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ISSUE 340 December 19, 2025 – January 16, 2026

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RETAILER OF THE YEAR!

GWR Castle 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* races across North Staffs Junction with Vintage Trains' 1Z31, the 8.56am Birmingham New Street to York 'Christmas White Rose,' on December 3. The return journey was set to see No. 5043 double-head with A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* on the return journey, but crewing problems saw it come back on its own. *Tornado* ran light engine to Tyseley two days later to haul another 'Christmas White Rose' to York on December 10. No. 5043 also took part in the Tyseley operator's 'The Polar Express' programme from Birmingham Moor Street between November 21 and December 22. GRAHAM NUTTALL

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Heritage is now a big winner for us all

THE National Railway Heritage Awards 2025, as featured on pages 64-67, has for many highlighted the rich transformation of the public awareness of Britain's rich railway legacy, as reinforced by the splendid Railway 200 landmark celebratory programme.

The post-Beeching decades in which far too many redundant railway structures were cast aside and bulldozed in the cause of quick commercial progress without a second thought to their true historical value to their locality, region, or the nation now seem a distant memory, although we can never sit back and take current positive thinking for granted.

Take, for example, the case of Richmond station, where a £235,000 transformation which started two years ago restored its magnificent Art Deco glory with its façade leading to it now being hailed as "the prettiest station in London."

Then there is the imposing Cambrian Railways headquarters building in Oswestry, for which Shropshire Council has been honoured after undertaking meticulous work on every detail during its awesome project to reinforce it as a focal point of the town and its history.

At Yorkshire's Ebberston station, the owners have deservedly received an award for enhancing the original features during a very sensitive and conversion into self-catering accommodation. Elsewhere, it would have been so easy to take the practical, basic approach and demolish the long-disused water tower at Keighley station, but thankfully such thoughts eluded the heritage-conscious Keighley & Worth Valley volunteers, who have transformed it into a very attractive visitor centre.

Britain gave railways to the world, and surviving buildings for which their original use has long since ceased should be valued as much a part of a town's defining heritage as any other local historic structure of any type and build date.

Volunteer-led railway preservation began with the Talyllyn Railway nearly 75 years ago, and sowed seeds which grew and eventually blossomed into an enormous forest of appreciation way beyond our immediate revivalist sector – to the benefit of everyone.

A journey on a heritage railway today is akin to time travel, seeing and experiencing the past which made our country and the world what it is today.

Take a look at our 2026 Railway Calendar in Off The Shelf, page 79, which will inspire ideas for visits to our successful heritage lines every month of the year.

RobinJones Editor

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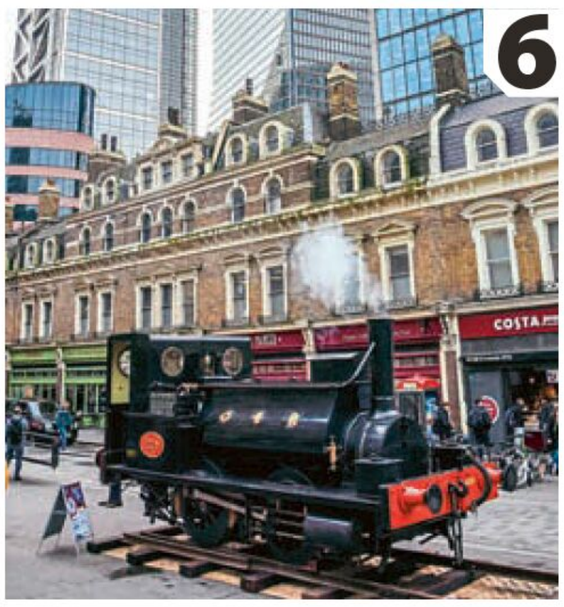

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No. 60532 *Blue Peter* crosses the Forth Bridge with a Steam Dreams tour to Dunfermline on November 29. DAVE COLLIER

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Safe in their hands!

The National Railway Heritage Awards 2025

Guardians of Britain's proud rail heritage were again honoured for their stunning achievements at The National Railway Heritage Awards 2025 ceremony in London, reports Robin Jones.

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Following the formation of BR, it was decided to begin the construction of several new classes of Standard locomotives. BR engineman Dave Wilson looks at two of the most ubiquitous and numerous of these designs.

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Paul Lawrence looks at the history of one particular GER 0-6-0T that became synonymous with one of London's many termini.

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GER 'Coffee Pot' in steam marks historic moment in the capital

By Owen Hayward

DECEMBER 8 marked an historic occasion for GER 0-4-0ST 'Coffee Pot' No. 229 as it returned to its home region and was to be found in steam outside London's Liverpool Street station as part of a Railway 200 celebration organised by local Freemasons.

Built by Neilson & Co works in 1876, No. 229 ended its working years with the GER at nearby Stratford depot as a shunter. In 1917, it was sold to the Admiralty and moved to Chepstow's Beachley dock, and although it returned to home territory when it was taken to the former North Woolwich museum, until now it had never been seen in steam back in the region, its last date in commercial use believed to be in about 1954.

Owned by Bill Parker, of the Flour Mill workshop at Bream in the Forest of Dean, following the demise of the museum, the diminutive locomotive was taken there in June 2008. A restoration into working order was completed in time for Hopetown Darlington's September 20-October 5 Titans of Steam gala, as reported in issue 338. On December 8, No. 229 was taken by road to Liverpool Street and unloaded onto a short display plinth outside the GER terminus in the early hours, and it remained there until about 9pm the following evening, when it returned to Gloucestershire. The visit was organised by Railway Support Services managing director Andrew Goodman and the Freemasons.

Freemasonry has a long connection with the railway industry, with both George and Robert Stephenson having been members, as were GER chairman Claude Hamilton and other company directors. When the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street station opened in 1884, it incorporated two finely furnished meeting rooms for the Masons. The Freemasons' Permanent Way Lodge, which meets in Evesham, saw a unique opportunity to celebrate the links between the organisation and the history of the railway, assembling in one of the surviving meeting rooms at the station.

While No. 229 was outside the station, the Flour Mill crew lit a fire in No. 229, marking the first time it had steamed on home territory since being sold by the GER 108 years before. This action caught the attention of rush-hour commuters and visiting tourists, with sufficient boiler pressure being produced to intermittently blow the locomotive's whistle, the sound echoing between the surrounding high-rise buildings. Fresh GER lettering had been applied to No. 299's distinctive water tank sides for the occasion by photographer Geoff Silcock.

The Freemasons raise about £50 million for charity annually.

In addition to collection buckets surrounding No. 229 during its two-day stay, it was also promoting a raffle in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital, with prizes including a selection of Bachmann OO scale locomotive models, a footplate ride on Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60103 *Tornado*, steam and diesel footplate experiences, and a day at Cheltenham Races for two including travel aboard a steam-hauled service on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway to the racecourse.

Entries close on December 22; to buy tickets or donate, head online to go.rallyup.com/rail200raffle/Campaign/Details

Chepstow docks reunion

During its time at Chepstow, No. 299 would have worked alongside Kerr Stuart 0-4-0WT D249 *Willy*, which arrived there the following year. *Willy* spent its entire working life there under the ownership of shipbuilders Fairfield Mabey Ltd, before both locomotives were rescued in 1982.

With both now owned by the same person, an opportunity to reunite them close to home territory has presented itself which will see the pair star at the Dean Forest Railway's March 28/29 small engines gala, which will also mark No. 229's 150th anniversary, although its exact build date is uncertain.

Full details will be confirmed nearer to the time; however, DFR volunteers are currently attempting to complete the restoration of Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2221 of 1946 in time to appear at the event.

No. 229 is dwarfed by the skyscrapers surrounding Liverpool Street on December 10, when the diminutive 0-4-0ST returned to home territory and could be found in steam on GER territory for the first time in more than a century. OWEN HAYWARD

A Chepstow reunion is on the cards, as Kerr Stuart *Willy* is set to head to the Dean Forest Railway in March, when it will be seen in steam alongside GER No. 229 for the first time since 1954. OWEN HAYWARD

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Early start: No. 299 in steam outside Liverpool Street station at 7.23am on December 8. BILL PARKER

The race is on to complete Andrew Barclay No. 2221 in time for the Dean Forest Railway's small engines gala in March, where No. 229 will also appear. ADAM WILLIAMS/DFR

Built for Devonport Dockyard, it has not steamed for about 50 years and has been stranded on a plinth in Norchard years since the 1990s.

Following the completion of Peckett No. 2147 *Usmkmouth No. 1* in September 2024, No. 2221 was moved into the workshops for overhaul to commence.

By early December, a new cab and bunker had arrived, were fitted, and then fully riveted together.

Remaining work will require the bottom 12in of the firebox wrapped and the backplate and throatplate be replaced, along with a new main steam pipe and 100 new tubes.

Achieving a return to steam by March would see the whole project completed in just 18 months, but the railway stresses that it will not cut corners and rush to complete the job.

An appeal to raise £20,000 to fund the remaining work has been set up. In addition to taking up membership, support can be shown by making a donation at dfr.hops.org.uk/shop/donations/andrew-barclay-2221 or by bank transfer to Dean Forest Railway Society (sort code 30-91-87, account number 04655645, citing Barclay 2221 in the reference. Cheques (with the reverse marked 'Barclay Appeal') can be made out to the Dean Forest Railway Society and sent to: Dean Forest Railway Society, Norchard Station, Forest Road, Lydney GL15 4ET.

Two top awards for The Greatest Gathering

By Robin Jones

ALSTOM has scooped two awards for its sell-out record-breaking Railway 200 event The Greatest Gathering.

Organisers of the world's largest-ever gathering of historic and modern trains – held at Alstom's 90-acre Derby Litchurch Lane Works on August 1-3, as featured in Heritage Railway issue 336 – carried off the Star Team Award at the 2025 Heart of Gold Awards, which is organised by the Railway Benefit Fund to celebrate those in the rail industry who make a real difference.

Award winners were announced at Railpen's new London offices and presented with their honours by charity president Pete Waterman OBE and Jo Kaye, the fund's chief executive officer.

