – indeed, perhaps of the year – and that trend is very much emphasised in the memorabilia on offer in Main Line Railwayana's timed auction that started on August 25 and runs until August 31. In this category are BR(S) Epsom making what is believed to be its auction debut, while BR(Sc) Gleneagles has a golfing ring to it, and a selection from of other regions will also be teeing up for a bid to

reach the honours board, as will a variety of steam era seatbacks.

There is also a cabside numberplate from GWR 2-8-0 No. 2851, the smokebox numberplates from LMS Class 8F 2-8-0 No. 48692 and Standard Class 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75012, a carriageboard from the 'Royal Duchy' Paddington-Penzance express, and two early GWR handlamps and a GER 1917 ex-Norwich Thorpe example.

Heritage modern traction collectors won't feel left out, for included are nameplate *The Port of Felixstowe,* from Class 47 No. 47291 (ex-D1993), and worksplates from two other members of the class, No. 47497 *Tayside Region* (ex-D1940) and No. 47584 *County of Suffolk* (formerly D1775). In support are six Class

37 worksplates and another from preserved Class 33 No. 33110 that started life in October 1960 as D6527.

A North Eastern Railway drop dial clock, numbered 3977, is also going under the hammer, and so too some London Underground memorabilia that includes destination plates and a platform roundel from Mile End.

Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **Ends August 29**
  Paddington Ticket Auctions
- **Ends August 31**
  Main Line Railwayana
- **September 2**
  Special Auction Services (model trains)
- **September 5/6**
  Great Central Railwayana
- **September 18/19**
  Great Central Railwayana ('Bloxham' sale)
- **September 20**
  Thirsk Railwayana
- **September 20-October 4**
  Great Northern Railwayana

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Missing SR Battle of Britain's crests 'did exist'

REGARDING the sale by GW Railwayana of a nameplate from Battle of Britain No. 34110 *66 Squadron* – the only member of the class not to carry crests. I researched this subject back in 2014, when the company that made the original Bulleid Pacific crests, Burnham Signs, closed down, with No. 34081 *92 Squadron* receiving the last set to be produced. There is strong evidence that not only were crests made for No. 34110, but that they probably still exist.

In a March 2014 *Railway Magazine* article titled 'Naming the Battle of Britain Class,' Jeff Dacombe wrote that he saw the *66 Squadron* crests on display at two consecutive open days at Eastleigh Works in the late 1950s.

Also, Ian Wright of Sheffield Railwayana Auctions, stated he too had seen the *66 Squadron* crests – both minus their brass surrounds – when he collected some other items from a vendor in the Nuneaton or Uttoxeter area, whose father had rescued them from Eastleigh Works.

After the engine's withdrawal in November 1963 and scrapping the following March, one of its nameplates (presumably not the one that has just come up for auction) was presented to its namesake squadron, then based at RAF Seletar in Singapore, who fixed it to the front bumper of the station's Land Rover!

If the crests were made and do survive, perhaps Geoff or a raílwayana collector might be able to track them down?

Toby Jennings, Axminster, Devon

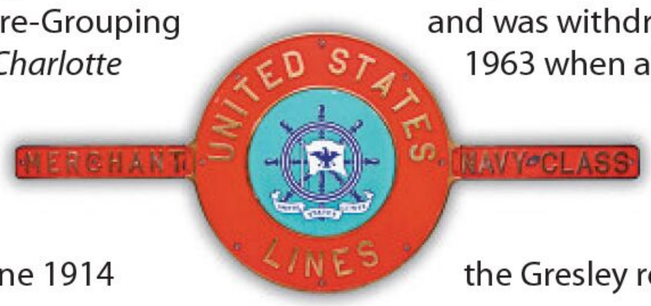
Crest fallen: No. 34110 *66 Squadron* speeds through Brookwood in Surrey with the Down Waterloo to Southampton and Bournemouth 'Royal Wessex' on an unrecorded date. The Battle of Britain light Pacific was the only member of the class not to carry crests, although *Heritage Railway* reader Toby Jennings believes they were made and may survive. One of the locomotive's nameplates was recently sold by GW Railwayana Auctions for £8000, which has reignited the debate about the 'missing' crests. TRANSPORT TREASURY/JOHN DAVENPORT

Then there were nine – and counting?

EARLY in August, Great Central was listing just one main line steam nameplate in its September 6 flagship quarterly sale – *Fairey Battle* from GWR Castle class No. 5077, as reported in last month's column. Within a week, however, that singleton was joined by eight more, of which five were from Nigel Gresley-designed locomotives, two from the Southern Railway, and the eighth from the GWR.

Two of the eight newcomers are from the pre-Grouping era – *Princess Charlotte* from Star class 4-6-0 No. 4054, built at Swindon in June 1914 and withdrawn from Plymouth Laira (83D) in February 1952, and *Loch Laggan* from LNER K2 No. 61791, which was outshopped by Kitson & Co in August 1921 and also made it into BR stock before ending its days at Fort William (65J) in March 1960.

Another contender from north of the border is *Felstead* from LNER A3 No. 60089, which emerged from Doncaster in August 1928 carrying the name of the horse that had won the Derby three months previously, and was withdrawn in October 1963 when allocated to Edinburgh St Margaret's (64A).



Rounding off the Gresley representatives are nameplates from three members of the D49 'Shire' and Hunt' class of 4-4-0s: Nos. 62724 *Bedfordshire*, 62732 *Dumfries-shire*, and 62748 *The Southwold* with fox, all of which were built at Darlington in 1928-33 and withdrawn in 1957/58 from respectively Hull Botanic Gardens (53B), Carlisle Canal (12C), and Leeds Neville Hill (50B).

On then to the Southern Railway, with plates from two Pacifics built when the steam era was beginning to sense a new order of motive power was eyeing up the future. They are *United States Lines,* from January 1945 Eastleigh-built Merchant Navy No. 35012, and *Chard* from West Country No. 34033, which was constructed at Brighton in June 1946. The former was withdrawn from the Battersea shed of Nine Elms (70A) in April 1967, while the West Country was given its marching orders in December 1965 when allocated to Eastleigh (71A).

This means the West Country was in service for just 19½ years and the MN a little over 22 years, but in its life the latter clocked up 1,134,836 miles, which equates to an average of nearly 140 miles every day. The auction will be live online and start at 10am.

GWR eyes top spot with Castle leading the way

A live steam 7¼in gauge model of GWR No. 4082 *Windsor Castle* with an estimated selling price of up to £50,000 is set to go under the hammer in a two-day auction being held by Harper Field of Stonehouse, Glos., on October 8/9.

It was constructed by world-renowned modelmaker David Aitken, one of whose models sold for £100,000 in 2015, and will be accompanied in the auction by a second Aitken model built to the same gauge, of GWR 2-8-0 No. 3822, which will carry a top estimate of £40,000. Two other GWR models, of 0-4-2T No.1466 in 5in gauge, and a 3½in gauge No. 7918 *Rhose Wood Hall*, will also feature, while a second 3½in gauge model, of Class 6P5F 2-6-0 No. 13246 (BR No. 42946), will bring a touch of the LMS to the occasion.

A 7¼in gauge live steam model of a GWR King class 4-6-0 was also expected to be consigned to the sale, which will be a saleroom and live online auction, starting at 10am on each day.

Rail and road combination to Cornwall heads sale

COMBINED road and rail travel from London to Cornwall's Lizard peninsula in eight hours was the theme of a circa early 1900 GWR poster card that topped the Paperchase July 14-29 quarterly auction with a realisation of £360. It carried the name of James C Inglis – Scottish-born Sir James Charles Inglis, who was appointed general manager and consulting engineer of the railway in 1903 and died in Rottingdean, near Brighton, in 1911 at the age of 60.

Joint runners-up at £330 were 150 b/w negatives of a variety of locomotives in the late-1950s and a similar selection of a further 220 negatives. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 12½%.

Live steam and electric dead-heat for top honours

TWO models dead-heated for the winner's laurels in a two-day sale held by Vectis on July 30/31with realisations of £1100, comprising a gauge three live steam LNWR 4-4-0 No. 7093 *King Edward* made by Bing of Germany and a gauge one three-rail electric German outline Pacific No. HB 12921 constructed by Fa Berendt of Stuttgart. Behind at £900 was a Gladiator Models of Derby O-gauge LNER Class U1 2-8-8-2 Beyer Garratt No. 2395 (BR No. 69999).

At £850 apiece was an Aster of Japan gauge one live steam model of preserved LNWR 2-4-0 No. 790 *Hardwicke* and an O-gauge GNR 'Stirling Single' 4-2-2 No. 8.

Prices excluder buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

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DOING THINGS THE SOUTH DEVON WAY

Our ongoing series discussing the issues faced by our heritage railways takes us to the South Devon Railway, where **Owen Hayward** spoke to general manager Ernie Ellsworth-Wilson about the challenges of being a line in a predominantly tourist-focused part of the country and the steps being taken to help safeguard its future.

The South Devon Railway has a particularly rustic charm to it. Following the River Dart between Buckfastleigh and Totnes, this seven-mile branch passes through some of the region's finest scenery and has for many years been in a strong position whereby it has ably afforded to assist other heritage lines by loaning out some of its locomotives for lengthy spells. Yet while there are many challenges it shares with its contemporaries, its position in the geography of the country does come with unique ones. With Devon being a very tourist-centric demographic, to encourage people to visit away from that market often requires convincing them to drive past other heritage lines. Despite this, general manager Ernie Ellsworth-Wilson reports that a slight increase in passenger numbers has been experienced.

"It's been a small increase year on year; while still not back to pre-Covid levels, it is going in the right direction," he tells me. "Revenue is also increasing. So far, we're up again on 2024 and are quite pleased with that, because reports from other local tourist attractions is that their footfall was down 8-10% during the May half-term in particular, whereas we were 1.5% up during that same period. Admittedly, that's not massive figure, but it's nice to know we are bucking that trend.

"There are many people serving the tourism demand, but the amount of demand has obviously reduced since Covid-19 because people are now going abroad again, meaning that we are all fighting for the same market."

The right marketing

Marketing your product correctly is vital for any heritage line, and making the most of the options available to you will be a massive boon, as too will making sure your presence is as strong as possible.

"We've recently upped the game by engaging a marketing agency which has revamped everything. We have a new website, new branding, and we're now really embracing digital marketing. We've had a big push to spend more of the marketing budget on digital rather than conventional print. We still do a leaflet and distribute it in all the usual locations, but we are really seeing results from what we're doing with the digital presence. Much of it is just about the product that you're selling.

"We have a new tagline of 'Jump aboard' which we tie in to things, so 'Jump aboard for a great day out,' 'jump aboard for rails and ales' – it gives us some consistency. Marketing is key because we're all competing for the same group of people, so we have to stand out above the others and get our message out there."

Ernie also points out that the railway has adjusted its pricing structure to encourage more families to visit, with children's fares being half the price of an adult day rover.

"We were seeing an increase in the number of non-family visitors – not enthusiasts, but more adult and senior couples without children. Obviously, it's families who are hardest hit at the moment, so if we can make the pricing more attractive, hopefully we'll encourage them back too. That certainly seems to be working because we've seen an increase in the number of families and children being brought here so far this year."

Supporting and working with local attractions can also bring about benefits if

Above: Small prairie No. 5526 awaits departure from Buckfastleigh with a mixed rake of GWR carriages on August 28, 2022. KENNY FELSTEAD

Right: The SDR has developed strong links with many heritage lines and groups. For its Polar Express services in 2024, it hired in GWR 2800 2-8-0 No. 2807 from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, seen here approaching Staverton on January 3. Negotiations for a large locomotive for this year's festive workings are ongoing, but it is expected that whatever is secured will go on to appear at the January 2-4, 2026, winter steam gala too. OWEN HAYWARD

GWR pannier tank No. 6412 propels its autocoach away from Totnes Riverside during the January 3-5, 2025, winter steam gala, the consist reflected in the still waters of the River Dart below. OWEN HAYWARD

done correctly. Once upon a time, a joint ticket could be bought as standard that not only allowed travel on the trains, but also entry into the butterfly and otter sanctuary at Buckfastleigh, as well as the rare breeds centre at Totnes Riverside. A great idea in theory, but it was one that actually didn't make much commercial sense. "We were finding that it didn't really make a difference to the passenger numbers, but we were still providing that discount, which obviously isn't very good from a revenue perspective," Ernie points out. "Now, a few times a year we do events where we put it all together in the one ticket price and that's proven extremely popular. We did one at the start of May and it's been our best yet. On the bank holiday Monday, we were full!"

Events

Getting the right balance of events to appeal to as wide a variety of people as possible is something we are seeing across the sector, with immersive dining experiences introduced and a variety of character days each appealing to new audiences.

"We had Day Out With Thomas this year after a hiatus, and sales were really good. We've also got Polar Express, operated by PNP Events, where we get almost three times as many passengers at Christmas than we did with the traditional Santa Express trains. So far this year, we've seen an increase in demand for them since they went on sale. Away from the family market, we also have a number of dining products on offer, such as Sunday lunches and afternoon teas, and there's ploughman's meals on Saturdays too. This year we've also introduced murder mysteries on a couple of Fridays a month. We are constantly trying to expand in the dining market because there's a real demand for that. We make sure we have something aimed at different markets and budgets, and they're all very popular.

> "We were seeing an increase in the number of non-family visitors – not enthusiasts, but more adult and senior couples without children."

"One thing we do with dining now is that we operate them on our normal service trains. We used to run them as a separate service, and that obviously comes with the cost of the staff to work it, as well as running another locomotive. Now all we do is attach the extra dining carriages to our normal passenger train. That really reduces the operating cost.

"We have something nearly every weekend throughout the year and they almost always sell out, so that's really good.

"It's about offering added value, aimed at getting people to come to the railway who, being from a slightly different market, might not come otherwise. That's great from a marketing point of view as it allows us to target specific people and interests, and then hopefully it opens up the railway to them.

"What we're finding is that quite often, someone who comes for a murder mysetery evening, for example, will book to come back for a dining train or a family event because they've really enjoyed their visit."

The recent introduction of Pullman car *Lydia* into service has generated a lot of positive publicity, and the line has already receieved numerous enquiries for private hires. Ernie said further premium dining vehicles are to be introduced, although care must be taken to strike a fine balance and not oversaturate the market.

"We have our own two 'super saloons' which have both been out of traffic for a while. One of those is part way through a major rebuild, but we'll finish off rebuilding *King George* and see where we go from there. What we'll probably do is have those two in service, and then in time get the second saloon ready to replace one of the other two vehicles when they need to come out of service for work in future.

No. 3205 is currently stored in the yard at Buckfastleigh, where it awaits a future overhaul. A share issue launched in December 2023 has successfully raised some capital towards the expected cost; however, more funding is required before a start can confidently be made on the project. OWEN HAYWARD

Plans are afoot to finish erecting the running shed at Buckfastleigh, of which a third was built after the previous was demolished pre-Covid. The additional undercover space will hugely benefit many works and also provide dry shelter for some of the out-of-service locomotives, both steam and diesel. OWEN HAYWARD

Another project taking place is the conversion of a former gold bullion van into a passenger vehicle which will boast a buffet, disabled access space and guard's compartment, reducing the number of low-capacity individual vehicles required to serve each of these three purposes. OWEN HAYWARD

Alongside external contract work, focus is currently on completing GWR 0-4-2T 1400 No. 1420, which has not run for 19 years. While a finish date cannot be given at the moment, general manager Ernie Ellsworth-Wilson is confident that it will be a part of the SDR fleet at some point during 2026. OWEN HAYWARD

"We already have an SO we've done up and made look more like an FO, and that's our core dining train with 48 seats, plus *Lydia* with 24 seats. If we can add the Super Saloon, that will take us almost to a 100-seat dining train, but there's only so much you can cater for with a single kitchen car on the set. We are always mindful of what must be overhauled to make sure we have back-ups for when they come out, though they have quite long lifespans for the time being."

Getting the fleet right

Being a country branch comes with its challenges – you can push as hard as you want to encourage people to visit, but if you can't accommodate them, then it could all come to naught. Short platforms and loops limit the length of trains able to be operated, so picking which vehicles go in for work must be considered carefully. The alternative, however, is to address that in the rebuilding of some vehicles to help matters.

"We've got a Mk. 1 being overhauled at the moment which was built as BSK No. 35327 (rather coincidentally, our k itchen car was rebuilt from BSK No. 35326), now No. 80225, and it was formerly a gold bullion carriage. It is being converted to our own-design vehicle with a buffet, guard's van and a seating area for people with disabilities. That means that near enough all the things you need on a train we will have all in one carriage. Currently, we must have one vehicle providing for each purpose, each with not much seating capacity. By putting them all into one vehicle, we can then put it out with two TSOs, giving 128 seats, and that's a perfect set for us off-peak. From the coal point of view, that's a plus as there's less weight to be moved by the locomotive, but it also saves on unnecessary wear and tear on an excessive number of low-capacity vehicles.

"Locomotive-wise, we have GWR 0-4-2T 1400 No. 1420 in the final throes of overhaul. It's been 19 years since it last ran, but it was a slow-burn project because of how big a job it was going to be. Basically, the whole boiler is new, apart from the steam dome. That's it – the whole thing has been renewed! It's got new water tanks, bunker, and cab, there's been a lot of work on the bottom end. It's near enough a new engine. It's taken longer than expected but that's not really been a surprise.

"We lost a few years on it during Covid, when we halted overhauling our own fleet to focus on contract work to keep the money coming in. That was definitely the right decision at the time but has meant we are struggling a little for steam engines for now. All being well, No. 1420 will be tested later this year – it will definitely be in the running fleet at some point next year.

"In the meantime, small prairie 2-6-2T No. 5542 is being readied for its boiler lift, which is being done at the same time as 0-6-0PT No. 6412. Once those are out, we'll inspect the boilers, and when we know which is likely to have the quickest turnaround, we shall go from there."

For many years, the SDR had a surplus of locomotives at its disposal; it was not uncommon to see one or two out on lengthy loans to help other lines in their time of need. At present, the railway only has Nos. 1369 and 5526 in service, but Ernie is confident that in a few years' time they will be back on stronger footing and maybe even able to let things out again. This may well include the sole-surviving Collett goods 0-6-0 No. 3205, which has been out of service since 2017 in need of heavy overhaul.

> "Having a surplus of locomotives can have something of a benefit. If one fails, we have something we can bring back to provide cover."

"We couldn't justify starting anything on it until we could be certain that it would stay here," Ernie explains. "Thankfully, at the end of 2023 we agreed a long-term lease with the locomotive's owning group, but it needs some major work on the boiler and the bottom end. We launched a share issue at the same time, which ran for 12 months to raise funds for a variety of projects. It had a minimum of £350,000 and a maximum of £3 million.

"We didn't get loads obviously, as people just don't have the money, but we were really pleased with how it all went and passed the minimum. Part of the anticipated use of some of that money is to go towards No. 3205.

"We are looking at other funding options, but it will be an extremely expensive overhaul,

Unique Collett Goods No. 3205 approaches Buckfastleigh during its previous spell in service. KENNY FELSTEAD

No. 6412 at Riverford with a pair of autocoaches on February 17, 2017. KENNY FELSTEAD

so we must know how we'll finance it before we start work. It remains an intention to see it back as it's perfect for us. It's a tender locomotive that isn't too big, is really popular, and is unique.

"Having a surplus of locomotives can have something of a benefit. If one fails, we have something we can bring back to provide cover. It also offers variety to our crews – and, of course, there's the income you get from hiring them out.

"They are, however, increasingly more expensive to overhaul, so it's that balance between the hire fees and whether those cover the overhaul costs.

"I think hiring them out will basically cover their costs – you won't make loads of money, but you're not going to lose money because of having hires for them and the flexibility you gain with them."

Making sure you are retaining that which is necessary while not burdening yourself with stock that cannot feasibly be restored will help keep a clearer picture of your end goal. In recent years, a substantial clear-out of redundant items of stock has taken place with this in mind.

"There was *Dumbleton Hall* which, despite what some might say, we had no idea would end up in Japan. Many of us hoped we'd see it on the main line here in the UK. We also sold No. 3803 to Dartmouth Steam Railway, which was always its intended home when it was first preserved. An autocoach in a poor condition has also gone.

"We've had a good look at what we've got, and we'll probably do another review soon. I doubt there'll be any locomotives we want to part with – we have a really good fleet here now – but there are probably a few carriages we need to seriously look at and ask if we will ever get around to doing them or if we even need them. It's far better to move them on while they are still restorable than wait until they are rotten hulks."

Eyes on the future

Heritage lines are often described as running fast to stand still, so making sure your product is the best it can be puts you on a strong footing for making sure your visitors go home having had the best experience possible. That can range from simple things like the aesthetic of a station forecourt to creating an immersive experience as part of their day. Keen to ensure that the railway becomes an all-year attraction, Ernie highlighted some plans the railway has to achieve this ambition. "There's a new restoration facility we'd like to build on the far side of the station site, and also our running shed will be extended. The old one was demolished pre-Covid, and we got around to putting up a third of the replacement. We've got planning permission to finish the rest, and that will happen soon.

"There's improvements to make at all our stations to ensure we have the facilities to not only look after our rolling stock, but also vitally our passengers – as any tourist attraction should. We want to create more exhibitions and indoor space; our original 1872 goods shed at Buckfastleigh is part-museum, part-carriage workshop. If we get the restoration centre, we'll have the whole goods shed building publicly accessible as an exhibition space and indoor event space.

"We obviously have many locomotives and rolling stock, but not all of it can be in service at once, so rather than hiding them in sidings, can we create something like at Highley where we have them indoors, publicly

Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 2031 *Ashley* (built 1942) and SDR broad gauge 0-4-0 *Tiny* (built 1868) in the museum at Buckfastleigh. It is hoped that improvements at the site will enable the museum space to be expanded and for the railway to become a year-round attraction, even on days when trains are not running. OWEN HAYWARD

GWR pannier tank No. 1369 coasts into Buckfastleigh on June 5. Having spent recent years as a locomotive on long-term loan to other lines, it will now remain at the SDR until the locomotive fleet is back to a strength that will allow such hires to resume. OWEN HAYWARD

A quintessential South Devon scene as GWR prairie No. 5526 and its train are reflected in the river waters at Dartington on January 3. OWEN HAYWARD

accessible, with interpretation that people can look around? It'll make us more appealing on wet days, but also potentially opens us up as an all-year attraction as through the winter, when trains aren't running, you can still have a museum site available for people.

"Coal is talked about a lot, but it's probably not my biggest concern at the moment. People's perception of the world is changing and how what they do impacts the environment, so how they perceive coming for steam train rides is something we all must be mindful of. We are always going to be burning some kind of fuel, so there'll always be that release of carbon, so we need to look at everything we can do to promote that it is still green travel. Much of what we do is to promote the use of our free car park at Buckfastleigh and travel aboard the trains to visit Totnes in the summer – rather than drive and get jammed up in traffic there. We become more than just a train ride in that sense.

"Railways have a lot of ecological benefits for local wildlife. We work closely with trusts and groups to ensure we manage the lineside in the right way to encourage the right sort of wildflowers to make sure we provide a good wildlife corridor.

"Financial challenges will persist. People are becoming more and more strapped for cash, and railways are becoming more expensive to run. Coal, utilities, the stock for shop and food for the café – all these bills will go up, but not necessarily at the same rate as your revenue, so it's constantly being aware of that.

"We are in a reasonably good position as we've undertaken a lot of track renewal, so much of the line is good well into the future, but some lines haven't reached that stage yet and are running on track that does – or will soon – need expensive replacement.

"Our long-term goal is to make sure we have a sustainable business to continue running a heritage railway with all its infrastructure well into the future. Obviously, everything we ran the share issue for are the things we identified as needing for that.

"If money were no object, we'd do all that, renew all the track and employ more staff. Everyone talks to us about extending back towards Ashburton. That would be lovely – it's certainly not something we'd be against, but neither is it something we're putting resources into at the moment because we have to make sure we focus on the seven miles we have and what we need to run it. Conversely, even if we had the money, we'd be better off trying to buy the old Dairy Crest site at Totnes, build a bridge over the River Dart, and put the railway back into Totnes itself, next to a main line station with a car park, rather than being where we are now, about 20 minutes out from the town. Totnes is by far our biggest population that we serve, so getting closer to there would be a huge gain."

Winter gala

Though enthusiast events can be a divisive topic for many heritage lines, Ernie is more than happy to see them take place on the SDR, despite the geographical challenges.

"We brought back the diesel gala last year – the first since 2019 – and got a Class 60 in to visit, which was extremely popular. In the past, we'd found these hadn't really worked. That's partly because of where we are – so it costs a lot to bring things in. There aren't many main line depots down here, so we can't just call up and ask someone to send something over as there's nothing really stabled nearby. Even by road we are a long way from most places, so it is expensive, but it seems there is an appetite for these events again.

"We are looking at building another big steam gala back into the main part of the season.

"We have our heritage transport weekend on September 13/14 but are thinking about bringing in some visiting locomotives to make that our key Railway 200 celebration as well. Depending on how that goes, we'll look to bring back a bigger steam gala in the main part of the calendar from next year.

"The winter galas are really good little packages. We have the rolling stock available after Christmas and we generally have a big hired-in locomotive that's been with us through December, so we look at adding an extra smaller one to make it interesting.

"They have proven really popular, and it doesn't cost us all too much to put on. Obviously, it'll never be packed out because its the festive season and people are busy, but it is a great format that works well and is profitable, so we'll carry on with that.