The next day, The Greatest Gathering won a Project Team Award at the RailStaff Awards 2025 at the National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham, hosted by journalist, broadcaster and former MP Michael Portillo.

Alstom secured 17 finalist places in 20 categories, including individual nods for Ben Goodwin (Rail Ambassador of the Year) and Kathryn Lancaster (Lifetime Achievement Award), two of the organisers of The Greatest Gathering.

Rob Whyte, managing director of Alstom UK and Ireland, said: "To see The Greatest Gathering recognised twice in one week is truly remarkable. These awards celebrate not only the scale and ambition of the event, but also the collaboration and passion that made it possible. I'd like to thank the organising committee, alongside the hundreds of Alstom colleagues and partners on the main line and in heritage sectors who made The Greatest Gathering a once-in-a-lifetime event for the thousands of visitors we welcomed to Derby – alongside the millions who enjoyed it virtually around the world."

The Greatest Gathering organising committee celebrate after securing a Project Team Award at the RailStaff Awards 2025. RAIL MEDIA

Adam O'Connor, managing director of Rail Media, which organised the RailStaff Awards, said: "I am thrilled that Alstom have come away with three awards this year. Having been around their Derby operations for decades, I have personally witnessed the passion behind their success. Top work from a top team."

More than £100,000 raised by the event has been split between five chosen charities – Alzheimer's Research UK, Railway Benefit Fund, Railway Children, Railway Mission and Transport Benevolent Fund CIO – as well as more than 50 railway heritage organisations that took part.

Duke hits buffer stop at Hanwell Loop

AN investigation was underway into a collision between unique BR Standard Class 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* and a buffer stop during shunting moves with its support coach within Hanwell Loop near Southall at 8.40pm on December 6.

Following the steam-hauled leg of Saphos Trains' 'The Bath Christmas Market Express' from Ely via Southall to Bath, No. 71000 came into contact with the buffer stop at Hanwell East Spur. Train operator Locomotive Services Limited said: "This was a very slow-speed move, and no passengers were involved. There was no damage to the locomotive and no staff were hurt. LSL TOC is carrying out a full investigation involving the relevant parties."

No. 71000 returned to action to head its Steam Dreams excursion from London Victoria to Bath on December 9.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch said that it will not be making any further inquiries.

No-go for BR Scottish Standard

BO'NESS & Kinneil Railway-based BR Standard 4MT No. 80105 has been withdrawn from service following a currently undisclosed boiler failure, meaning that its year-long loan to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway from mid-February will not go ahead.

Preserved by the Locomotive Owners' Group (Scotland) Ltd in 1973, its most recent overhaul was completed in the autumn of 2024.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway press officer Ian Crowder confirmed that the search for a replacement was ongoing.

GCR(N) seeks permission to run public evening trains

THE Great Central Railway (Nottingham) has asked the Secretary of State for Transport for permission to run public services after 6pm.

Under the Transport and Works Act 1992, the railway is subject to certain restrictions which do not permit passenger trains to run after this time, although freight and engineering trains are allowed to use the line at any time.

In a formal application submitted on December 1, the railway asked for written consent to make a small amendment to the operating restrictions to run a single train on no more than two evenings a week and finishing no later than 10pm.

Starting at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre in Ruddington, the proposed train would run south through Rushcliffe Halt and across Stanford Viaduct, before returning north.

The request is part of a plan to develop a modest dining offering and charter business and drive some economic growth on the railway and in the local area, said a GCR(N) spokesman.

All views considered

Any objections to or other representations about the request should be sent to the Secretary of State for Transport c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit, Department for Transport, Zone 1/18, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR, or emailed to transportinfrastructure@dft.gov.uk, giving a postal address and stating 'Great Central Railways – East Leake' in the subject line.

An objection or representation must be received by the Secretary of State on or before January 19 and made in writing either by post or email. It must state the grounds of the objection or other representation, indicate who is making it, and give an address to which may be sent.

Following the close of the notice period, the Secretary of State will consider the representations that have been received and the request for the proposed changes in reaching a decision.

The GCR(N) request can be viewed at gcrn.co.uk

West Somerset announces special events celebrating half centenary

By Robin Jones

Bagnall 0-6-0ST no 2996 *Victor* with the inaugural train at Dunster on March 28, 1976. BAZ JUNIPER/WSR

BRITAIN'S longest standard gauge heritage railway has announced a series of events to mark its 50th anniversary in 2026.

The theme for the year's special events on the West Somerset Railway will be WSR 50 to mark the half-centenary of the reopening of the first section of the GWR branch between Minehead and Blue Anchor on March 28, 1976.

The loss-making line was closed by BR, with the last service departing from Minehead on January 2, 1971. Following a meeting of the Minehead Railway Preservation Society in Taunton on February 5 that year, a working party headed by local businessman Douglas Fear set about looking into the possibility of the closed branch being reopened as a privately-owned concern

That May, a new West Somerset Railway Company was formed to acquire the line and operate a year-round commuter service from Minehead to Taunton alongside which a limited summer steam service could also run.

The revivalist company agreed a deal to buy the branch with the support of Somerset County Council, which expressed concerns that the lucrative Minehead station site could fall into private hands if the scheme failed. The council then bought the line itself in 1973 and leased back the operational land to the West Somerset Railway Company plc.

The proposed commuter service never materialised because of traffic restrictions between the newly-installed Taunton Cider Company sidings at Norton Fitzwarren and Taunton.

After the first section was reopened purely as a heritage line, services were extended to Williton on August 28, 1976. They reached Stogumber on May 7, 1978, and Bishops Lydeard on June 9, 1979 – a total of 20½ miles.

During special events, some trains continue a further two miles to Norton Fitzwarren, bringing the total length to 22¾ miles. The new Doniford Halt was opened on June 27, 1987, to serve a holiday camp at Helwell Bay.

The first SWR 50 event will be held on March 28/29 to mark the anniversary of the reopening of the first section.

The annual Spring Steam Spectacular on Friday, May 1 and Monday, May 4 will feature several visiting locomotives alongside the home fleet, an intensive timetable, and several other attractions for a weekend of steam action. The guest locomotives will include regular performers on the WSR over the years or ones of the same type where the exact locomotive is no longer available.

The annual Summer Diesel Festival will be held between Thursday, June 4 and Saturday, June 6, with a mixed traction day on Sunday, June 7. There will be several visiting diesels locomotives running alongside the home-based Diesel & Electric Preservation Group fleet, plus additional attractions throughout the weekend.

Further events for later in the season are being planned.

Filming jobs and *Scotsman* boosted West Somerset fortunes

THE hugely popular visit by A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* to the West Somerset Railway last summer further boosted its finances – after the increased use of the heritage line for location filming by movie companies helped reduce its annual losses from more than £420,000 in 2004 to £29,460.

The WSR plc annual accounts for the year ending March 31, 2025, showed that previous weekly losses of more than £800 had been reduced to £566.

Chairman Jonathan Jones-Pratt said income had been boosted by an increasing use of the railway by filming companies. "We had a major contract in mid-2024 and we are pleased how this went," he said. "We are actively pursuing other possibilities.

"A key element which a heritage railway can offer the film industry is more flexibility than filming on the main network. If they want our trains to shuffle back and forth for another take, it is usually possible to do that.

"Until recently, much of this business has been taken up by railways nearer London, and the Bluebell Railway has been notably successful over several years. The business is there, so all we have to do is point it in our direction.

"We have benefitted considerably from the recent visit of *Flying Scotsman,* and the team are to be congratulated on all the work that went into this. This, together with our other income, will leave us in a reasonable cash position for the coming winter.

"However, we should not rely on exceptional income events to sustain our cash position."

Jonathan said there was a slow decline over the years in regular 'fare box' income alongside gradually increasing costs which could affect long-term viability. He said that last summer, the railway suffered from the very hot weather (which may prove not to have been exceptional) and the risk of lineside fires caused by steam locomotives.

A directors' report with the accounts said: "The directors are confident that the company will return to trading profitably in the future. However, the railway remains in need of regular and significant cash investment.

The West Somerset Railway-based Diesel & Electric Preservation Group has increased its fleet to 11 with the purchase of No. 08401 (D3516) from the Hunslet Engine Company at Doncaster. In full working order, the 1958-built Class 08 , first allocated to Plymouth Laira, is now at Williton, where it will be made dual-braked with the reinstallation of vacuum braking. JOHN TOOKE/WSR

"Our senior management team are finding ways to encourage more visitors to the railway and to increase income outside of the fare box. This has been developed further during the year and did result in higher fare income during the season.

"Christmas fares did not materialise as anticipated and as such the 2025 Christmas programme has been adapted to reduce the risk of this reoccurring."

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BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73082 *Camelot* approaches New Road bridge with the 5pm Steam Lights from Sheffield Park on the Bluebell Railway on December 6. NICK GILLIAM

Top local award for Great Central

THE Great Central Railway has won an award for being the Best Day Out in Leicestershire.

The railway scooped the prestigious accolade at the 2025 Leicestershire Promotions Tourism & Hospitality Awards presentation evening and was highly commended for its Elizabethan traditional Sunday Lunch dining train.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "Winning this is an incredible honour as it was the only category voted for by the public. Placing in every category we entered as well makes this a truly remarkable night. As a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organisation, recognition like this means the world to us. It reflects the passion, skill and hard work of our teams."

The GCR will be running a public passenger service on Christmas Day. Although December 25 has traditionally seen most of the country close down and families spend time at home, the GCR has run a festive first class dining service of the day for several years, serving a six-course meal on board a steam train from Loughborough Central and Leicester North. This year, it is also opening its doors to those looking for a day of heritage travel.

At the awards presentation are (left to right) Great Central Railway volunteer Avril Hunt general manager Malcolm Holmes, HR manager Lorraine Kearins, and head of marketing and commercial development Jonathan Fraser. FU MEDIA

"With the railway already open for the dining train and volunteers both available and keen to run a public service, we have decided to give it a go," Malcolm said. "Who knows, it could become a new tradition, replacing the post-lunch walk."

There will be three non-stop round trips of the line, departing Loughborough Central at 11.30am, 12.45pm and 2.30pm and running non-stop to Leicester North. The dining train is sold out; tickets for general travel are £20 for adults and £10 for children; see www.gcrailway.co.uk/visit/events/20251225-christmas-cracker

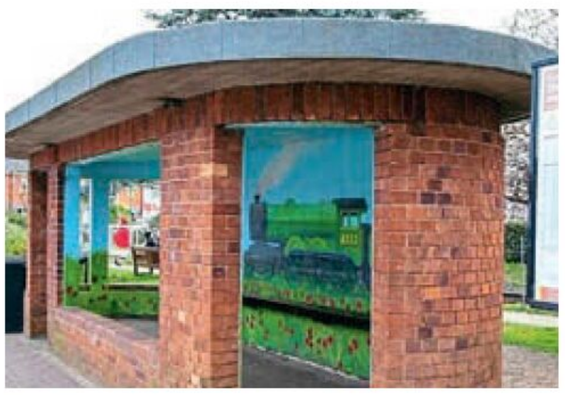
Protests staged to save Norfolk bus shelter with railway mural

SHERINGHAM residents staged 24-hour sit-in protests to save a 1950s brick-built bus shelter in Station Approach, near the North Norfolk Railway's terminus, which contains a mural of LNER B12 4-6-0 No. 8572 by local artist Colin Seal.

Norfolk County Council wanted to demolish the shelter due to accessibility and safety concerns and replace it with a modern plastic one.

However, starting on December 1, protestors camped in the shelter on a rota basis. Bailiffs arrived at 4am on December 8 but were stood down at 10am after the protestors refused to move. A petition at change.org, which attracted more than 4000 signatures, stated: "It is a cherished part of Sheringham's identity. Children grew up waiting for buses here; adults now return with their own families to show them this familiar landmark."

In the House of Commons on December 3, Local Liberal Democrat MP Steff Aquarone tabled a motion signed by 15 members which said: "That this House notes with grave concern the plans of Norfolk County Council to demolish Sheringham's historic bus shelter; recognises that the shelter is of Streamline Moderne Art Deco design, dating from the 1950s; further notes that it contains a treasured poppy mural painted which recognises the historic Midland & Great Northern Railway..."



The Station Approach bus shelter containing Colin Seal's LNER B12 mural. CHANGE.ORG

At an emergency meeting on December 9, Sheringham Town Council voted to no longer support the demolition of the bus shelter, a decision vociferously welcomed by the campaigners. A subsequent county council statement said: "We will respect that decision and will now stop all work and withdraw from the site as soon as possible."

Three carriages on the market

A CONVERTED railway carriage used as a luxury holiday home in Northumberland is being offered for sale.

The 76ft Stannington Pullman was built in 1978 as a Mk. 3 Tourist Standard Open before it was rebuilt for Grand Central as a Mk. 2 Trailer Standard and reconfigured as Coach No. 41207, serving inter-city routes to London and then working around the East Midlands prior to withdrawal.

Opened in 2022 and positioned near the East Coast Main Line five miles south of Morpeth, the carriage features gas central heating, a separate shower room and toilet, a fully-fitted shaker-style kitchen and its own wi-fi network, with a dining area made from an authentic leather East Midlands Railway booth.

Co-owner Emma Williams said: "It's been a brilliant project to create, with an amazing response we've had from our guests over the last three years, and it's been extremely popular all year-round, but it's now time for the train to pull out of the station and find a new place to stop." For details, email thestanningtonpullman@gmail.com

Artefacts for sale

Elsewhere, the clearance of a private site at Blennerhasset Mill, near Carlisle, has seen a selection of various railway artefacts offered for sale – including two NER carriages.

Located in Cumbria, the carriages and other rolling stock belonged to Andy Curle, renowned for the candle-powered steamboat models he sold at festivals and Christmas markets, who died earlier in 2025.

NER five-compartment thirds Nos. 362 and 514, both built in 1913, were after withdrawal used as staff accommodation at the Bungalow Hotel in Sandsend, near Whitby, where they were incorporated into the building which became derelict in the early 2000s. In April 2010, Andy, aided by a team of helpers, dismantled the building to recover them.

Also for sale are 2ft gauge diesel Hibberd Planet 4WDM No. 3756 and an unidentified Ruston 4WDM

Viewing will be available by appointment between December 26 and January 2. For the full list of what is available, visit tinyurl.com/blennerhasset-rail-sale

The exterior of the Stannington Pullman. FOOTPRINT PR

Keeping the magic alive despite Spa Valley's water supply woes

By Owen Hayward

AN early December water supply disruption to Tunbridge Wells in Kent came close to impacting the Spa Valley Railway's 'Polar Express' services, but thanks to some quick planning, services were able to run as advertised.

On November 29, residents reported low pressure for their water supplies, with some a total absence. South East Water apologised, citing issues at the nearby Pembury water treatment plant which had resulted in the site shutting down, with water tankers deployed to supply residents and businesses with drinking water supplies. Although the firm initially hoped to resolve the issue by 6am the following morning, the disruption continued until the end of the following week.

Battle of Britain Pacific No. 35053 *Sir Keith Park* heads a Spa Vallery Railway 'Polar Express' service on December 6, unaffected by the local water supply disruption. SPVR

'Ridiculous' situation

Accordingly, many firms, including hotels and restaurants, had to close while mains supplies were reinstated, resulting in thousands of pounds worth of losses in the locality. The Spa Valley Railway, which runs for five miles out of the LBSCR Tunbridge Wells West station towards Eridge, was in the middle of its 'Polar Express' season, with services planned to run from December 4-7. However, there was no water supply on the whole of the main station site for basic activities such as flushing toilets, let alone filling up a steam locomotive.

On December 2, a post on the railway's social media platforms said: "The situation at Tunbridge Wells with its water supply is absolutely ridiculous and unacceptable. All we want is to be told what is going on and a reasonable idea of timescale. We're fed up of false promises and times that mean nothing."

In order to ensure that customers did not face disappointment as a result of cancelled trains, the railway took measures and secured a water tanker at its own expense, with additional supplies procured for hot chocolate drinks, one of the prominent features of the on-board festive experience.

A SpVR statement said: "We are determined to keep the magic of Christmas alive for our visitors and their families. For many of our younger guests, this is a truly special occasion, and we'll do everything we can to make it memorable. We want to reassure you that our team has worked incredibly hard behind the scenes to prepare and adapt.

"We have made arrangements to continue to produce lots of hot chocolate and have taken delivery of a tanker with 28,000 litres of water so we can operate our trains and flush facilities. We've also installed extra toilet facilities."

Safety advice

The cause of the disruption was found to be a faulty batch of chemicals used in the treatment process of water to make it safe to drink. On December 3, the company said it was still working to rectify the problems and advised customers receiving mains supplies to boil any water for drinking or use in cooking and cleaning first.

"There is no evidence that the water is contaminated but we cannot currently meet the stringent regulatory requirements required to provide drinking water," a SEW statement said. "We have therefore taken the decision to pump water from our treatment works into the network, which can be used for flushing toilets or showering, but crucially cannot be used for drinking without boiling first."

During the evening of December 3, a weak mains supply of water had reached the SpVR's station, although it initially appeared only as a gentle trickle out of one a water pump outlet. By December 6, full pressure had returned, although the requirement to boil water for consumption remained in effect for at least 10 days.

New GCR training centre opens at Loughborough

THE Great Central Railway's new Robinson Centre, featuring an education and training facility next to Loughborough locomotive shed and which attracted a £280,000 grant aid contrubution from Loughborough Town Deal, was officially opened on December 5.

The centre will become home to the GCR apprenticeship programme and a hub for school engagement and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) outreach, featuring state-of-the-art teaching facilities.

The opening event brought together staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who were welcomed with speeches from GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes, Coun Jenni Tilltson, Charnwood Borough Council's deputy leader and lead member for economic development, and Dave Jones, from CrossCountry Trains, each highlighting the line's role within the community.

The £780,000 project also included the refurbishment of the shed with resurfaced walkways and the creation of designated routes for visitors, plus new racking to store materials. Damaged and missing cladding was replaced to provide better weather protection.

Following the speeches, guests were taken on guided tours of the locomotive shed, signalboxes and station.

Above: The official opening of the Robinson Centre on December 5. CHARNWOOD BC

Left: Inside the new education and training facility. GCR

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Unrestored 'Black Five' for sale at Loughborough

A PRIVATELY owned LMS 'Black Five' which has yet to steam in the heritage era has been placed on the market. Its sale is being facilitated by the Great Central Railway, its home for the past 14 years.

Built at Derby Works in 1943, No. 5491 was employed for wartime traffic during the latter years of the Second World War, after which it settled down with basic goods and passenger services.

Renumbered 45491 by BR, it lasted in service until July 1965 and that October arrived at the Woodham Brothers' Barry scrapyard. It remained there for 16 years before being bought in 1981 by the West Lancashire Black Five Society, which moved it to the ICI works at Hillhouse, Thornton, along with a tender from Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45699 *Galatea*.

It moved to Fleetwood Steam Centre, where a break-in saw thieves steal parts of the copper firebox platework and other components including the main steam pipe and three of the four bogie axleboxes.

The locomotive was bought by current owner Phil Wainwright in 1991 and taken to the Midland Railway – Butterley where work began before it moved on again, this time to the GCR in 2011 where work has continued.

Earlier this year, the locomotive was served an eviction notice, with the railway citing that restoration had made 'limited progress.' Although a deadline for June 16 had been given for its removal, the locomotive is currently still under cover in the locomotive shed at Loughborough Central.

A GCR statement said: "The locomotive has been undergoing restoration by its current ownership for a number of years but is believed to still be in need of substantial additional work before it could be considered as fit for operational service. The GCR has has not played any significant role in the restoration work carried out hitherto.

"The sale is being conducted with reference to section 12 and schedule 1 of the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977. For this purpose, GCR has been in receipt of legal advice provided by Shakespeare Martineau LLP of Nottingham.

"Offers from interested parties to buy the locomotive and tender are now being sought in its as-seen condition."