"We'll have another gala again this coming winter, taking place on January 2-4. We're not sure yet what we'll have for our Polar Express, but that will still be here, and we'll aim to hire something in from somewhere else.

"We'll see where No. 1420 is at that point. It would be nice to say it will be ready for then, but you can never put a date on these things, of course." HR

"Our long-term goal is to make sure we have a sustainable business to continue running a heritage railway with all its infrastructure well into the future."

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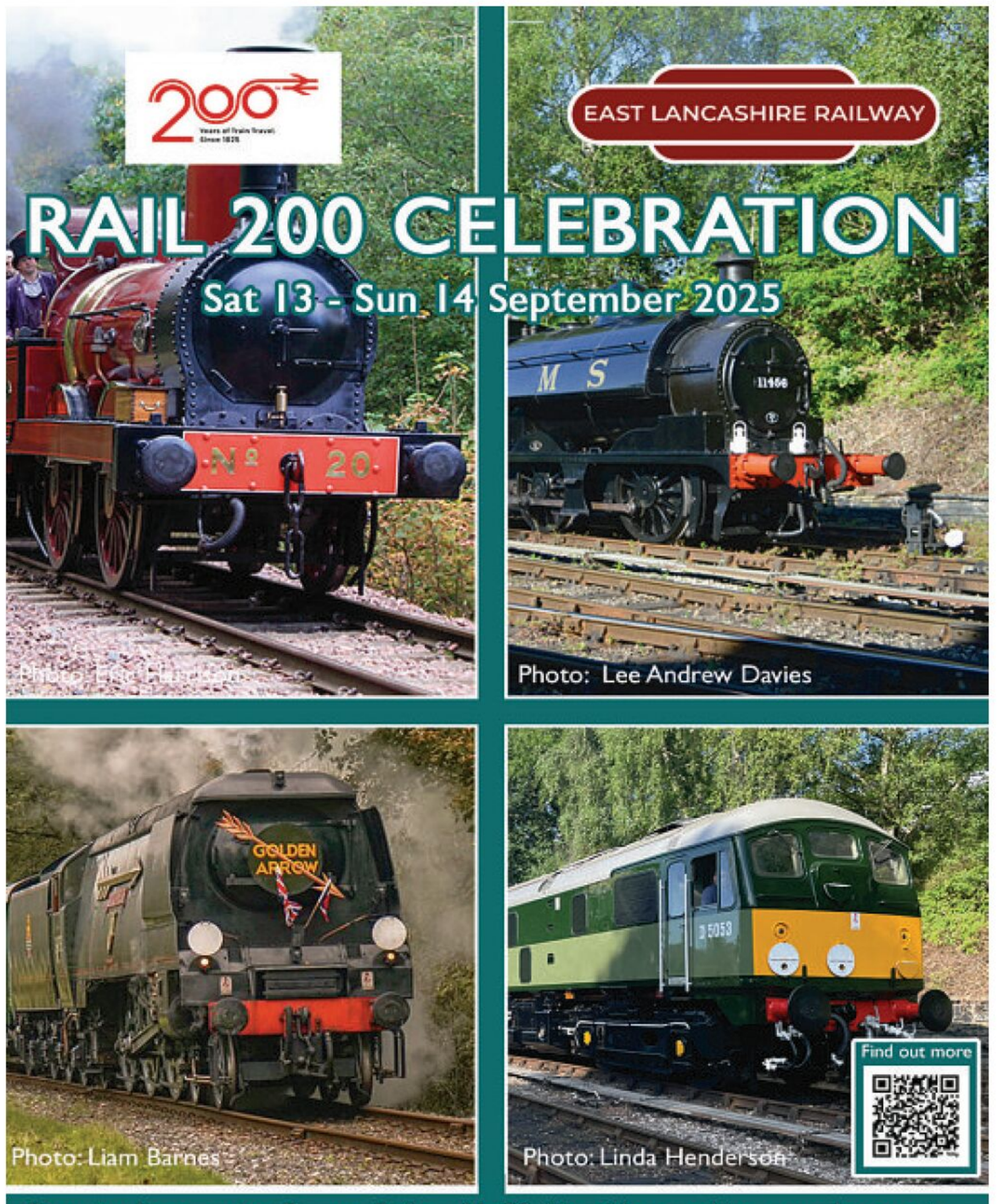

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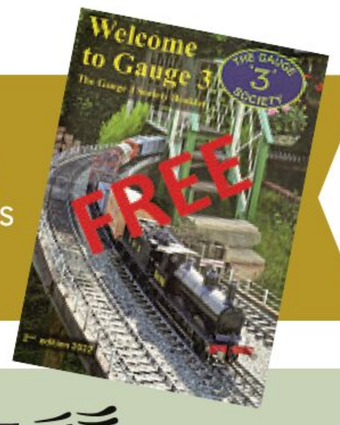

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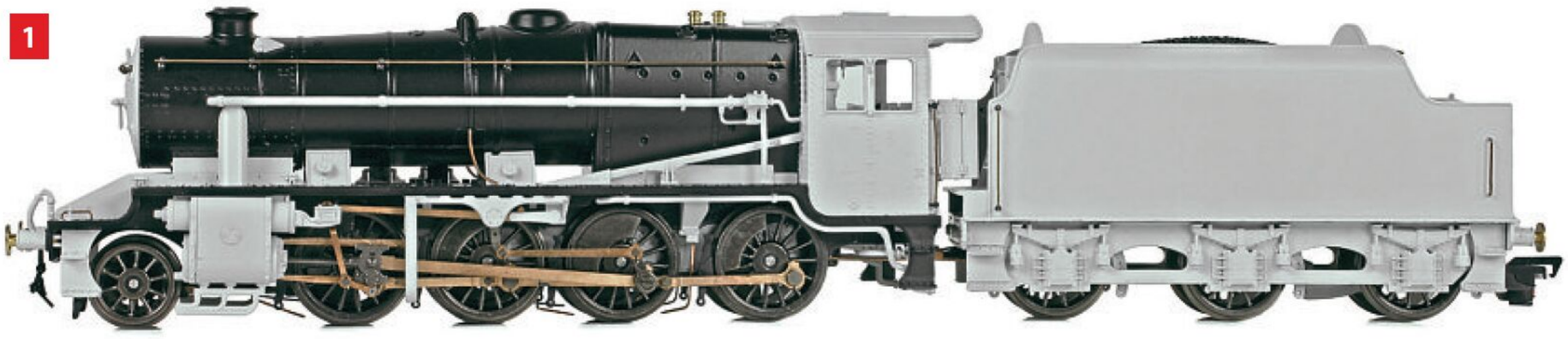
Bachmann unveils the tiny and the mighty in autumn model showcase



PERMANENT way vehicles, pre-Grouping tank engines and mighty freight movers will hit the shelves this autumn following Bachmann Europe's August 6 reveal of its planned releases over the next few months. With several new tooled models on the horizon, plus returning favourites, there is undoubtedly something on offer for most modellers.

1: LMS Stanier 8F

One of Britain's most numerous and successful steam locomotive designs gets a modern upgrade for OO scale. Designed by William Stanier LMS, the first 8F entered service in 1935 and a total of 852 locomotives were bult. Some were even exported to countries around the world, with examples remaining in both Israel and Iraq.

A new subject for the Bachmann Branchline range, the 8F joins a burgeoning stable of LMS machines and draws inspiration from its award-winning N scale counterpart produced by the company's Graham Farish brand.

The model boasts the diecast boiler which has come to be expected of modern releases, with the same treatment being applied to the running boards, meaning this is no lightweight model. Adorning the locomotive are a wealth of fine separate details, while sprung metal buffers are fitted to the bufferbeam. Two different driving wheel patterns will be available, the first being those with fabricated balance weights and the second with cast weights, and three different tender variations have been catered for: the Fowler 3500-gallon design, along with both Stanier's welded and riveted 4000-gallon types.

Five different identities will be available in the first wave of releases, among which will be two preserved identities.

The Great Central Railway's own No. 48305 will be presented as it currently appears in unlined BR black, while the Severn Valley Railway's No. 48773 will be presented as LMS No. 8233, the identity it carried when it entered service on loan to the LMS from the War Department.

RRP starts at £249.95 for standard DC models, with DCC sound-fitted and deluxe versions also to be offered.

1

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2: NER E/LNER J71

Announced a few days earlier at The Greatest Gathering was this pre-Grouping era 0-6-0T, which was first introduced by the North Eastern Railway and designer Thomas W Worsdell in 1886. A total of 120 were built before Worsdell's successor, Wilson Worsdell, introduced the E1 class in 1898.

The E Class tanks were found to be suitable workhorses for the NER's sprawling network in the North East, particularly at coastal ports, freight depots and wharfs, where tracks could feature tight curves and where weight restrictions were often in place. They were also suited to station pilot duties and local trip working, as well as allocations at the NER's Darlington Works and Shildon workshops where they handled internal movements. Their regional connections therefore made them an ideal choice for Bachmann to model in this bicentenary year of modern rail travel.

While the J71s were more numerous than the subsequent J72s, numbering 120 examples versus 113, the latter is arguably the more famous, having seen an example survive into preservation and being represented with OO and N scale models since as early as 1990. The E/J71, meanwhile, has never been commercially available in miniature, making Bachmann the first manufacturer to tackle this previously overlooked locomotive.

Details include metal lamp brackets on the rear of the coal bunker and metal handrails at the front of the tank, plus locomotive controls, levers, dials and gauges accurately depicted inside the cab, with toolboxes and cabinets backing onto the bunker.

Three models will be offered initially, and all are finished with a livery application that is executed to stunning effect. Included in the line-up is LNER No. 317, which played an important role in the centenary celebrations of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1925, when it hauled Electric Locomotive No. 9 which could not travel under its own power as the route used for the cavalcade was not electrified. The two further models depict No. 495 in its original TW Worsdell livery of lined green and maroon and No. 68260 during BR service.

RRP starts at £159.95 for DCC-ready models, with the ornately decorated NER example coming in at £10 extra. Models are due to arrive in early 2026.

3: *Birch Grove*

The E4 0-6-2T locomotives return to Bachmann's range this autumn with four different liveries on offer. Presented in BR black with early crest is No. 32473, which many will know as *Birch Grove* on the Bluebell Railway. This particular locomotive has been covered by Bachmann before, with a Collector Club exclusive of it in Marsh Umber and a general release SR version when the class first appeared in OO scale back in 2015. All three of these new examples have an RRP starting at £164.95.

4: Film star Wickham

The minute Wickham Trolley makes a return to the Bachmann OO scale catalogue with two versions on offer. In addition to the more conventional departmental yellow, WD9033 is presented in its Longmoor Military Railway livery of dark blue as it wore when it featured in the 1960s film The Great St Trinians Train Robbery. Both Wickham models have an RRP of £99.95 and are due for release in December.

In addition to these highlighted models, much more was also confirmed, including PAV and PAA bulk grain hoppers and further identities for the new Class 31 tooling suite in OO, while N gauge welcomes back the GWR Castle class 4-6-0s and introduces the five plank China clay wagons to the range for the first time. The Scenecraft range will see additions including Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's Toddington-inspired station buildings in OO, corrugated engine shed for NG7 and Highley station yard crane in N, amid a tranche of other full and low-relief products.

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Send your model news to staff writer **Owen Hayward** on **OHayward@mortons.co.uk@mortons.co.uk**

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All Saints, Faldingworth, Lincolnshire ©Push Creativity

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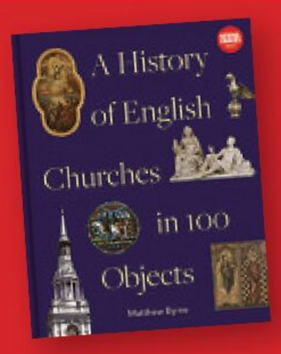

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HERITAGE LINE-UPS AND DEBUTS AT MANX TRANSPORT FESTIVAL

The annual celebration of the Isle of Man's heritage transport network covered the 130th anniversary of its mountain railway and saw several restoration projects step into the light, as **Owen Hayward** reports.

From left to right: SMR cars Nos. 2, 1, 5 and 4 lined up partway up the island's only mountain to mark the 130th anniversary of its opening. PHIL GRAINGER

A MECCA for heritage enthusiasts the world over, the Isle of Man's annual transport festival took place on July 22-27 and once again showcased the best the island has to offer, for where else can you travel aboard steam, two different electric tram routes, literal horse power and even a bus network all under one fare?

This year, focus was directed to the Snaefell Mountain Railway which, having been opened in 1895, was celebrating its 130th anniversary. The only electric mountain railway in the British Isles, it travels only five miles in distance, yet it climbs nearly 2000ft fas it works its way around the isle's only mountain from its starting point at Laxey.