Prospective buyers will be given an opportunity to view No. 45491 at Loughborough on January 14 and offers for a purchase must be made by 11.59pm on January 30. To arrange a viewing or make an offer on the locomotive, email Richard.patching@gcrailway.co.uk; prior booking for the viewing day (at least five working days in advance) is essential.

Looking largely complete but still requiring a much work before it can run again, Stanier 5MT No. 45491 has been offered for sale at the Great Central Railway. GCR

Class 20 finds a new place to call home at Bury

THE East Lancashire Railway is now home to Class 20 D8069.

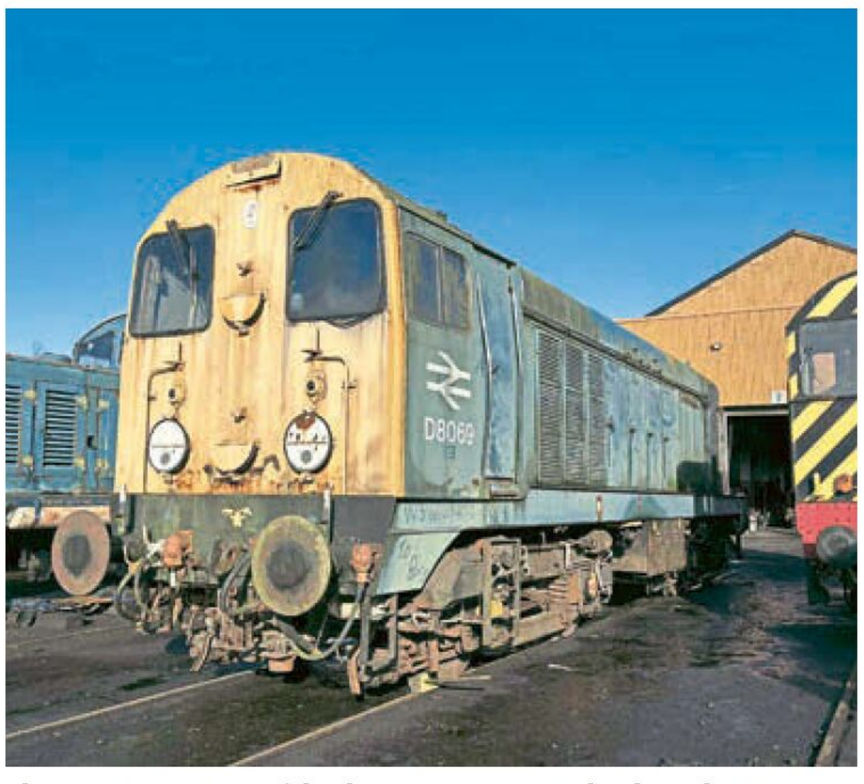
Entering service on June 30, 1961, later renumbered to 20069, it was withdrawn on February 1, 1981, and stored at Swindon Works. In June 1982, No. 20069 was moved to Glasgow Works as part of a plan to upgrade all remaining Class 20s with dual brakes to see them in traffic for another decade and allocated to Edinburgh's Haymarket depot.

On May 19, 1991, while at Thornaby, it was condemned and dumped at Frodingham depot. The following year, it was bought by a group led by the late Chris Broadhurst and arrived at County School, home of the nascent Mid-Norfolk Railway, that June.

In June 2001, it visited the nearby North Norfolk Railway's diesel gala and stayed there for four months, undergoing a cylinder head change.

Stood down by the MNR in June 2012 after being hit by a steam locomotive, it went to Nemesis Rail at Burton for repairs and returned to Dereham in 2013 but never worked there again and was stored out of use at Thuxton. Harry Needle bought it and moved it to Worksop, but no work was carried out.

D8069 CIC, a community interest company, was formed and on November 10 it moved by road to the ELR in the custody of The Bury Chopper Group and was successfully started on November 22. Once D8069 is running, the new owning group's main priority is the restation of the bodywork after four years of it being stored in the open.



Class 20 D8069 outside the Baron Street shed on the East Lancashire Railway on December 13. BEN TAYLOR

Heading the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway's first 'North Pole Express' of the festive season, USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 6046 prepares to depart from Chinnor on November 29. CPRR

Help get Southern Locomotives tank pair running again

SOUTHERN Locomotives Ltd has issued a double appeal for two amounts of £15,000 towards the overhaul of its two tank engines.

Hiring the pair helps solve the group'sfinancial pressures, with the income raised going straight to its Bulleid light Pacifics, No. 35028 *Eddystone* having impressed with its heritage era main line debut in 2025.

BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80104 needs £15,000 to replace its superheater header, an unexpected problem that has strained the group's finances,

The return of No. 80104's boiler to the Swanage Railway's Herston Works for the fitting of the crinolines and cladding has been delayed by cranes breaking down at the subcontractor, but the transfer was imminent. There will be several months' work once the boiler has been reunited with the frames, but the group hopes it will be ready to haul trains at Swanage by the end of 2026.

A similar amount is needed for WD Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 7086 of 1943 WD No. 75050 *Norman* to complete axlebox work and motion overhaul to enable reconstruction to start.

About 80% of the unskilled work has been completed on the frames and axlebox repairs nearly completed off-site, along with the manufacture of new slide bars, meaning the group will soon start the reconstruction.

➜ For details of how to donate, email southernlocos@btinternet.com, telephone 01474 833263, or visit www.southern-locomotives.co.uk

Stores van for sale

THE North Norfolk Railway is offering Mk. 1 BG No. 81114 for sale, having deemed it as surplus to requirements. Formerly an internal user vehicle at Derby, it has served only as a stores van in preservation.

Its condition is described as fairly poor with several components missing, and the wheelsets are due to be swapped before a sale takes place. Interested parties are advised to arrange a viewing of the vehicle at Sheringham before making an offer; for further details email chris.moxon@nnr.co.uk

Shortlist of record entries for HRA Awards 2026 unveiled

By Robin Jones

A BULLEID Pacific, a fireless locomotive narrow-gauge gunpowder van and the newest heritage line station in the UK are among dozens of projects, people, and achievements that have made it onto the biggest-ever shortlist for the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2026.

A panel of judges chaired by the National Railway Museum's Anthony Coulls and comprising industry experts and leading journalists from the sector considered a record 110 entries to create the shortlist.

HRA chief executive Steve Oates said: "This has already been the most hotly contested HRA Awards ever, with entries comfortably breaking through the 100 figure for the first time.

"The judging panel really did have their work cut out to whittle that down to a shortlist – the biggest and most comprehensive shortlist we've ever seen.

Right: The completion of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways' £5 million Boston Lodge Interpretation and Restoration Project is celebrated: see also pages 64-67. FFWHR

Facing the challenges

"Even in a year that has been incredibly challenging for heritage rail thanks to the ongoing economic climate, there have been so many stunning projects completed and so many people standing out for their exceptional contributions.

"It's really impressive to see, and it speaks loudly about just how resilient and determined heritage railways and tramways are. It's been an outstanding year truly worthy of Railway 200."

Arguably the most sought-after prize at the annual awards is Railway of the Year. Four very different lines will each hope to take home the title: the Keighley & Worth Valley, Seaton Tramway, Tanfield Railway, and Vale of Rheidol Railway.

Competing for the Steam Locomotive Award is an unusually diverse selection of finalists: Mid-Hants Railway-based Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific*; South African Railways NG15 2-8-2 No. 134 on the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways; Barclay fireless 0-4-0 *Boots No. 1,* based at the West Somerset Railway; and the diminutive 2ft gauge Telford Town Tram.

Contenders in the Diesel and Electric category are: Great Central Railway Class 27 No. 27056; Isle of Wight Steam Railway-based Class 03 No. 03179 *Clive*; Motor Rail Simplex pair *Morris* and *Ubique*, from the Chasewater Railway; and Hunslet 0-4-0DM No. 1786 of 1935, from the Middleton Railway Trust.

The shortlist for the Rolling Stock Award includes the replica gunpowder van built by the Talyllyn Railway's young members group, the Severn Valley Railway's conversion of a GWR carriage into an accessible buffet car, the Bala Lake Railway's replica Penrhyn saloon carriage, and the Bluebell Railway's Southern Railway 'Hastings' line brake carriage No. 3687. The recently introduced Station of the Year category shortlist is: the Cambrian Heritage Railway's Oswestry station; Blue Anchor station, on the West Somerset Railway; Sheringham station, on the North Norfolk Railway; and Seathorne Bank station, on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway – the newest heritage sector station to open in the UK.

Many achievements

The National Railway Museum's refurbishment and reinterpretation of Station Hall in York, the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's 'predict and prevent' asset management, the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway's Independent Line project and Peak Rail's traditional locomotive watering facility make up the Infrastructure Award shortlist.

Competing for Achievement of the Year are: the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group's replacement of a cylinder on its Q6 0-8-0 No. 63395; Seaton Tramway's new Jurassic Discovery attraction, the Downpatrick & County Down Railway for its 'Moyexit' rescue of four diesel locomotives, as described in *Heritage Railway* issue 324; the Vale of Rheidol Railway for its 'Collection X' project (*Heritage Railway* issue 339); and the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways for the interpretation and restoration of Boston Lodge.

The new Event of the Year category generated a huge amount of interest. Making the shortlist are the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway for its The Railway Children theatre show, Hampton and Kempton Waterworks Railway for its Railway 200 event, the Talyllyn Railway for its Awdry Extravaganza, the Bluebell Railway for its Railway 200 events, and the Tanfield Railway for its 300th anniversary celebrations.

The shortlist for the Innovation of the Year category includes the Kent & East Sussex Railway for its gaming train, the Middleton Railway for the introduction of an almoner role (as reported in issue 337), the Severn Valley Railway for its Boogie Lights Express train, and the KWVR for its theatre production of A Christmas Carol.

A growing element of the HRA Annual Awards are the people-related categories. The longstanding Lord

The North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group replaced the right-hand cylinder on North Yorkshire Moors Railway-based LNER Q6 0-8-0 No. 63395 following its catastrophic failure in 2023, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 307. The new cylinder was cast at the Boro' Foundry and No. 63395 was operational again in May 2025. NELPG

Locomotive line-up at the Tanfield Railway, which in 2025 celebrated its 300th anniversary as the world's oldest operational line. TR

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Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific,* which had been out of traffic since 2008, in Mid-Hants Railway action on March 24. MHR

Faulkner Young Volunteer of the Year honour has four finalists in Samuel Jones, from the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway, Ben Wilson, from the Tanfield Railway, Jamie Taylor, from the Fife Heritage Railway, and Shea McKee, from the Downpatrick & County Down Railway. The DCDR will also be competing in the Rising Star category with 26-year-old compliance officer Christopher McCausland up against Mid-Hants Railway education and outreach coordinator Daniel Ball, North Yorkshire Moors Railway mechanical apprentice Charlie Bauckham, Severn Valley Railway project leader Jack Baldwin and Lynton & Barnstaple Railway events and marketing coordinator Rebecca Paterson.

Recognising people

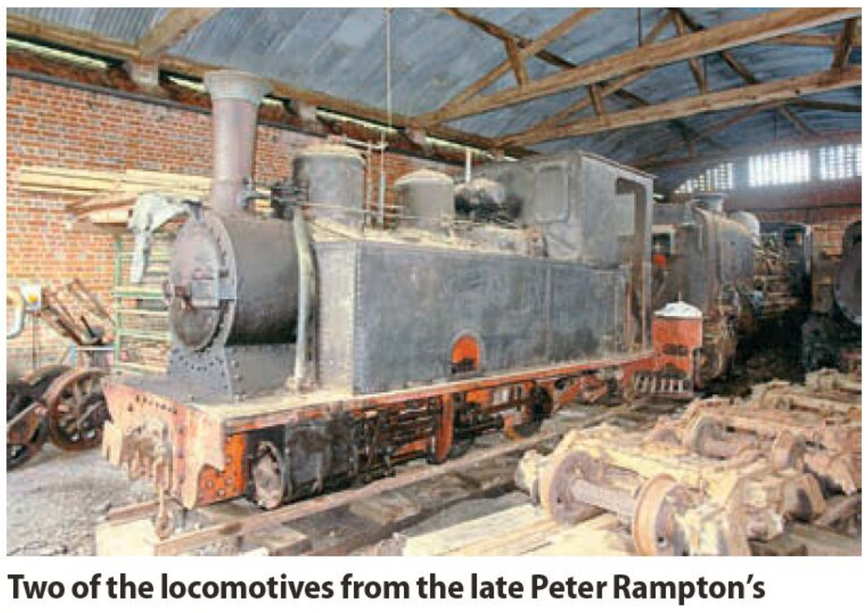
The Team of the Year shortlist comprises the KWVR's catering team, the Southern Electric Traction Group, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway events team and Great Central Railway-based Heavy Tractor Group.

In addition to the 12 categories available for entries, the Heritage Railway Association has three special awards which are only given to exceptional projects and achievements. The Manisty Award for excellence, the Chairman's Special Award and the Railway 200 Award are expected to be presented on the evening – the first time that all three have been awarded in the same year. There will also be separate honours from publications covering the sector including *Heritage Railway*, (Interpretation Award), *The Railway Magazine* (Person of the Year) and *Rail Express* (Modern Traction).

The winners of the biggest and most prestigious awards scheme in the heritage railway sector will be revealed at an event in Llandudno on March 7, featuring guest speakers and a gala dinner. Tickets are on sale via the HRA website at https:// www.hra.uk.com/events

Newly-restored Barclay fireless 0-4-0 *Boots No. 1,* which, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 333, made its heritage era debut at the West Somerset Railway's May 2-5 Railway 200 spring steam gala. SEB WALSH/WSR

Right: The 2ft gauge Telford Town Tram at the Telford Stram Railway's Spring Village station restarted in 2025 after a six-year absence due to boiler work. TST



Two of the locomotives from the late Peter Rampton's legendary Collection X of international narrow-gauge locomotives in storage in Surrey on April 24, 2024, examples of which are now being displayed at the Vale of Rheidol Railway's new Engine Shed museum at Aberystwyth. STEPHEN PHILLIPS/VORR

New Heritage Railway Association chairman Stephen Parkinson, Baron Parkinson of Whitley Bay. HRA

New chairman steps up to the mark at the HRA

LORD Parkinson of Whitley Bay has taken over as the new chairman of the Heritage Railway Association.

While serving as Minister for Arts, Heritage and Libraries in the Government in 2022-24, he secured £15 million of public funding for the National Railway Museum's new Central Hall project and took part in the centenary celebrations of A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman*.

He also worked closely with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Heritage Rail on issues ranging from coal to young volunteers.

Lord Parkinson also has a long-term commitment to diversity and widening engagement, with a passion for ensuring that people of all backgrounds can follow their talents. The North Tyneside-born peer is a trustee of a registered educational charity.

"Both in government and in opposition, I've made the case for the key role heritage rail plays," he said. "From the visitor economy to rural employment and the creative industries, our heritage railways and tramways have an essential place in our national life.

"I hope I can use my varied experience in this new role, but also that I can learn more about this exciting sector and the dedicated people who make it all possible."

An outstanding choice

On October 1, Lord Parkinson took on the chairmanship from Paul Lewin, general manager of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, who had been acting chairman since the previous holder, Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, became Rail Minister in July 2024.

Paul said: "Lord Parkinson was the outstanding candidate for this role and it is a pleasure to welcome him to the HRA. It's clear to see that his high-level political experience will add an important string to our bow at a time when we face challenges such as coal and net zero, a faltering visitor economy, and the need to ensure that the next generation of young volunteers can play an active role in the sector.

"I m confident that such a high-profile appointment will be welcomed by our growing membership and everyone with an interest in heritage railways, tramways and funiculars."

Paul will remain on the HRA board as deputy chairman alongside directors Andrew Barnes, from the Bure Valley Railway, Stephen Clews, from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, Noel Hartley, from the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, Simon Marsh, from the Kent & East Sussex Railway, Garry Mumford, from the North Yorkshire Moors and Talyllyn railways, Jenny Nunn, from Seaton Tramway, Chris Price, from the Talyllyn, and James West, from the Royal Deeside Railway.

The 'nightmare before Christmas' for No. 76077 as boiler faults found

By Robin Jones

THE overhaul of the boiler for Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway-based ex-Barry scrapyard BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 76077 is set to cost far more than first thought after Devon-based overhaul contractor Leaky Finders Ltd discovered major problems following removal of the copper firebox door plate.

The boiler, in service for only three years since overhaul at Eastleigh in 1964, was initially thought to be in good condition. However, it has now been proven to be a Pandora's box of issues, including poor workmanship carried out by BR, and it is now thought that about 60% of the boiler must be replaced.

Early in 2025, non-destructive testing (NDT) revealed serious lamination of the steel firebox, and it became clear that the cost of the overhaul would be more than double the original £150,000 budget.

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous benefactor who offered £75,000 towards the boiler overhaul, a match-funding initiative was launched at the G/WR's Cotswold Festival of Steam. By the end of August, it had attracted a further £75,000 – adding £150,000 to the boiler fund.

Andrew Meredith, engineering director of owner Toddington Standard Locomotive Limited, said: "As the dismantling of the boiler progressed, an almost unbelievable range of problems has been revealed, including some very poor historic workmanship.

"While a new front parallel section of the barrel and tube plate were planned, along with patch repairs to the firebox wrapper, non-destructive testing of the boiler revealed significant lamination of the steel, necessitating new firebox half-sides and throat plate. Removal of these showed that most of the copper stays fitted at Eastleigh were at or near maximum size while the stay holes showed 'star' cracking around them, which left little choice but to replace the copper sides.

"One positive discovery was that the copper tube plate appeared to be new, although how it was fitted left a lot to be desired, requiring remedial work."

Significant repairs needed

The foundation ring was also found to need significant repairs as it was cracked and suffered several misaligned rivet holes. With both the tube plate and copper door plate removed, further poor workmanship was discovered following removal of considerable build-up of scale from the waterside of the steel backhead. More NDT revealed significant cracking almost from top to bottom between the stay holes parallel to the backhead flanges.

Leaky Finders director Rory Edwards said: "I have seen century-old boilers in much better condition than this one, which saw little more than a dozen years of service. The standard of workmanship carried out at Eastleigh in 1964 is frankly shocking – I can only think that given the writing was already on the wall for steam, only a 'make do and mend' approach was taken."

These discoveries have left little option but to replace both the copper and steel door plate.

Delays in the supply of new copper to the correct specification and forming new components, plus the need to raise further large sums of money to pay for this work, is set to add another two to three years to the overhaul programme.

"There is a silver lining to this cloud of issues," said Andrew. "By the time we have finished, about two-thirds of the boiler will be new.

"This builds in longevity and will deliver a boiler that will certainly be better than when it was first manufactured, so it should give very many years of reliable service."

The new problems were revealed to shareholders at the company's packed annual general meeting at the end of November.

The TSLL team is now planning how to raise additional funds, given the final cost could be about three times the original estimate. This includes a relaunch of the successful component sponsorship scheme as well as exploring new fundraising initiatives.

The boiler of No. 76077 under overhaul at Leaky Finders. TSLL

TSLL marketing director Ian Crowder said: "This could be described as the 'nightmare before Christmas'.

"Yet, despite these costly disappointments, with the final budget yet to be calculated, this remains a positive and attractive project for investors."

Still on time?

He said that No. 76077 "is still expected to be completed in a timescale, from when TSLL was founded in 2018, of about 10 years – notwithstanding two years of delay thanks to Covid-19."

"Anyone who has yet to become a part-owner of the engine through our shareholding and component sponsorship initiatives can do so now in the realistic expectation that they will see the result of their investment working in the Cotswolds within the next three years or so," he added.

➜ Find out more by visiting www.standard76077.com or by emailing info@standard76077.com

Steam and light to start the Middy's new year

THE Mid-Suffolk Light Railway is to stage its Steam & Light Festival on January 1.