The line was first surveyed by George Noble Fell, son of John Barraclough Fell, who invented the 'Fell' system of operation, whereby an additional rail was laid on steep lines when two would not provide adequate braking, traction, or both. Originally planned and approved as a steam operation in 1888, was t never started and it would not be until the SMR Association revived the plans in 1895 that construction both began and was completed for electric traction. That said, the building of the line was aided by Manx Northern Railway 0-6-0T No. 4 *Caledonia* – the only steam locomotive to have ever climbed the mountain railway. Fell braking was fitted to the tramcars to aid their control on the steep descent.

The set-up of the line may not facilitate any particularly extravagant operations, but to mark the occasion a number of quirky offerings were able to be offered. In addition to all available tramcars being in service, trips up the mountain were also offered aboard some of the permanent way Wickham-built vehicles. Furthermore, a line-up of the four tramcars together at the summit was scheduled for July 23; unfortunately, weather conditions saw the location changed to Bungalow, the halfway point of the climb.

Douglas in Douglas

Over on the steam railway, on July 23 the cosmetic restoration of Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T No. 9 *Douglas* was unveiled as part of the Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters Association AGM. Built in 1896, it follows on from previous cosmetic restorations of Nos. 5 *Mona* (2021-23) and 6 *Peveril* (2021-22) by island volunteers keen to see some of the out-of-service locomotives made presentable and put on display.

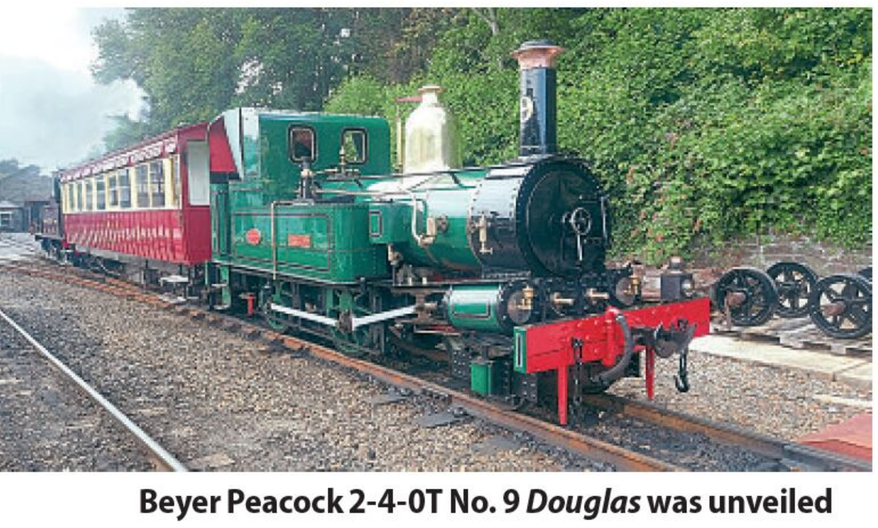
Unusually, where most of the steam locomotives face east, *Douglas* aptly faces west and therefore into Douglas, which has been arranged in part for when it goes on display in the museum at Port Erin station.

Throughout the week, workshop tours were on offer for visitors to witness activity taking place therein, including the ongoing overhaul of No. 12 *Hutchinson*, which is expected to return to service in time for the 2026.

A welcome evening at Port Erin to start the proceedings took place on July 22, with No. 4 *Loch* working a special departure out of Douglas at 5.30pm to the southern terminus, where it was posed for photographs alongside Nos. 5 and 6, which were temporarily extracted from the museum (which was celebrating its own 50th anniversary during the festival).

At the opposite end of the festival, a day of double-headed and banked workings took place on July 27, making use of all four currently operational steam locomotives (*Loch* and *Caledonia*, plus Nos. 11 *Maitland* and 13 *Kissack*).

In what is an annual tradition for one day of the festival, a headboard was carried to pay tribute to long-serving and influential volunteers who have died in recent years. Tributes on this occasion were paid to Mike Buttell, who sadly passed away last October after a prolonged illness.



Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T No. 9 *Douglas* was unveiled on July 24 following its cosmetic overhaul by IOMSRSA volunteers, the last of the out-of-service locomotives to currently receive such a refurbishment. GRANT TAYLOR/IOMSRSA

Visitors to the Snaefell Mountain Railway's workshops were able to see the progress on SMR No. 6, which was withdrawn for overhaul in 2017 and has needed a new steel underframe. KEITH VALLA

Clydesdale trammer Harry leads trailer No. 42 along the Douglas promenade. In 2026, the horse tramway will mark its 150th anniversary, which will be a key focus of the transport festival next summer. KEITH VALLA

Right: The eight surviving trams from the MER's very first batch to be delivered in 1893 were lined up together at the depot at Derby Castle on July 24. JOSHUA HAWORTH/MER

Trams from across the eras line up at Ballomar on the Manx Electric Railway during a photographic evening special on July 23. KEITH VALLA

Tramcar debut

While *Douglas* was debuting from its cosmetic refurbishment, over on the Manx Electric Tramway, trailer car No. 50 was returning to service for the first time since 1978 after its own lengthy restoration.

No. 50 was the second trailer of the first batch of six built for the railway in 1893 by G F Milnes, of Birkenhead, originally numbered 12. As new motor cars entered service, it became No. 24 in 1895 and then finally to No. 50 in 1903. For a time it was unique in having only four roof supporting pillars and not the conventional six other trailers of its type were built with, and it was also one of just three trailers to receive the nationalised MER green livery in 1957, a short-lived scheme as it was repainted into red and white by 1961.

Withdrawn in 1978, it spent many years in the car sheds at Laxey and was one of four vehicles offered for sale by the MER that year, although no successful bids were received and so it remained kept there.

Following several moves between storage locations, it was selected for restoration in 2022 after the completion of work on trailers Nos. 54 and 36 by volunteers. It has received a full body overhaul, restoration of the seats to original varnished condition, and replacement trucks with roller bearings. To match with motor car No. 32, it has been painted in the nationalised MER colours.

A regular feature of the festival, parallel runs ran between Derby Castle and Groudle most mornings, offering an opportunity to compare trams of different eras. Some of the restored goods trailers were attached to some workings so to recreate further sights once seen across the tramway in days past.

On July 24, a photographic evening took place at the Derby Castle tramcar depot featuring the eight surviving trams that were delivered to the MER in 1893. Only one tram has been lost from that batch in the ensuing years, No. 3 having been destroyed in the Laxey car shed fire of 1930. The high survival rate of such an early batch of trams may well be a unique accolade in heritage tramway circles.

To 2026

Next year's transport festival will run from July 28 to August 2, 2026, and will focus on the 150th anniversary of the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway, as well as 50 years since the nationalisation of the bus network. Opened in 1876, the horse tramway is another part of the IOM's Government-owned transport network. Until 2022, it connected the sea terminal at Douglas with the MER at Derby Castle, but following redevelopment of the promenade it now no longer meets with the arriving ferries. Hopes of extending the tramway back to its original length in time for its anniversary year look unlikely to be realised, although infrastructure minister Dr Michelle Haywood suggested it was not being wholly ruled out, saying: "The department is pressing ahead with a business case for Treasury and Tynwald seeking reapproval of funding to install track suitable for future use by electric trams, alongside refurbishing the derelict Tramway Terrace houses fronting the historic stables. Realistically, there was no way this would have been ready for 2026 unless work had started across winter 2024/25." HR

Returning to service after nearly 50 years in storage, trailer car No. 50 sits at Derby Castle after arriving behind motor car No. 32, the pair wearing the MER nationalised green and white livery. DAVE MARTIN/MER

On July 23, IOM steam railway locomotives wore headboards in tribute to members of the Buttell family, including drivers Joe and Arthur, as well as IOM heritage supporter Mike. GRANT TAYLOR/IOMSRSA

TRIPLE-HEADER 37s HIGHLIGHT OF COTSWOLD SUMMER DIESEL GALA

Diesel doubles and a trio made the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway diesel gala a stunning summer success, reports **Robin Jones.**

Class 50 No. 50021 *Rodney* arrives at Winchcombe on July 27. IAN CROWDER

At an early stage, the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway announced that three Class 37s would run at its July 25-27 summer diesel gala, with the National Railway Museum’s pioneer English Electric Type 3 D6700, normally resident on the Great Central Railway, booked to operate in a timetable that included home-based green-liveried D6948 and blue No. 37215 – leading to the rare prospect of a triple-header being accomplished.

Later, it was announced that Class 50 No. 50021 *Rodney* was to make a return visit by courtesy of Paul Spracklen and his team. Affectionately referred to as Dave from the sitcom Only Fools & Horses, it was the first main line diesel locomotive to arrive at the formative G/WR in 1992, later moving to the Bo’ness & Kinneil Railway. Following a failure, it was overhauled at Eastleigh Works in Hampshire.

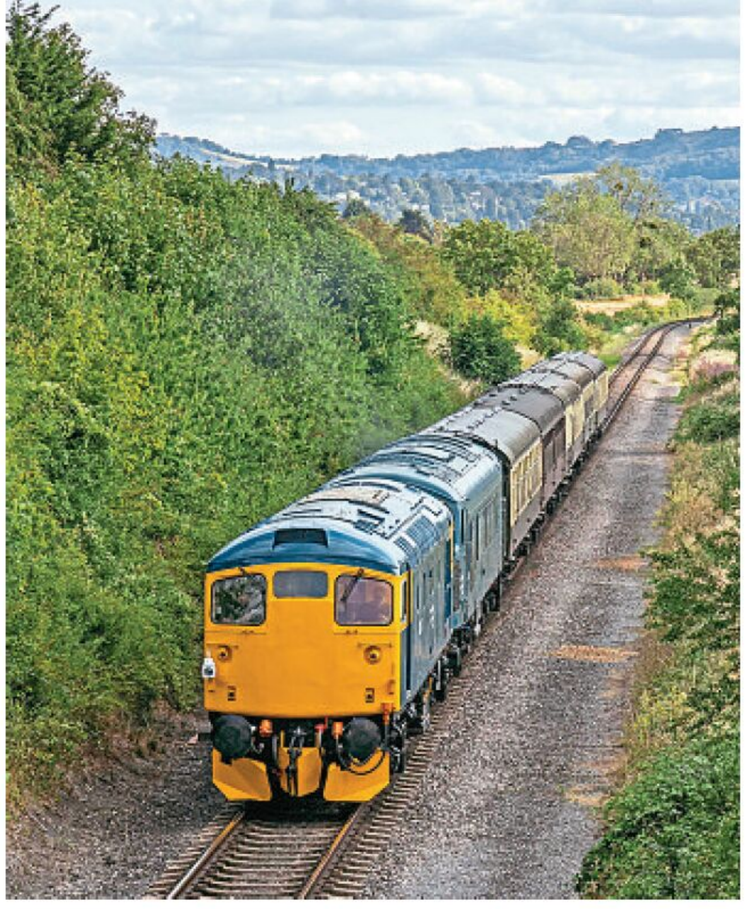
The ‘Hoover’ – which last year derailed on the Swanage Railway – behaved impeccably and its services were also extremely well-filled. Indeed, it was the first time since 2022 that two visiting diesel classmates have run at the gala (last time it was a pair of Class 55 Deltics). Their presence undoubtedly attracted many visitors; more than 1700 tickets were sold. G/WR spokesman Ian Crowder said: “The event was an outstanding success, with a busy timetable that kept to time throughout the weekend.

“On the Saturday evening, the promised triple-header made a round trip of the railway and so popular was it that you would have struggled to get a beanpole on board the packed train.

“The sound from the locomotives was certainly captivating and despite being filled to a degree that wouldn’t have been

The main highlight of the event was the beer-ex on Saturday night, with Class 37s D6700, D6948 and 37215 hauling 1C19 the 7pm Toddington-Cheltenham Racecourse past Hayles Abbey Halt on July 26. JOSH BRINSFORD

Visiting Class 37 D6700 crosses the landmark Stanway Viaduct. IAN CROWDER



Back in action after six years, Class 26 No. 26043, backed by Class 45 No. 45149, heads a service train on July 26. MARTYN TATTAM

Class 04 D2280 giving brake van rides at Toddington. IAN CROWDER

Freightliner-liveried Class 47 No. 47376 departs Toddington. IAN CROWDER

amiss on a rush-hour commuter service, the atmosphere was wonderful."

Another attraction was freshly-overhauled Class 26 No. 26043, making its return to service debut since undergoing a major overhaul at Toddington since 2019. It performed superbly, albeit coupled to resident Class 45 No. 45149 to ensure a gentle return to service, and it certainly impressed.

The other attention-grabbing combination was the nose-to-nose appearance of Class 20 pair Nos. 20137 and the stunningly restored 20228, which received a 'highly commended' accolade at this year's Heritage Railway Association awards.

There was much for visitors to enjoy, from model railways at Winchcombe to brake van rides with Class 04 D2280 on its first-ever passenger turns at Toddington.

The rest of the home fleet – including Class 47s Nos. 47105 and Freightliner-liveried 47376 – also performed well on the intensive daily timetable. D6700 then moved to Derby for The Greatest Gathering. HR

➜ The G/WR has appealed for donations towards the repainting of four coaches in BR blue and grey livery to match the diesel fleet and for use at galas. So far, a BSK in need of a repaint by the diesel department has been selected, and three more will be identified.

The first coming of the railway to Broadway

A NEW permanent exhibition has opened in the Broadway Museum & Art Gallery, telling the story of the coming of the GWR to the Cotswold village in 1904 and the profound effect it had on its people and businesses and the surrounding communities.

The arrival of the railway brought an end to horse-drawn coach transport, as well as enabling people to travel more quickly, further, and more safely than ever.

Broadway station was closed by BR in 1960 and demolished three years later. The line itself was closed in 1976 after a coal train derailed at Winchcombe..

Left: Broadway station in 1904, shortly after opening, looking north. Work is still taking place on the northbound platform and where the station was on an embankment; the platform extensions were temporarily built of timber. Today, this view is little changed thanks to the construction of a new station to the original design. GWR TRUST ARCHIVE

A new chapter began with the development of the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, whose volunteers rebuilt Broadway station following the design of the original and reopened it in 2018.

The exhibition follows the Journey Through Steam display which in 2023 won the Heritage Railway Interpretation Award, sponsored by Morton's Media, publisher of *Heritage Railway*, and which was extended

Right: Broadway station on August 1, 1904, the day that it opened, with services running from Honeybourne. JOHN JACQUES/GWR TRUST ARCHIVE

because of its popularity. Archivist Mike Dodd said: "The railway played such an important part in the local community.

"It is a story not just of the services that the railway brought, but also of its influence on the lives of local people who both worked for the railway and depended on it for the success of their businesses.

"We hope that many local people as well as visitors find the exhibition both stimulating and informative."

The museum in a 17th-century building at 65 High Street is open Mondays to Saturdays, 10am to 4.30pm.

LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T *Stepney* at Sheffield Park on the Bluebell Railway on August 9. OWEN HAYWARD

A sonnet to *Stepney*

In 1875, from Brighton's hand,
A 'Terrier' born to steam the land.
Small and stout, with Stroudley's care,
Through London's streets, she cut the air.

From London Bridge to Victoria's gate,
She served her passengers, proud and straight.
But as the years brought engines tall
Stepney's duties began to fall.

To branch lines, yards, she made her way,
Shunting cars through night and day.
Retired? Perhaps-but not for long,
Her story would continue strong.

In fifty-nine, the Bluebell came, Preserving
Stepney, sealing fame.
The first to join their growing fleet,
A symbol proud, both tough and sweet.

Now though she rests, her steam run dry,
In children's hearts, she'll never die.
A hero in Awdry's Railway lore,
Stepney will shine forever more.

So here she stands, a tale to tell,
Of iron, of steam, and time's sweet swell.
As part of Britain's golden past,
In memory, her whistle's blast.

Sam Goodwin, email

The best a railway can do!

I ATTENDED the recent Railways At Work weekend at the Great Central Railway for the first time and I must say that I was impressed with everything I saw going on, with activities at every station transporting me back in time.

I could have easily spent more of my visit just sitting at Quorn & Woodhouse watching the loading and unloading of wagons as goods trains came and went, while a steady stream of steam and diesel services passed through the platforms.

One particular highlight was the crane demonstration. There are many heritage lines which have a crane of some sort as part of their collection, yet seldom do you see them actually being used, let alone in a public setting.

All this activity meant you were never waiting long for something to watch.

With car parking at Quorn also largely moved to an adjacent field, it meant the presence of the classic vehicles in the yard really helped make the setting authentic (although the marquee set up was the only major detraction from that atmosphere).

Some were saying that as the organisers are looking to have a break, this was to be the last one for a while – if that is the case, then I sincerely hope someone steps up to keep it going, as it is surely one of the best events any railway could put on. Perhaps we will see other lines start to do something similar to not only demonstrate the vital role railways played in local and national communities but, as the GCR has shown, that they can make use of what is already at their disposal.

Jennifer Packard
By email

One of many sights to be enjoyed during the award-winning Railways At Work weekend. On August 16, No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* passes Kinchley Lane with a local working while a reenactor, complete with a 1968 Morris minor, watches on. OWEN HAYWARD

Don't overlook the people!

WHILE your magazine does an excellent job of keeping readers informed about our heritage railways and main line runs, I feel there is one aspect of the steam scene which is largely ignored in spite of the fact that it is fundamental to the future of our industry. I refer to the footplate crews who keep our trains running but about whom we hear very little.

As an occasional driver of standard gauge and miniature locomotives, I would love to hear from other drivers and firemen (male and female) about how they qualified for the footplate, which engines they like best and why, and the amusing and sometimes alarming incidents they may have experienced. Of course, the professional crews from the days of main line steam had the best tales to tell and a number of books record their stories but, sadly they are a fast-diminishing source of information.

However, many heritage lines boast crews who have been with them since the early days and probably now have as much experience or more that their BR predecessors.

I am sure that a regular 'Footplate Feature' in *Heritage Railway* spotlighting a different crew each issue and finding out about their skills, tips and passions for steam would be of great interest to other crews and enthusiasts alike.

What do other readers think?

Hugh Cullimore,
East Knoyle,
Wiltshire

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GREAT RATES SEE PAGE 30

The Greatest Gathering shows support is there for the taking

I WISH to highlight aspects of The Greatest Gathering – this amazing event of the decade – which may get lost in the post-event hype.

Firstly, Alstom's breathtaking site at Litchurch Lane, Derby, is in real danger of closure if the Government fails to understand the need for continuity of new train orders while the plans for Great British Railways are in gestation. To lose this iconic piece of history – and future capability – would be a tragedy. Let's not forget that similar lack of vision forced the closure of other facilities in the run-up to privatisation.

Secondly, can we ponder the significance of thousands of non-railway enthusiasts lapping up the delights on offer at the festival, with Alstom apparently estimating it could have sold the tickets FIVE times over? How can our heritage railways tap into this huge reservoir of latent interest in our hobby?

Running on a specially laid length of 1ft 11½in gauge track, George England 0-4-0T+T No. 2 *Prince*, the first steam locomotive restored by the heritage era Ffestiniog Railway in 1955 – gave passenger rides at The Greatest Gathering, as seen on August 1. ROBIN JONES

I don't have any easy answers, but surely the strength of demand has been clearly identified. Congratulations – and thanks are due to Alstom for a memorable event.

David Caffall, Kings Ripton,
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

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Rail Wonders of Pisa, Corsica and Sardinia - Departs 30 September

It was easy enough to build a standard gauge railway along the wide north-south valley of Sardinia, but the towns in the hills either side of it, or the ports and fishing villages on the east and west coasts could only be reached by narrow-gauge feeder lines. Our tour of Sardinia gives you the chance to travel over every open railway line on the island, both standard and narrow gauge, and includes the two tramway systems.

Corsica (option), the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean is also called “The island of beauty”; a veritable mountain in the sea and an island of strong character. Just look at the wild and rugged natural environment and the island’s tumultuous history. We start our tour in Pisa and tour the sights before travelling to Corsica and its narrow-gauge lines.

The Railways Around Bilbao – 9 to 16 October

We invite you to join us on a seven-night stay in the modern, attractive Basque capital, Bilbao. Our hotel is centrally located near the Old Town, tram, metro and railway, we will have time to discover the best of Bilbao as well as exploring other parts of the Basque Country. Our tour includes two cruises, one on the river from Bilbao city centre to the river mouth, and a second along the scenic coastline at Bermeo, three funiculars, including the oldest in the Basque Country, and scenic rail journeys to Bermeo, San Sebastian and Miranda de Ebro. We also visit the famous Vizcaya Transporter Bridge, including a guided tour over the top of the bridge.

Classic Montenegro and Serbia - 11 to 18 October

The Balkan country of Montenegro is a varied country of rugged mountains, thick forests, fortified towns, medieval villages and narrow beaches, which became a sovereign state as recently as 2006. Opened in 1976, the country’s main rail artery links the port of Bar with Serbia and its capital Beograd and ranks as one of the most spectacular railways in Europe. As we head northwards the line twists and climbs up the Morača valley and we are treated to magnificent mountain scenery, heavily forested in places, with numerous tunnels and bridges to negotiate. After passing through Bioče station we cross the Mala Rijeka viaduct, which at 198 metres is the highest in Europe. The splendid scenery continues as we reach the line’s summit at Kolašin, having climbed from 40 to 1032 metres above sea level.

Our other railway holidays this autumn include:

USA Western States and Railroads – from 4 October

Railways of Mexico – from 6 November

Naples and Sorrento – from 19 November

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Then and Now: The North Norfolk Railway

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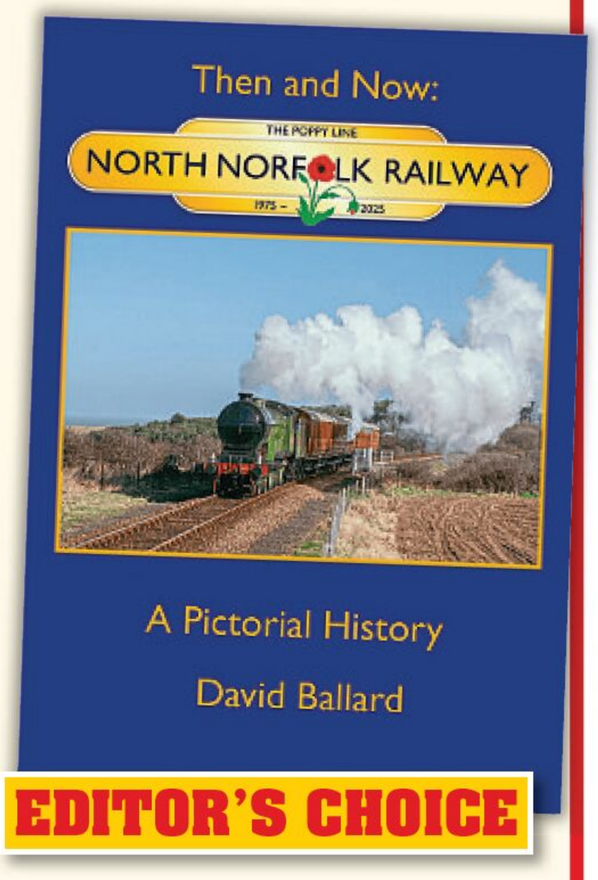


EDITOR'S CHOICE

ANNIVERSARY years are a perfect time for publications that cast an eye over history, and this pictorial documentation of half a century of the North Norfolk Railway is rich with archive photographs covering all the major achievements in that time. Yet, as Ballard says in his prologue, "to have put in every 'quality' image or topic I wanted to cover would have doubled the book's length."

From humble origins

The NNR is like many others in that it started with small beginnings and has grown into a renowned destination on Norfolk's coastline. The book opens with past-and-present comparison shots, and it is surprising to see just how much some of the locations have changed since even pre-BR days. Sheringham's once extensive goods yard now largely sits beneath a car park, while the station has lost the buildings on one of the two platforms. Yet for as many that have drastically changed, there are some that remain fairly closely matched, with a change of fencing and modern tarmacked roads the only obvious changes to be observed.

This well-researched publication covers all the important aspects you would expect: the extension from Sheringham to Weybourne, and then on to Holt; the return to service of iconic locomotives such as LNER J15 No. 65462; and the gradual transition away from a predominantly industrial operation to one with ex-BR main line locomotives. Even a temporary relaying of the level crossing in 1975 to reconnect to the national network to allow the delivery of newly purchased carriages gets coverage, The official reinstatement of 2010 is well-documented, but how many knew of such earlier times the heritage and main lines were relinked?

Keeping stock

In its last few pages, readers can also find a full list of rolling stock that is or has ever been resident at or even visited the railway, including the years they were present and (if applicable) where they are now. When you consider how poor record-keeping of such moves can sometimes be, clearly a lot of time has gone in to preparing this section alone.

There's even a record of all movements to have used the reinstated Sheringham crossing!

For those keen to see how one of Norfolk's premier attractions has blossomed, then this publication will certainly not disappoint. Being a self-published title, all proceeds go straight back into the railway too – another reason to pick up a copy for sure.

VISUAL PASSAGE OF TIME

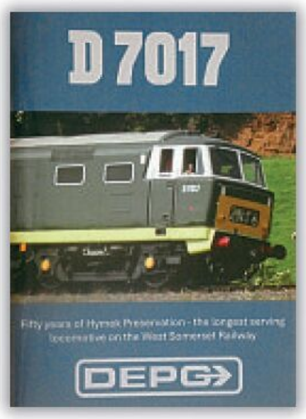
Pre-order Issue 337: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

D7017: Fifty Years of Hymek Preservation – The longest serving locomotive on the West Somerset Railway

By Mark Bladwell (softback, Diesel and Electric Preservation Group Limited, The Old Goods Shed, Williton station, Williton, Somerset TA4 4RQ, www.depg.org, 65pp, £15 plus £3.50 p&p, ISBN 9781916117525).