The event will feature the Historical Lighting Association's display of fascinating vintage oil lamps dating from the mid-Victorian era, as seen everywhere from grand houses to practical workplaces.

The duty locomotive will be Stephen Middleton's Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1208 of 1916 *Illingworth,* from the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, which previously visited in 2018.

It will be hauling the line's GWR Victorian four-wheeled coaches, a historical and exciting experience for any passengers, especially children.

The tearoom and museum will be open, and the Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Society will run a free shuttlebus service between Stowmarket and Brockford station during the day.

Tickets are available now and can be booked online at www.mslr.org.uk/booktickets or in person from the booking office.

New Year's Day 2024 was the line's best-ever day, attracting nearly 700 visitors, but, as reported, 2025's event was cancelled due to poor weather.

Right: Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST *Illingworth* hauling one of the Mid-Suffolk Santa specials, which had sold out as this issue closed for press. JAMES KINDRED/MSLR

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Middlesbrough marks Railway 200 with shunter rides at port

THE Port of Middlesbrough celebrated 200 years of the Stockton & Darlington Railway with a special Branch Line Society event on November 22.

AV Dawson, owner and operator of the port, hosted a rail experience event in the form of the AV Dawson Shunter Special, which featured its Class 08s, Nos. 08410 and 08774, giving rides around the internal system, with visitors learning more about the rail facilities on the site.

The firm donated the £5500 proceeds from the day to the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway to support their continued efforts to preserve the line's heritage.

Six primary school pupils from across the Tees Valley were also invited to attend the event as winners of the S&DR200 Challenge Day, which saw 15,000 local children learn about the history of the railway and design a creative resource to mark its 200th anniversary. The winning students received a golden ticket to the rail day, where they were invited to the port to enjoy a rail experience with AV Dawson colleagues.

Spectators enjoyed a ride on AV Dawson's Class 08s Nos. 08410 and 08774 through the Port of Middlesbrough complex. AV DAWSON

Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway receiving the donation from the Rail Day at the Port of Middlesbrough. Left to right are Graeme Jolley, from the Branch Line Society; Caroline Hardie, of the Friends of The S&DR; Kev Adlam, fixtures secretary of the Branch Line Society; and Charlie Nettle, group managing director of the Port of Middlesbrough. AV DAWSON

The society's fixtures secretary, Kev Adlam, said: "It was fantastic to host the AV Dawson Shunter Special event at Port of Middlesbrough to not only celebrate the bicentenary, but also to allow our members to learn more about these fantastic rail facilities and experience the historical locomotives.

"We'd like to thank AV Dawson for hosting this memorable day for our members and for hosting our annual general meeting at its incredible facilities."

AV Dawson Group managing director Charlie Nettle said: "We've been working with Caroline Hardie, from the Friends of the S&DR, for many years and it's fantastic we can give back to such an important group which continues to fly the flag for the rich rail heritage we have here in Teesside. It was great to bring together a range of people to celebrate this tremendous milestone. From rail enthusiasts to primary schoolchildren, it showcases how significant this milestone is while also promoting the future of rail.

"We feel it is important to give back to the community and inspire the next generation."

The society's annual general meeting was held in the port's Lloyd Suite and rounded the day off with an evening of presentations.

First Class 313 EMU delivered to Cynheidre

THE Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway has become the new base for pioneering Class 313 EMU No. 313201.

The three-car unit owned by the 400 Series Preservation Group was the only Class 313 still in operational condition and last ran under third rail power when it was used for driver experiences at Eastleigh Works in June.

The dual-voltage 313s were the oldest EMUs operating on the national network prior to their withdrawal in 2023.

Built by British Rail Engineering Limited at Holgate Road carriage works, initially for the Eastern Region, the class made its debut in 1976 when it was hailed as technologically revolutionary, later moving to the London Midland Region.

London stalwart

The unit spent most of its life in North London working Euston to Watford DC and North London Line services with BR, Silverlink and London Overground under privatisation.

It was transferred to Southern in 2010 following introduction of Class 378 units and was based during its final years in service at Brighton depot.

To commemorate its introduction, No. 313201 was repainted into a heritage BR blue and grey livery by Beacon Rail Leasing and Govia Thameslink Railway.

The Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board had originally designated No. 313201 for potential preservation as the first 313 unit. However, in early 2023, the board instead decided to designate Network Rail's unit No. 313121, because it retains its original seating and dual-voltage running equipment. It is preserved at the Fire Heritage Railway. No. 313201 appeared at Alstom's award-winning The Greatest Gathering; delivered to Cynheidre on November 25 and December 2, it will stay there with Class 315 EMU No. 315856 until a permanent home is found.

Class 313 EMU No. 313201, previously Nos. 313001 and 313101, at Cynheidre on December 2. LMMR

Appeal to replace *PS Waverley* masts and windows launched

A £135,000 winter appeal have been launched for *PS Waverley*, the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, to replace both of its masts and dining saloon windows by March, ahead of the 2026 sailing season.

These traditional features are central to the distinctive profile of the vessel, built in 1947 for the LNER, and renewing them in authentic materials is essential to preserving it historic character and renewed appearance.

Waverley general manager Paul Semple said: "Essentially, many parts of the ship could be replaced with more modern materials and fittings which may last longer, but collectively that would change the look and feel of the ship.

"Preserving *Waverley* is about maintaining her as far as is possible as she was intended to be. We are preserving her truly unique character."

Waverley's 2025/26 £1.5 million winter refit is now well underway, with essential maintenance and several major investment projects including replacing the fire sprinkler system and renewing the port paddlebox spring beam.

Left: *Waverley*'s timber masts help define the vessel's unique profile, both of which need replacing before the steamer returns to service in May. WSNCL

These works alone will cost more than £500,000 and are being jointly funded by the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society and the ship's owning charity, the Waverley Steam Navigation Co Ltd.

Donations to the appeal can be made at waverleyexcursions.co.uk or by contacting *Waverley*'s booking office on 0141 243 2224 (Monday-Thursday 9.30am-4.30pm, Fridays 9.30am-4pm).

‘Shakespeare Express’ spring return dates

VINTAGE Trains has announced the first ‘Shakespeare Express’ dates for 2026.

The first trip to Stratford-upon-Avon will start from Derby on April 26.

Worcester will be the starting point for the trip on May 17.

The ‘Shakespeare Express’ from Birmingham Snow Hill, Moor Street and Tyseley will begin on June 14 and then run every Sunday from July 26 up to August 30. Trips will again include three-course dining, First Class afternoon teas, and cheaper tourist fares.

➜ For full details and to book, https:// vintagetrains.co.uk or telephone 0102 708 4960.

Standard safe on the Bluebell

THE future of BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80151 at the Bluebell Railway has been secured thanks to the generosity of shareholders.

Until recently, the Bluebell Railway Trust had owned 40.3% of the shares of 80151 Locomotive Limited, which owns the Brighton-built Standard. Now that has been increased to 90.6%, which reaffirms its long-term position as a part of the railway’s fleet of locomotives. “A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has supported this important achievement,” a statement said.

Presflo on offer

THE Rushden Transport Museum is offering a Presflo cement wagon for sale in a bid to secure funding for other projects on the site.

Built in 1960 by Butterley Co at the Codnor Park wagon works, TC8955 is one of five surviving examples of these cement-carrying wagons which are perhaps known best for the ones employed by Blue Circle Cement that were bright yellow in colour.

Enquiries should be directed to Dave Chambers by emailing brush206@hotmail.co.uk

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The replica of what is thought to be Richard Trevithick’s first locomotive of 1802/3 running again at Blists Hill on December 4.
JOHN TITLOW

Blists Hill Victorian museum returns Trevithick replica to steam

By John Titlow

WHILE Railway 200 has successfully celebrated the bicentenary of the world’s first modern steam train on the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825, the replica of the locomotive believed to have started it all 23 years before has returned to steam near its reported birthplace following an 18-month overhaul.

The full-scale working replica is based on a drawing by Richard Trevithick which dates back to 1802/3, two years before what is considered to be his second locomotive gave its first public demonstration on the Penydarren Tramroad, near Merthyr Tydfil. The fate of the original prototype, if there ever was one, remains unknown, and its design appears to have formed the basis for the 1804 locomotive.

The 1802 design came 27 years before Stephenson’s *Rocket* and could be considered the catalyst for railways and steam locomotives.

The replica is now running again inside the Blists Hill Victorian Museum at Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, which has connections dating to the beginning of railways because the first iron wheels and rails were cast there in the 18th century.

Unofficially named

The replica is referred to as ‘the Trevithick engine’ but carries no nameplate. Keeping the local connections, it was built in 1989/90 by employees of GKN Sankey in nearby Telford, drawing on historic and contemporary evidence.

The loco ran at Blists Hill Victorian Town until July 2024 when it needed essential repairs including replacement tubes. There is one large tube and 26 small ones. All work was done in the Blists Hill workshops, mainly using volunteers.

The replica runs on a boiler pressure of 50psi and has no reverser or blower. To reverse it, the crank has to be in the correct position and the steam enters the single cylinder from the opposite end. There is a brake on its tender.

The track is a simple 3ft gauge 100-yard made out of angle iron. It was recently lifted and relaid by several corporate volunteers, including Network Rail.

The replica’s wheels are flangeless and the upright section of the angle iron keep it in the tracks.

It was intended that the replica run at weekends and some days midweek in the lead-up to Christmas. It starts running at about 11.30am and finishes at 4pm.

Bridgnorth’sTrevithick art trail hits the buffer stops

AN art trail celebrating Richard Trevithick’s 1808 locomotive Catch Me Who Can, which was built in Bridgnorth in 1808 and which comprised locomotive statues, is being removed from the town after seven years.

Installed in 2018 on a time-limited permission granted by Shropshire Council, the two-mile trail consisted of 13 statues, each decorated by local artists in a collaborative effort between Bridgnorth Town Council, local businesses who sponsored them, and the community. It had been scheduled for removal in 2023 but the deadline was extended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Four of the statues will remain at key sites within the town, at Quayside, Severn Valley Railway, Castle Grounds and Bandon Lane. Others will be returned to the sponsors or stored by the council.