HERE is an impressively concise yet detailed and superbly illustrated biography of a star performer on its home line. After 13 years in Western region service, it was bought by the group in 1975.

Beginning with a history of Class 35 and diesel hydraulics in general, and the Hymeks' technical details, there are several excellent pictures of it in BR service prior to the withdrawal of the class, which was decided on as early as 1967, the Hymek Swansong Tour of September 22, 1973, and its years in preservation. All of the liveries worn by D7017 in preservation are depicted. Several pages comprise a chronological list of events involving D7017 since it embarked on its second life.



The WSR gave the group the weekend of August 30/31 to celebrate D7017's half centenary in its ownership.

ABSORBING AND INFORMATIVE HYMEK HISTORY

From British Rail to Freightliner: A Train Drivers Story & Other Anecdotes 1984-2022

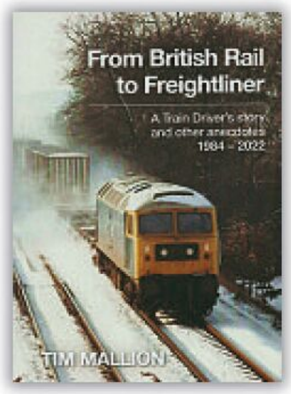
By Tim Mallion (softback, self published, 256pp, £20 including p&p, to order email: railbooktim@gmail.com).

TIM Mallion's book details how from his fascination with railways as a schoolboy he went on to pursue his dreams and eventually become a railway driver. His parents helped him write numerous letters to the railway and he was eventually offered a job as a traction trainee, starting on January 16, 1984. His family history in the railways had some influence on him: his grandfather was a yardmaster at Morden Underground station, while his great grandfather was a shunter at King's Cross station for the Great Northern Line.

In the 38 years he spent on the railway, 34 were on numerous locomotive footplates in various areas of the UK. As a driver's assistant, he trained to be a driver by taking British Rail's MP12-training course, which lasted 27 weeks, and on January 19, 1988, he drove his first train as a qualified driver.

Keeping diaries of his time on the railways has enabled Tim to tell his story in great detail, from his early career with BR working in East Anglia from Ipswich on both Inter-City and Freight lines.

Privatisation brought many changes that saw him move to drive passenger trains on the West and East Coast main lines. There are the highs and lows, with the downside of lodging away from home for his shifts, but the sense of being part of the railway family that helped him cope.



The book oozes with Tim's enjoyment and the sense of pride he had in his job, supported by several photographs, many of them of the numerous different classes of locomotives he drove.

There is humour, sadness, fun and sometimes tragedy – and even Tim coming to the rescue of other drivers.

Towards the end of the book is an impressive list of all the routes he worked on. He also kept records of his annual mileage to and from work and on the routes he covered, and he points out that from privatisation during 1996/7, the miles travelled at work increased considerably.

Whether you are a retired railway worker, someone who has always wanted to be a railway driver or an enthusiast you will enjoy the way this book's takes on the author's journey.

It could even catch the interest of the younger railway enthusiast who may be wishing for a career as a railway driver, as the positive impact of this book could both encourage and entice while still highlighting the hard work involved to make the grade and the reward that follows.

POSITIVE WINDOW INTO THE DRIVING WORLD

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Young Railway Photographer Of The Year 2025

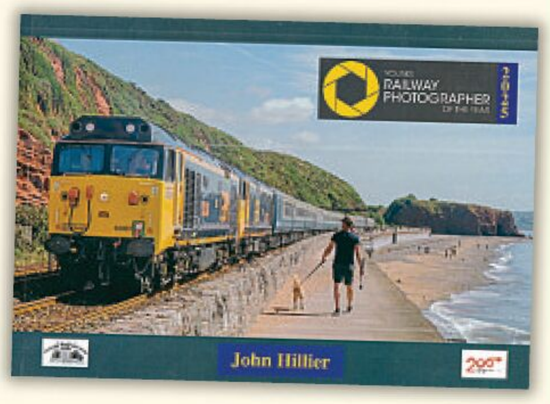
Complied by John Hillier (softback, Silver Link/Mortons Media, 80pp, £10.99, ISBN 9781911704430).

IN the steam era, trainspotting was a mainstream hobby among schoolboys and to those who managed to save enough of their pocket money and graduated to the next stage – buying a Box Brownie or other camera and adding photographs to their records of what they saw on the lineside. Indeed, many of the UK's great railway photographers on the day started out in this way.

Fast-forward several decades and digital technology, combined with the availability of very affordable and versatile cameras and the ability to record an infinite numbers of views at no cost, has made the art of quality railway photography available to all.

The National Railway Museum has supported the Railway Photographic Society's Young Railway Photographer of the Year competition as part of its Railway 200 events, the results of which were published in *Heritage Railway* issue 335. Railway 200 has visibility awakened and instigated fresh public interest in railways, both heritage and modern, and the times and opportunities have never been better to record what you see for posterity and satisfaction.

This splendid booklet not only shows just what can today be readily achieved by relative newcomers to the lineside, but it also offers inspiration on every page – and it is not just



the winning entries that are reproduced, but those who came close too.

For the average price of an SD card, this handy-sized volume comes with an avalanche of ideas and originality, and it is a must-have for newcomers and seasoned enthusiasts too. As Network Rail acting chairman Mike Putman says in his foreword, "I encourage you to pick up a camera next time you travel by train or visit your local heritage railway."

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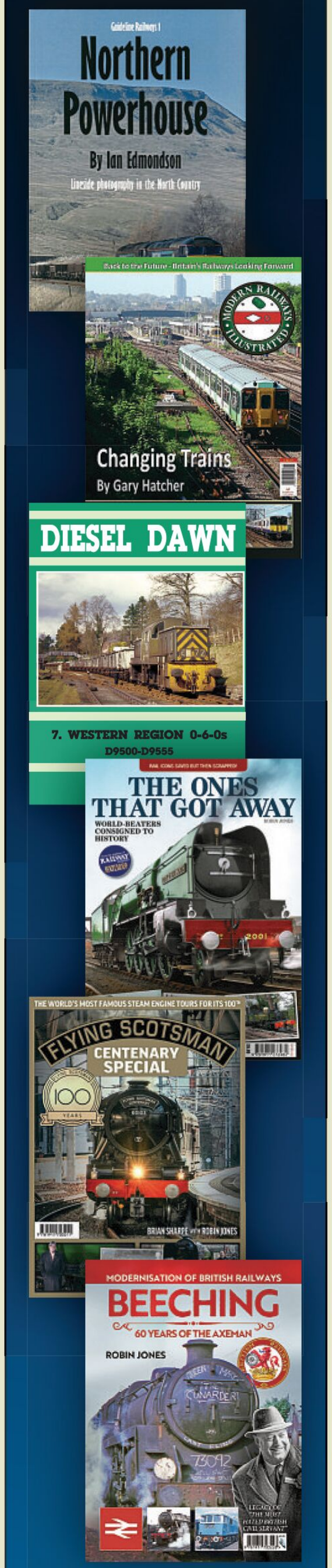

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Celebrating Railway 200

CELEBRATIONS for both Railway 200 and the Stockton & Darlington Railway bicentenary are taking place around the UK, involving main lines operators, heritage lines, museums and local communities. Here's a preview of some of those happening in the next few months. If you have an event, exhibition, talk, or other way of celebrating this anniversary planned and would like it to be included here, 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

Heritage railways, museums and works:

August 30/31– Battlefield Line Railway 200 Gala
September 6/7 – Veluwsche StoomTrein Maatschappij Back In Time gala
September 13/14 – Fife Heritage Railway Open Doors Day
September 13/14 – Talyllyn Railway Heritage Weekend
September 20-October 5 – Titans of Steam Gala, Hopetown Darlington
September 27/28 – Heatherslaw Light Railway. Railway 200 Gala
September 27/28 – Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Autumn Showcase Gala
October 25/26 – North Tyneside Railway Railway 200 Gala

Main line:

September 1 – Alstom Glasgow Traincare Centre 150th Anniversary Glasgow Traincare Depot, Glasgow
September 27 – Railtour: 'Railway 200 Special' (Railway Touring Company) Carnforth, Stanhope (Weardale Railway) and return.
September 28 – Railtour: 'Boulby Flyer' (Saltburn Railtours) Freight lines tour between Middlesbrough and Boulby
October 4 – Railtour: 'Railway 200 Special' (Railway Touring Company) Kings Cross, Stanhope (Weardale Railway) and return.

Talks:

September 23-26 – Eighth International Early Railways Conference Central Hall Dolphin Centre, Darlington
November 8 – After Agenoria: Aspects of the Railway Revolution in the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

Exhibitions:

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, in York, and Locomotion Shildon, County Durham

Upcoming:
September 1-30 – Railart 2025 Kidderminster Railway Museum, Worcestershire
September 1-30 – Steaming Forth North Queensferry Railway Station, Fife

Other:

Until September 30 – Barton Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership Railway 200 Photo Competition Online: www.bccrp.co.uk
August 30 – Guided walk: Folkestone's Railway Transformation (Tales from the Tracks) Folkestone, Kent
September 13 – Heritage Open Day Poppleton Community Railway Nursery, York
September 13/14 – Darlington Model Railway Club Exhibition Oakleaf Sports Complex, Newton Aycliffe
October 4/5 – Advanced Steam Traction Trust 2025 Conference Hopetown, Darlington

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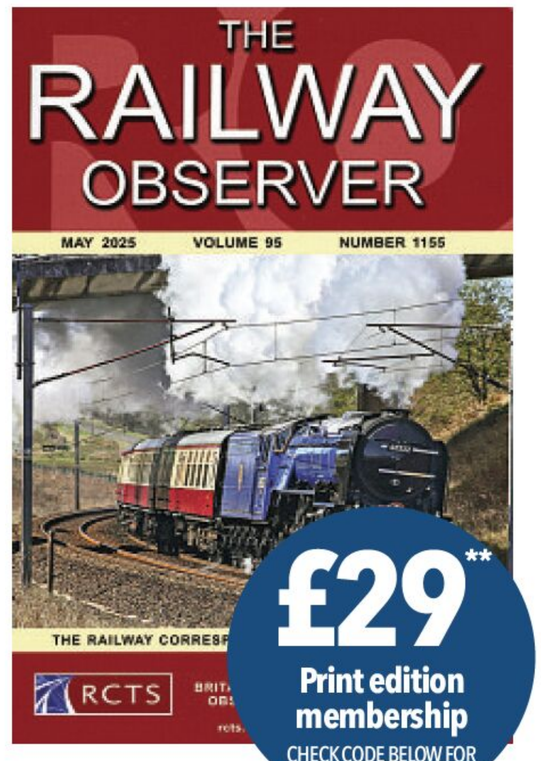

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OPERATIONAL HERITAGE LINES AND MUSEUMS

SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex. Tel: 01798 831370. **Open: Weds-Sun.**

Bluebell Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL. Tel: 01825 720800.
Running: Tues-Suns, bank hols, sch hols.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.
Running: Weds-Fris.

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 + Sept 20, 27.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204.
Running: Tues-Thurs, Sats + Sept 1, 8, 15.

Kent & East Sussex Railway
Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.
Running: Tues, Weds, Suns.

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.
Running: Sept 14, 28, Oct 12, 26.

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.
Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es + Oct 3.

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. T el: 01795 424899.
Running: Suns, bank hols.

Spa Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.
Running: W/Es, bank hols .

Volk's Electric Railway
2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton.
Running: Daily.

The Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway's First World War event has been extended to cover a full weekend this year, taking place on September 20/21. Throughout the course of the two days, it is expected that (subject to weather conditions) the adjacent airfield will see the arrival of no less than four de Haviland Tiger Moth bi-planes, while the railway itself will call upon the vast collection of World War One rolling stock that makes up its collection, including the only surviving ambulance van in the UK.

Lineside access is available for £10 per person, with a limited number of passenger services running at the normal £2 per person or £5 for a family ticket. For full details, visit www.lclr.co.uk DEVE ENEFER/LCLR

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538.
Running: W/Es until Sept 14, then Suns from Sept 28.

Bodmin Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.
Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns + Sept 27.

Bristol Harbour Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.
M Shed Museum open Tues-Suns.
Running: Sept 6/7, 13/14, 27/28.

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, Thurs, W/Es + Sept 12.

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752.
Running: Sept 28.

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 until Sept 28.

Launceston Steam Railway
1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665
Running: Suns-Weds until Sept 17.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

Moors Valley Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415.
Running: Daily.

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: W/Es, bank hols.

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: Weds + Sept 14, 28.

South Devon Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.
Running: Daily.

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.
Running: Daily.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.
Running: Suns + Sept 6, 13, 19, 20.

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: Sept 14, 27/28.

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 + Sept 13, 27.

East Anglian Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.
Open: Weds, W/Es.
Running: Oct 5.

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 (until Sept 24), W/Es.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.
Running: Aug 31.

Nene Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01780 784444.
Running: Weds, W/Es + Sept 5, 12.

North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA. Tel: 01263 820800.
Running: Daily until Sept 18, then Tues-Thurs & W/Es.

Wells & Walsingham Railway
10¼in gauge, four miles. Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.

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Tel: 01328 711630.
Running: Daily.

Whitwell & Reepham Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Reepham, Norfolk. Tel: 01603 871694.
Open: Tues-Suns. Running: W/Es.

HOME COUNTIES

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Quainton Road, Bucks. Tel: 01296 655720
Cafe open Mon-Fri.
Running: Suns.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366
Running: Suns.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067
Running: Aug 29-31, Sept 13/14.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: Weds-Suns, bank hols.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols + Sept 5.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Running: W/Es until Sept 21 + Sept 19.

Great Whipsnade Railway
2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.
Tel: 0344 225 1826.
Running: Daily until Sept 28.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway
2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.
Tel: 01932 212235.
Running: Suns.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Suns + Sept 6.

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: W/Es.

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 + Sept 3, 10.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys).
Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire.
Tel: 01691 728131.
Running: Aug 30/31, Sept 3, 6/7.

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.

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile.
Crich, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01773 854 321
Open: Sats-Thurs.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles.
Norchard, Lydney, Glos.
Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: Weds, W/Es.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles.
Wirksworth, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 823076.
Running: Thurs-Suns, bank hols.

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.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Standard gauge, 15 miles.
Toddington, Glos.
Tel: 01242 621405.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323.
www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: Thurs, W/Es + Sept 5, 19.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)
Standard gauge, 10 miles.
Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.

Built at Brighton in 1955 and withdrawn just eight years later, recently-overhauled BR Standard 4MT No. 80105 will move in February for an 11-month loan to ahe Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. MARK ASHMOLE/G/WR

Toddington to gain a Scottish 4MT for a year

BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80105 is to go on long-term loan to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway through 2026, arriving there in February and remaining until January 2027. Returned to service at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway last year, it will provide an economical tank engine for the Cotswolds line while filling a gap left by impending withdrawals.

Ian Crowder, the G/WR's spokesman, said: "This winter, two of the railway's stalwart performers are being withdrawn following expiry of their extended boiler certificates – Merchant Navy No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental SN Co* and Modified Hall No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall*. If you want a chance to see and ride behind either of these locomotives before withdrawal, do so soon! We are delighted and grateful to Locomotive Owners Group (Scotland) Ltd for making its fine Standard tank locomotive available for its first trip to the Cotswolds.

"This class would not ordinarily have worked over our line and I'm certain that it will be a popular addition to the Toddington steam locomotive stud."

Railway Museums

Beamish
County Durham. The Living Museum of the North. Open: Daily.
Tel: 0191 370 4000.

Blythburgh Station
Suffolk, off A12 in Blythburgh.
Open: Tuesdays 07379 789665

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.

Southworld Narrow Gauge Railway
Southwold, Suffolk.
Open: Jul 6, 27 + Suns in Aug.

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.

Open: W/Es.
Running: Sept 7, 13, 20.

Leek & Rudyard Railway
10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs.
Tel: 01538 269948.
Running: W/Es, sch hols, bank hols.

Midland Railway – Butterley
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.
Running: W/Es.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Pitsford, Northants. Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: Suns, bank hols.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Tel: 01604 702031.
Running: Sug 31, Sept 7, 20/21, 28.

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: Sept 21.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants. Tel 0300 3023 150.
Running: Aug 30/31, Sept 13/14.

Severn Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 16 miles.
Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR.
Tel: 01562 757900.
Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es.

Statfold Country Park
Multiple gauges, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU.
Tel: 01827 830389.
Open: Weds-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: Aug 31, Sept 27/28.

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, Weds, Sats.
Heritage tram tours: resume October.

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.
Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: Weds-Suns, bank hols.

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 until Sept 31.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 670453.
Running: Weds, Suns.

Heaton Park Tramway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.
Running: TBA.

Isle of Man Steam Railway
3ft gauge, 15½ miles.
Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 662525.
Running: Daily until Oct 6.

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 until Oct 5.

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: Tues, Thurs, 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: Sept 6/7, 13/14, 27.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe
Standard gauge, 15 miles.
British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.
Tel: 07889 297271.
Running: Sept 6, 20.

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-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols, 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, W/Es.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway
2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.
Tel: 07407 500884.
Running: Aug 30. Sept 1, 6, 20/21.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Ludborough, Lincolnshire.
Tel: 01507 363881.
Running: Suns.

Middleton Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Hunslet, Leeds. Tel: 0845 680 1758.
Running: W/Es.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.
Running: Sats-Weds.

Scarborough North Bay Railway
20in gauge, 7/8 mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.
Running: Daily.

Stephenson Steam Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
North Shields. Tel: 0191 277 7135.
Open: W/Es. Running: Suns until Sept 28.

Tanfield Railway
Standard gauge, three miles.
Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.
Tel: 07508 092365.
Running: Suns + Sept 20.

Weardale Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles.
Stanhope, Co. Durham.
Running: Aug 30/31, Sept 3, 10, 26-28.

Heritage tube outings for a trio of anniversary celebrations

Tickets for the latest outings of London Transport Museum's 1938 stock have been released, which will see the unit traverse parts of the Metropolitan line on September 5-7. On the Friday and Sunday, outings will run between Amersham and Harrow-on-the-Hill, while on the Saturday, the rarely used Watford triangle north curve will see passengers destined for Watford. During these days, LTM will be jointly celebrating both Railway 200 and Transport for London's own 25th anniversary.

Ticketholders will have a chance to immerse themselves in London's transport story, meet a character based on architect Charles Holden, it also being the 150th anniversary of the birth of the man who transformed the face of London with his Art Deco style. Tickets must be bought in advance; for prices and times, see www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/heritage-vehicle-outings

This September, LTM's 1938 tube train will be running trips over part of the Metropolitan line in celebration of Railway 200, TfL25 and the 150th anniversary of the birth of architect Charles Holden. LTM

Pre-order Issue 337: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Wensleydale Railway
Standard gauge, 22 miles.
Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.
Tel: 01677 425805.
Running: Weds, W/Es + Sept 5.

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 + Sept 1, 8.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Blaenavon, Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.
Running: W/Es + Sept 12.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.
Pant, Mid-Glamorgan.
Tel: 01685 722988.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile.
Corris, near Machynlleth.
Tel: 01654 761701.
Running: Sats.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles.
Fairbourne, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01341 250362.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch 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.

Llanberis Lake Railway
2ft gauge, three miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870549.
Running: Suns-Thurs.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 07956 082305.
Running: Oct 26.

Llangollen Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles.
Llangollen, Denbighshire.
Tel: 01978 860979.
Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es + Sept 12.

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: Sats-Thurs until Sept 7.

Vale of Rheidol Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.
Running: Daily.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 513402.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es.

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: Tues-Thus, W/Es, sch hols.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Bo'ness, West Lothian.
Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: Tues, W/Es.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles.
Brechin, Angus.
Tel: 01356 622992.
Running: Aug 30/31, Sept 7, 13.

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge.
Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Running: Suns until Sept 28.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Dufftown, Banffshire.
Tel: 01340 821181.
Running: Fris-Suns until Sept 28.

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 until Sept 28.

Royal Deeside Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles.
Banchory, Kincardineshire.
Tel: 01330 844416.
Running: Aug 31.

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

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and other events in the coming weeks...

AUGUST
- 29-31 North Norfolk Railway Summer Steam Gala
- 30/31 Battlefield Line Rail 200 Celebrations
- 30/31 Didcot Railway Centre Brick Adventures
- 30/31 Nene Valley Railway Thomas' Branch Line Weekend
- 31 Leighton Buzzard Railway Bluey Visits
- 31 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Everything Goes Gala

SEPTEMBER
- 4-6 Great Central Railway Autumn Diesel Gala
- 5-7 Bluebell Railway Diesel Gala
- 5-7 Didcot Railway Centre Autumn Steam Gala
- 5-7 Swanage Railway Classic & Steam Vehicle Show
- 6/7 Crich Tramway Village Steampunk Weekend
- 6/7 Isle of Wight Steam Railway Cider Festival
- 6/7 Kent & East Sussex Railway Country Fair
- 6/7 Leighton Buzzard Railway Gala Weekend
- 6/7 Middleton Railway Rail200 Gala
- 7 Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway Farming & Agricultural Machinery Show
- 7 Epping Ongar Railway Autumn Bus Rally
- 7 Great Central Railway Mixed Traffic Day
- 12/13 Nene Valley Railway Rail200 Gala
- 12-14 Blaenavon's Heritage Railway Stea Gala
- 12-14 East Lancashire Railway Rail 200 Celebrations
- 12-14 Llangollen Railway 50th Anniversary Weekend
- 12-14 Swanage Railway Autumn Steam Gala
- 12-21 North Yorkshire Moors Railway Heritage Open Days
- 13 Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Welsh Highland Railway Society AGM
- 13/14 Apedale Valley Light Railway 15th Anniversary Gala
- 13/14 Crich Tramway Village Tram Gala
- 13/14 Dean Forest Railway Diesel Gala
- 13/14 Great Central Railway Extinct Express
- 13/14 Mid-Hants Railway Engineering Open Weekend
- 13/14 Middleton Railway Heritage Weekend
- 13/14 Statfold Country Park Road, Rail & Ale Festival
- 13/14 Talyllyn Railway Heritage Weekend
- 14 Great Central Railway Railwayana Swapmeet
- 14 Groudle Glen Railway Steam Gala
- 18-21 Great Central Railway Beer, Cider & Gin Festival
- 18-21 Severn Valley Railway Autumn Steam Gala
- 19-21 Bluebell Railway Beer Festival
- 19-21 Epping Ongar Railway Southern Giants Steam Gala
- 20 East Lancashire Railway Bluey Visits
- 20/21 Bala Lake Railway Model Railway Show
- 20/21 Barnards Miniature Railway 15th Anniversary Weekend
- 20/21 Peak Rail Mixed Traffic Gala
- 20/21 Spa Valley Railway Model Railway Weekend
- 20/21 Tanfield Railway Diesel Pioneers Gala
- 20/21 West Somerset Railway 1940s Weekend
- 21 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Bluey Visits
- 21 Kent & East Sussex Railway Stationary Engines
- 25-28 North Yorkshire Moors Railway Steam Gala
- 27 Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Trailffest
- 27/28 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Autumn Showcase
- 27/28 Nene Valley Railway Thomas' Branch Line Weekend
- 27/28 Statfold Country Park Day Out with Thomas
- 27/28 Yeovil Railway Centre Railway 200 Weekend

Are you organising a gala or other big event and would like it included in these listings? Let us know the details by emailing Owen Hayward at ohayward@mortons.co.uk

Strathspey Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.
Running: Weds-Suns.

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway
3ft gauge. Drumod, Co. Leitrim. Tel: +353 71 963 8599.
Running: Sats-Mons until Sept 29.

Downpatrick & County Down Railway
5ft 3in gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down.Tel: 028 4461 5779.
Running: Aug 30, Sept 6, 13/14.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim.
Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.
Museum open: Thurs-Sats.
Running: Aug 30, Sept 13.

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or Connor on 01507 529411 • ccrowley@mortons.co.uk

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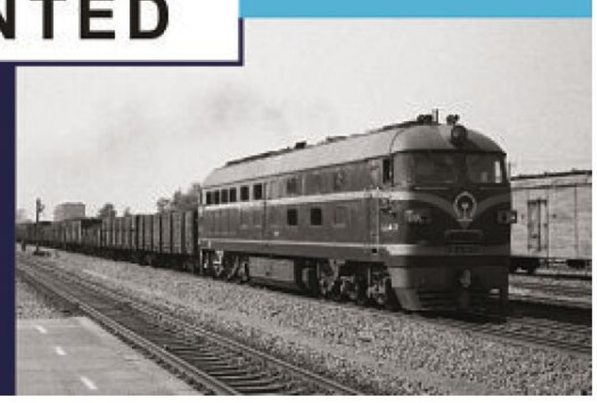

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WANTED Your lighter takes

If you've got a quirky photo, tale, poem, or anything else you think might be appropriate, please email staff writer Owen Hayward on ohayward@mortons.co.uk

Brian , 91, fulfils 70-year ambition at Skegness

By Robin Jones

WHEN Skegness enthusiast Brian Shaw moved from his native Preston in Lancashire to start his first job as a teacher at Clay Cross, in Derbyshire, in 1955, he decided that one of the ways to get to know the area was to walk the entire length of the closed Ashover Light Railway, which had ceased to run trains five years previously.

Although the 1ft 11⅝in gauge line had closed to passengers in 1936 and to goods traffic in 1950, the trackbed and some of the second-hand rails were still in place.