Catch Me Who Can was built by engineers John Urpeth Rastrick and John Hazledine at their local foundry in 1808.

One of the statues in the Catch Me Who Can art trail.
BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

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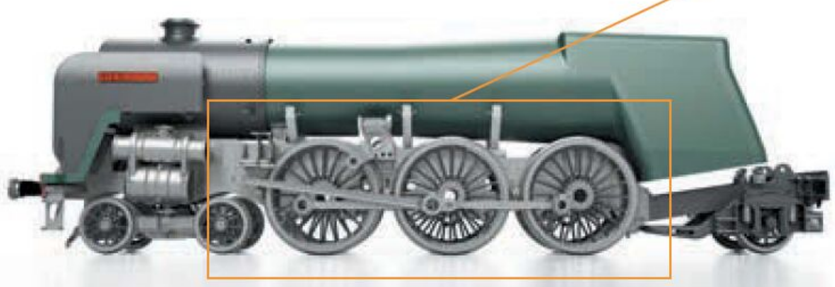
THE STANDARD STEAM LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY

BUILDING 72010 HENGIST

The Standard Steam Locomotive Company is a registered heritage charity, set up to recreate a 'lost' Class 6 British Rail Steam Locomotive, called 'Hengist'. The 'lost' locomotive completes the story of the development of the Pacific type of locomotive that began in the UK in 1908.

** Latest Project News**

Following on from William Cook donating 6 driving wheels to the value of £140,000, the next phase of work is underway for the coupled wheels. Roller bearings, axles and tyres have now been ordered. Design work on the roller bearing cannon axleboxes is nearing completion. The hind covers for the cylinders have been cast and machined - these feature the support for the front of the slidebars recently installed on 71000 'Duke of Gloucester'. An order has been placed for the casting of the front cylinder covers.



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MADE IN SHEFFIELD

Fresh Rother Valley appeal to complete Robertsbridge facilities

By Owen Hayward

WORK to prepare Robertsbridge station for the arrival of regular services once the Rother Valley Railway is linked to the Kent & East Sussex Railway has entered the next phase, with the latest fundraising appeal aimed at completing the facilities required for both passengers and rolling stock there.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters, the £500,000 station building forming part of phase one is now structurally complete and the interior fit-out is underway. When finished, it will house a traditional-style booking office, souvenir shop, and light refreshments area. The northern end already boasts fully fitted public toilets which the RVR Heritage Trust claims are "probably the best" to be found on any UK heritage railway. Work is also progressing on a new access route from the car park, including a wheelchair-accessible ramp and landscaping, due for completion in the spring.

The RVR is now looking to raise a further £350,000 which will enable the construction of a new locomotive shed and the required servicing facilities which will not only cater for the heritage line's services, but also for main line locomotives that may be visiting the area with railtour workings.

The building programme will include six core elements: covered accommodation for locomotives; inspection pits; fuelling points for steam and diesel locomotives; staff rest and washroom facilities; public viewing areas, and solar panels to reduce long-term energy costs. "These important facilities will support a flexible and efficient heritage train service between Robertsbridge and Tenterden benefiting both visitors and passengers,"a trust statement said.

The total cost of the project has been calculated at £600,000, of which more than £250,000 has already been secured through gifts and grants.

The new appeal seeks to raise the remaining £350,000.

The trust has maximised the ways in which supporters can contribute to the Building Appeal, from making one-off donations of any amount to providing significant upfront amounts to committing to monthly giving. For these two latter options, four special donor packages have been created – bronze, silver, gold and platinum – which can be explored at rvr.org.uk/fundraising

Each package offers unique recognition and rewards including certificates, tickets for inaugural journeys, and invitations to special events once donor contributions reach the full qualifying amount.

Platinum donors making gifts of a minimum of £8000 will receive a limited-edition print of an original painting by local artist Matthew Counsins.

Trust appeals director Helen Douglas said: "The heart of our mission has always been about partnership – a partnership between donors, volunteers, and enthusiasts, who not only believe in preserving railway history but also in building a strong future. That future will see communities reunited and bring benefits to local economies as new visitors arrive via the national rail network to explore the many attractions of this beautiful area, from the picturesque town of Tenterden to the historic castle at Bodiam. Every donation truly matters, bringing us closer to achieving that goal and making our long-held dream a reality."

RVR chairman Mike Hart added: "The new facilities at Robertsbridge will serve as the western operational hub of the extended railway and are a lasting legacy of what can be achieved through collective effort. Outstanding progress has been made, but we now need everyone's help to finish the job. These facilities are crucial to ensuring Robertsbridge can welcome passengers when the extended line opens in 2028."

An appeal has been launched to fund the construction of a new locomotive shed in the currently empty space to the left of the turntable at Robertsbridge alongside other servicing facilities at Robertsbridge station. RVR

Right: Work on the main external structure of the station building at Robertsbridge is now largely complete, with focus now turned to fitting out the interior. This was part of the £500,000 phase one appeal, with the locomotive facilities forming part of this latest appeal for phase two of the works. RVR

Unification progress

Meanwhile, work continues along the 3½ miles between Robertsbridge and Junction Road, where KESR track currently terminates.

After the track was lifted in the 1970s, parts of the land were sold to local farmers who pulled down embankments to facilitate better access to their fields.

Mike Hart highlighted the fact that being surrounded by fields and floods plains meant that work could "only take place 10 months in a year," but that progress had reached the point where they were almost ready to start laying track.

"There's still a lot of work to do in rebuilding embankments and putting in bridges," he said.

"Concrete pads for the level crossings required have been delivered and will likely be installed next year."

The extension is largely being funded by three private benefactors who have long supported the ambition to see the KESR and RVR linked. "Without their support it would be quite a challenge," Mike added. "When I was championing the revival of the Welsh Highland Railway during my time as a director at the Ffestiniog Railway Company, we were able to raise some of the £28 million required through avenues such as EU funding. If you wanted to try something like that now, it would be inconceivable.

"Their offer is to fund the main work involved with the linking of the two railways, while we take care of the projects such as the station and facilities. We are very grateful to them and to all who have supported us."

Double-up on Derbyshire diesels at annual joint springtime gala

PEAK Rail and the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway have announced that they will once again be running a joint diesel gala weekend on April 10/11.

Since 2023, the two lines have collaborated to run this annual enthusiast weekend that allows visitors to enjoy travel across both heritage lines under one ticket, with a road bus service connecting them.

The line-up at both railways will feature locomotives drawn from their respective home fleets, supplemented by a small number of visitors brought in for the occasion. Although no guest locomotives had been confirmed, a statement advised enthusiasts to "mark the date in your calendars," adding: "This is going to be one of the stand-out enthusiast events of the year."

Meanwhile, Peak Rail has announced that Andrew Goodman's Wemyss Private Railway 1943-built Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 15 *Earl David* will be joining its home fleet for 2026, running alongside home-based Hudswell Clarkes 0-6-0T No. 1884 of 1955 S102 *Cathryn*, 0-4-0ST No. 750 of 1906 *Waleswood* and Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 2000 of 1942.

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Shillingstone set for second 'Yankee tank' rebuild

WORK to restore a second Class 62 Yugoslavia-built 'Yankee tank' 0-6-0T at the North Dorset Railway to running order is to begin.

Project 62, which completed a 15-year overhaul of No.30075 at Shillingstone when its boiler inspection was passed on August 6, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 336, is now set to start work on sister No. 30076.

The group is hoping to get No. 30075 out on the heritage railway circuit to raise funds to restore No. 30076.

In 2006, the group bought 62-521, as No. 30076 was then known, from Sarajevo steelworks in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 1954-built locomotive was moved intact to the Mid-Hants Railway, the cost of transport proving more expensive than the purchase price. It then lodged at Allely's heavy haulage yard in Warwickshire and finally arrived at Shillingstone in January 2016, along with No. 30075 which came direct from the Mid-Hants.

A full overhaul of No. 30075 began, and No. 30076 went onto a siding as a static exhibit while waiting its turn, which now has arrived. Dismantling has begun, with the removal of the two side tanks and some of the smaller parts revealing the scale of the task ahead.

Unlike No. 30075, which was adapted when it arrived at Swanage in 1990, No. 30076 has never run on UK tracks and will have to undergo major alterations. Reducing the 62's width to fit the UK loading gauge will require channels to be cut into the tanks to accommodate the wayward pipework. Additional equipment is required so it can pull vacuum-braked carriages and steam heating for winter operation of passenger coaches.

Long way off

Project 62 anticipates that the rebuild could take anything up to 10 years to complete, subject to the availability of both volunteer hours and the necessary funds.

The group was formed in 1990 by enthusiasts who shared the ambition to buy and restore members of the class this versatile class. Income from hiring out a locomotive has not been an option for many years, so they have been entirely reliant on public support and continued financial backing from members.

Up to 400 examples of this American design were deployed in Europe during the Second World War, and in 1946 the Southern Railway acquired 14, plus one for spares, from the US Transportation Corps, using them in Southampton Docks where their short wheelbase made them ideal. They were numbered them 30060 to 30074. Project 62 adopted the next available numbers as a salute to these locomotives which were both part of the war effort and postwar reconstruction.

Volunteers usually work on the 'Yankee tanks' on Wednesdays and the first Saturday of the month. Shillingstone station is open every Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 4pm. Entry is free, but donations are always welcome.

➜ Project 62 at Shillingstone can be followed on Facebook or via www.project62.co.uk

Left: Class 62 'Yankee tank' No. 30076 with its tank removed at Shillingstone on October 25. PROJECT 62

Farewell to Cadeby founder Teddy's widow Audrey

AUDREY Boston, the widow of Cadeby Light Railway's founder, the Rev Teddy Boston, who ran it for nearly two decades after he died, passed away peacefully at her home on November 12.

A lifelong railway enthusiast, the Rev Boston became rector of All Saints Church in Cadeby, Leicestershire, and wanted to build a miniature line in his garden. In 1962, he bought Staveley Coal & Iron Co Bagnall 0-4-0ST No. 2090 of 1919 *Pixie* from Cranford Quarry, which donated a short length of track and two wagons, so he built a 2ft gauge line. He built up a collection of industrial narrow-gauge rolling stock and also had a sizeable OO gauge layout at Cadeby.