They had been laid by the War Department Light Railways in the battlefield trenches of World War One in France and Belgium. However, there were no stations, locomotives, wagons, or the line's legendary huge carriages left.

Flooded for a reservoir

Brian took a picnic to keep him going along the 7¼-mile route from Clay Cross to the picturesque village of Ashover, a favourite destination for daytrippers and visitors to this day.

He noted that work was already beginning to flood some of the trackbed to create the Ogden Reservoir, which now covers two miles of the old Ashover line.

Brian traces his fascination with railways to his grandmother taking him before the Second World War to see famous express trains such as the 'Coronation Scot' which ran just behind her home. As his career progressed and he married, he moved to the Matlock area and recalls being fascinated by the nearby Cromford & High Peak Railway, which at 1-in-14 had one of the steepest gradients of any UK standard gauge railway and used rope haulage to lift wagons up and down the steepest slopes. This intrigued Brian, as one transported water in wagons for cattle grazing in the upland fields of the High Peak.

Now retired from his role as a headmaster, he lives in the Seacroft area of Skegness, a short drive from the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, which in 1961 bought two of the Ashover Light Railway's carriages for use at its original Humberston site. They had become sports pavilions in Clay Cross: placed on First World War railway bogies and rebuilt, they were returned to use.

Both are now at the LCLR's site in the Skegness Water Leisure Park, where one is in use and the other is under renovation – but Brian was unaware of this until he attended a talk at Skegness Probus Club by one of the line's volunteers.

As a 91st birthday treat arranged by his family, Brian was shown the carriage in the depot close to the line's Walls Lane station. Both vehicles are 101 years old, so only 10 years older than Brian – therefore fulfilling an ambition to see them first formed 70 years ago.

VIP treatment

Brian also enjoyed a VIP ride to the LCLR's new station at Seathorne Bank in more-than-a-century-old carriages from the War Department Light Railways and the Nocton Estates Railway, pulled by Motor Rail 4wDM Wilton. He plans to return with his family to ride in Ashover carriage No. 2, behind Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1008 of 1903 *Jurassic*.

Richard Shepherd, chairman of the LCLR's Historic Vehicles Trust, said: "Brian is a truly remarkable person with a vivid memory of the old Ashover Railway, which is very much a part of the heritage of our line in Skegness. We have modelled our Walls Lane station on Stretton station on the ALR, which was

Brian Shaw with Ashover Light Railway carriage No. 2, now carrying passengers on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway. CHRIS BATES/LCLR

where it connected with main line trains. We are looking forward to welcoming Brian and his family again later this summer so he can achieve something he could hardly have dreamed of back in 1955."

Christmas arrives early for Severn Valley

ASIDE from the revenue from its sell-out services hauled by A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* for the official reopening of its line, as highlighted in News, pages 28/29, Christmas came early for the Severn Valley Railway.

For none other than Santa Claus was seen striding along the platform at Kidderminster Town station on July 25.

He arrived minus reindeers and sledge to see *Flying Scotsman* and also to assess some of the locations for the all-new Christmas events that he will be appearing in later this year.

These are Santa's Steam Specials, which will depart from Kidderminster, and the Elf Express, which will depart from Bridgnorth. The heritage line is working in partnership with the Wise Owl Theatre Company to produce them.

Wise Owl's artistic director, Chris Brookes, said: "There's something about steam trains that's already very theatrical, and so for Santa's Steam Specials we are creating a unique immersive experience that's completely different from what you'd get in a standard theatre setting.

"Passengers travel by steam train from Kidderminster to Arley for the Great Christmas Train Rescue, a theatrical show with Santa himself, plus Polly the polar bear and a scheming villain, Victor Von Sneeze. We're working with War Horse's Matthew Forbes to create some dazzling puppetry which will absolutely wow our audiences!"

Regarding the Elf Express, Wise Owl producer Chloe Thorpe said: "This wonderful interactive experience is all about making sure families are Christmas-ready. With a cast of mischievous and merry elves, we'll have dazzling on-board performances guaranteed to bring the magic of Christmas to life for everyone."

Both events take place at weekends from Saturday, November 29 and on Christmas Eve. Relaxed performances of the Great Christmas Train Rescue will take place on will take place on December 7, 14 and 21.

Tickets are now on sale at svr.co.uk

Santa chats to the locomotive crew of *Flying Scotsman* on July 25 during his recent early visit to the Severn Valley Railway. LESLEY CARR

NEXT ISSUE
Issue 337 out Sept 26
Coverage of the Blaenavon Heritage Railway's steam gala – including the reopening of a platform not used since 1941!

PLUS
DIDCOT'S FIRST BACK!
Great Western Society flagship autotank No. 1466 is relaunched – and joined by No. 1450 for Didcot's annual steam gala.

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Image by Cameron Walker

4 - 6 SEPTEMBER 2025

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

AUTUMN DIESEL GALA

Get ready for an action-packed weekend of diesel power with three special visiting guest locomotives joining our home fleet at the Great Central Railway's Autumn Diesel Gala!

Join us as we kick off the new season in style with an impressive line-up of heritage diesel locomotives. Our home fleet will be out in force, including the much-anticipated return of **Class 27 No. 27056,** freshly relaunched and ready for action.

They'll be joined by, **Class 35 'Hymek' No. 7018, BR Class 14 'Teddy Bear' D9551** and one more special guest, giving you the rare opportunity to ride behind a variety of iconic engines across the weekend.

Whether you're a dedicated diesel enthusiast or just looking for a unique day out with the family, the Autumn Diesel Gala promises an unforgettable celebration of classic traction.

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Come and join us for a great day out on the railway, upcoming events include:

MIXED TRAFFIC DAY **7 SEPTEMBER**
EXTINCT EXPRESS FAMILY DAY **13-14 SEPTEMBER**
RAILWAYANA SWAPMEET **14 SEPTEMBER**
BEER, CIDER & GIN FESTIVAL **18-21 SEPTEMBER**
AUTUMN STEAM GALA **2-5 OCTOBER**
OPEN WEEKEND **25-26 OCTOBER**
BONFIRE NIGHT & FIREWORKS **5 NOVEMBER**
REMEMBERANCE SUNDAY **9 NOVEMBER**
LAST HURRAH GALA **15-16 NOVEMBER**
SANTA EXPRESS **22 NOVEMBER - 24 DECEMBER**
BETWIXTMAS STEAM DAYS **27-30 DECEMBER**
NIGHTRIDER - SEE IN 2026 BY STEAM **31 DECEMBER**

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EUROPE

Baie de Somme Festival ~
Departs 24 April 2026 - 5 days from £1,150pp
Join us on this short break to enjoy this spectacular steam festival in northern France, staying in Abbeville, an important town in the Somme area and well known for the Collegiate Church of Saint-Vulfran.

Harz Explorer ~
Departs 30 May 2026 - 7 days from £1,665pp
Our escorted tours to the world famous Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB) are particularly popular. With daily steam trains and over 140km of narrow-gauge line to explore the HSB is a delight and one not to be missed.

Scandinavia by Rail ~
Departs 4 June 2026 - 15 days from £3,375pp
This new tour journeys by rail to Copenhagen, via Germany, and on to Oslo. Ride on both the Dovre and Rauma lines - two of the most scenic railway lines in Europe - before continuing to Östersund and Stockholm in Sweden.

Denmark & Northern Germany ~
Departs 6 July 2026 - 12 days from £3,050pp
We journey to Denmark via northern Germany and include journeys on the Mollibahn and Rasender Roland. We will visit the Danish National Railway Museum, cruise on a paddle steamer and take a journey on Denmark's longest narrow gauge steam railway before crossing the Baltic Sea by ferry.

Swiss Mountains & Lakes ~
Departs 2 September 2026 - 14 days from £4,330pp
Spend two weeks touring and ascending the famous peaks of the Swiss Alps – by train! Enjoy the stunning views from the top of some of Switzerland's most impressive mountains courtesy of engineering excellence and gravity defying railways.

Behind the Scenes in Central Europe ~
Departs 14 September 2026 - 15 days from £3,145pp
Explore some of Europe's most beautiful areas by rail, combining the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany with journeys on scenic railways, chartered tram rides and museum and depot visits.

WORLDWIDE

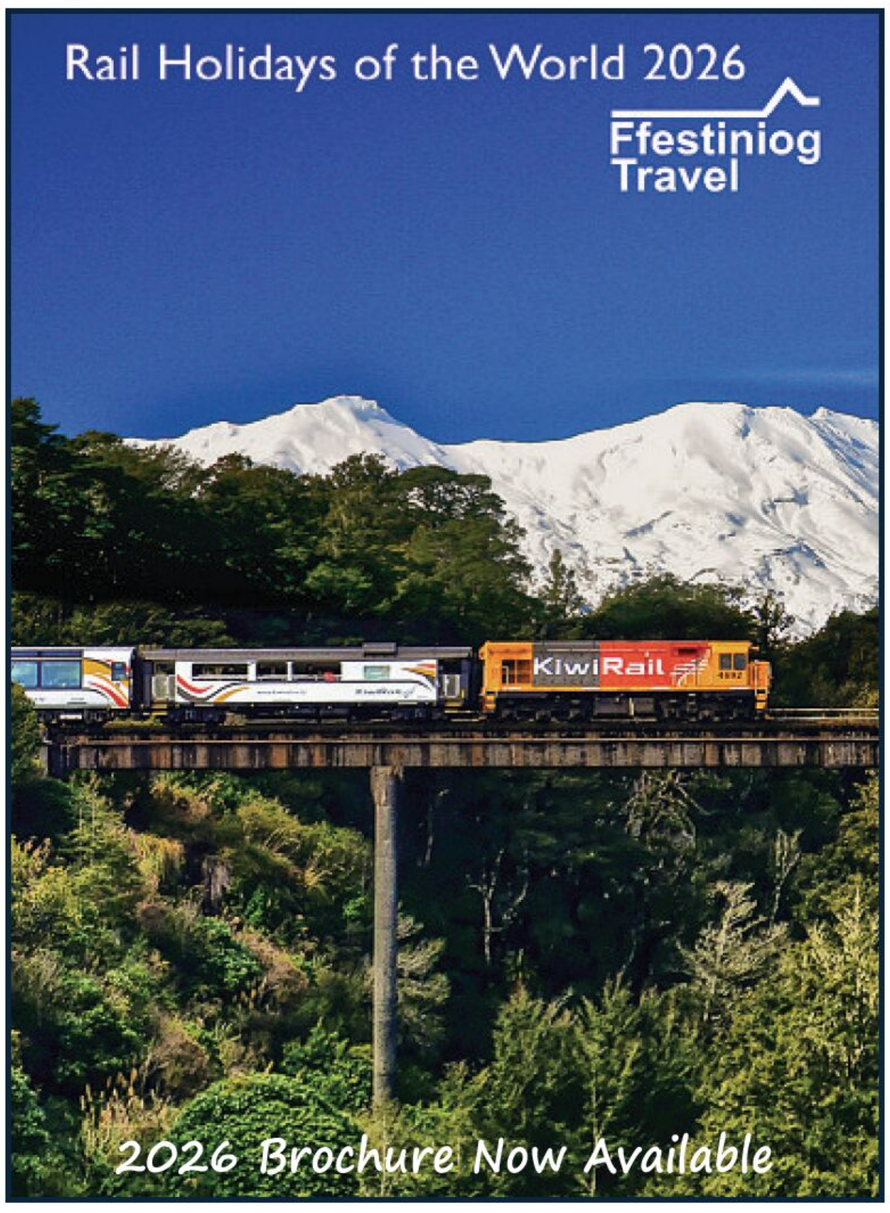
The Very Best of New Zealand ~
Departs 4 March 2026 - 27 days from £9,495pp
We return to New Zealand with this epic 27-day rail tour exploring both North and South Islands. Experience iconic journeys on the Northern Explorer, Coastal Pacific, and TranzAlpine trains, cruise the breathtaking Milford Sound, enjoy special highlights and vibrant city culture.

Mexican Rail Adventure ~
Departs 5 March 2026 - 16 days from £8,120pp
Our exciting new rail tour of Mexico blends thrilling train journeys with rich cultural experiences. Ride the legendary Copper Canyon Railway in First Class, enjoy scenic journeys aboard the new Tren InterOceanico and Tren Maya, and soak up local flavour on the Tequila Express. Plus ancient ruins, canal cruises and city sightseeing.

BRITISH ISLES

Wales: Culture, Steam & Heritage ~
Departs 4 September 2026 - 11 days from £2,695pp
This comprehensive tour takes you to the must-ride independent railways of North and Mid-Wales, along with a relaxing canal boat cruise and a good dose of history.

Isle of Man Driving Experience ~
Departs 14 September 2026 - 8 days from £1,595pp
The Isle of Man is a hidden gem for steam travel and vintage transport. This tour will indulge your passion for old-fashioned transportation as you go behind the scenes of working railways and trams whilst touring this pretty island in style



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