After he died in 1986, Audrey kept the railway open by holding regular open days until it finally closed in May 2005, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 74. Most of the stock found its way to the Moseley Railway Trust at the Apedale Valley Light Railway. *Pixie* was bought by the Richmond Light Railway at Headcorn in Kent in 2019 and following an overhaul returned to steam last year.

After her husband's death, Audrey also continued to run the Market Bosworth Steam Engine Rally, which at one stage occupied a field opposite All Saints parish church at Cadeby. She was also a committee member of the Ashby Canal Association.

Her funeral was held at the church on November 27 and was attended by nearly 100 mourners.

Left: Audrey Boston with *Pixie* at the Cadeby Light Railway's Farewell Open Day on May 14, 2005.

HERITAGE RAILWAY The Brighter Steam News Magazine
www.heritagerailway.co.uk

The Colas Rail tampers at Highley on November 18. JOHN TITLOW

Tamping the Severn Valley

TWO new Colas Rail tampers arrived on the Severn Valley Railway on November 17 for testing prior to being put to work assisting with permanent way work along the heritage line.

Built by Plasser & Theurer in Austria, they arrived via the main line connection at Kidderminster from the company's UK base at West Ealing.

Numbered DR73954 and DR73953, the pair looked rather incongruous against the heritage backdrop of Highley station in their striking orange, yellow and black livery.

Commissioning checks and inductions for the Colas staff took place on November 18, with both units being put to work the following day. During the visit, they continued tamping the rest of the week on the Highley to Arley section, working alongside the railway's permanent way department.

With the extension of the platforms at Kidderminster currently taking place, the newly positioned points at the station throat were tamped the week beginning November 24, along with parts of the section between Highley and Hampton Loade.

Further work continued along the railway before the machines left on about December 3.

KESR shake-up sees general manager position abolished

By Geoff Courtney

A ROOT-and-branch budget review by the Kent & East Sussex Railway has led to the abolishment of the heritage line's general manager role, a move that will lead to the present incumbent, Robin Coombes, leaving his post on January 2.

Staff, volunteers, and members were advised of the decision via a statement on November 24, explaining it had been made to ensure the financial viability of the railway in "a challenging economic environment."Daily operations will be reallocated to existing directors.

A press release issued the same day said the decision followed an extensive review of options to protect front-line delivery, such as safe operations, visitor service, and income-generating activity, while reducing overheads as the railway readied itself for the opening of the extension to Robertsbridge in 2028.

KESR general manager Robin Coombes observes proceedings at Tenterden Town station on June 1, 2024, during the railway's 50th anniversary gala. OWEN HAYWARD

Robin Coombes at the KESR Tenterden Town station in August 2022 shortly after his appointment as general manager. RHIAIN DAVIES

Simplifying overheads

KESR chairman, Derrick Bilsby, said: "Like many visitor attractions, heritage railways face headwinds from inflation in energy, insurance, materials and compliance costs. The KESR board has chosen to simplify overheads while maintaining visitor experience and the railway's long-standing safety standards. This is a pragmatic step to live within our means while keeping our focus on safety, service, and the visitor experience.

"The KESR has never been afraid to lead or innovate – that's been true from the beginning. We will continue to meet change with practical leadership and the same spirit that has carried the railway for 50 years."

After the announcement, Robin, who was appointed general manager in August 2022, said: "Heritage railways everywhere are navigating a tough moment. Costs are rising faster than incomes, visitor expectations are evolving, and the world keeps moving.

"For the past three-and-a-half years I have been fully immersed in meeting those challenges at the KESR – seven days a week at times – working alongside extraordinary volunteers and staff to keep the railway safe, welcoming, and relevant.

"Leadership sometimes means making space for the next chapter – putting the organisation first and accepting change when it helps the railway move forward. In that context, this was the only logical decision for the board to make."

Robin said he was immensely proud of what he and the railway had achieved "through storms literal and metaphorical,"and said the dedication and goodwill of volunteers, staff, partners and visitors was the reason trains kept running.

Remaining optimistic

"Heritage rail is about continuity and community. I leave KESR day-to-day leadership confident in the railway's resilience, and optimistic about what comes next," he said.

This decision will likely raise more than a few eyebrows within the movement, both because of the standing of Robin Coombes in the sector and the KESR having a bright future with the link to the Rother Valley Railway on the horizon, as previously reported.

Robin's sartorial elegance is a colourful feature of the KESR, and his railway CV includes being an architect and project manager at British Rail, independent review chairman of the West Somerset Railway, company secretary for Vintage Trains, assisting the Rail Regulator to develop the heritage section of new industry standards, and roles in the reopening of the Jamaica State Railway and establishment of the Heritage Rail Knowledge Network, so his day-to-day senior managerial input, background, and expertise will surely be missed.

It is understood that he intends to become a volunteer at the railway, and thus won't be severing his links completely, but his time will be shared as he plans to pursue other projects, including finishing a book and helping other heritage railways with governance and strategy.

Inspiration adds another 16 dates for 2026 diary

SIXTEEN more dates have been added to the year-long nationwide tour of the Railway 200 free exhibition train *Inspiration*, already visited by more than 40,000 people.

Co-curated with the National Railway Museum and supported by a £250,000 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, *Inspiration* outlines the story of how railways reshaped Britain and opportunities for the future.

The new hosts and venues are: Ribble Steam Railway, Preston, January 6-9; Merseyrail, Southport, January 10-13; Avanti West Coast, Crewe, January 15-19; East Lancashire Railway, Bury, January 21-24; c2c Rail, Upminster, January 26-30; Greater Anglia, Cambridge, January 31-February 1; Greater Anglia, Colchester February 3/4; Greater Anglia, Clacton, February 5/6; Greater Anglia, Hertford, February 7/8; Swanage Railway, Swanage, February 16-18; Mid-Hants Railway, Hampshire, February 19/20; South Western Railway, Salisbury, February 21-23; South Western Railway, Kingston February 25/26; Southern, Worthing, February 27/28, Southern, Epsom, March 9-11 and Southeastern, Hastings, March 12-15.

Rail Minister Lord Peter Hendy said: "I'mproud to be celebrating our heritage as the birthplace of the modern railway. With this train, we're not just looking to the past – we are inspiring the diverse next generation of engineers, drivers, conductors and technicians, and shining a light on what the railway is delivering today."

To book tickets for *Inspiration*, visit https:/ railway200.co.uk/inspiration/

***Inspiration* visited the West Somerset Railway on November 24-29, and Great Western Railway laid on a shuttle from Taunton station to Bishops Lydeard free of charge to those who had booked tickets for the exhibition train. Just arrived from Taunton is GWR Class 150 No. 150248 alongside *Inspiration* at Bishops Lydeard on November 25.** MIKE PINN

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Two Moguls together at Bridgnorth after GWR No. 7325 (right) arrived from Kidderminster on November 23, seen here standing alongside LMS No. 13268.

GWR mogul moves to Bridgnorth for overhaul assessment after 25 long dormant years

Words and pictures by John Titlow

ON December 23, GWR 2-6-0 No. 7325 was towed by Class 20 No. 20142 from the Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster carriage shed to Bridgnorth Shed. The same day, Ivatt 4MT 2-6-0 No. 43106 was towed to Kidderminster for undercover storage inside the carriage shed.

No. 7325 is not generally on public view and has been hidden at the back of the carriage shed for some time, occasionally brought out for display at Kidderminster station. It last worked on the SVR in 2000 and was withdrawn due to a leaking boiler.

It is to undergo an engineering assessment which will not be date-bound, the longer-term hopes being for an overhaul sometime in the future. Not a high priority, it will be done when time and resources permit.

Designed by George Jackson Churchward as Class 4300 using Swindon's No.4 boiler and many other standard parts, these 2-6-0s were used on the GWR network for mixed traffic duties. All class members were built at Swindon, with the first appearing in 1911.

They proved very successful, with 342 built over 21 years; the last was constructed in 1932. However, there were issues regarding flange wear on the leading driving wheels, so a steel slab for additional weight was added to the front end over the pony truck to alleviate this.

No. 7325 is one from the final batch, having been built in 1932, and was originally numbered 9303. It was renumbered 7325 in 1958 when the additional weight was removed. It covered most of the GWR, shedded at Penzance and Old Oak Common, plus others.

Entering preservation

Withdrawn from service at Pontypool Road in April 1964, it arrived at Barry scrapyard in November. By 1972, the newly formed Great Western Locomotive and Carriage Society made No. 9303 its first target for preservation. The following year, the society merged with the Great Western Rolling Stock Fund to become the Great Western (SVR) Association.

In 1974, volunteers were working on the locomotive at Barry, and its purchase took place in May via the help of a loan to avoid a price increase. After 10 years at Barry, it was towed in convoy with GWR 2-8-0 No. 2857 to Worcester before arriving on the SVR on August 20, 1975. When first steamed in 1992, it assumed the original identity of No. 9303, six months later reverting to No. 7325 in BR green livery.

Ivatt 4MT 2-6-0 43106, looking rather forlorn, is about to leave Bridgnorth shed for Kidderminster behind Class 20 No. 20142.

Not only did it work on the SVR, but it also ran on the main line, including the London Underground's Steam on the Met between Watford and Amersham. It even had a go on the Lickey Incline.

It was anticipated that the locomotive would run until 2002, but it was removed from service due to a leaking boiler and sent to Swindon Museum for display after cosmetic restoration.

In 2008, it was finally displayed inside the new Engine House at Highley, a year later than expected due to flood damage which closed the railway in several places. In 2019, it moved inside the Kidderminster carriage shed.

With the power classification 4MT, No. 7325 is an ideal choice for the railway, being capable of hauling most SVR trains. Due to its size, it is economic on coal.

In the queue

There are other locomotives in the overhaul queue at present as work continues on Sharp Stewart 0-4-4T *Dunrobin* (see separate story, page 34). These are West County 4-6-2 No. 34027 *Taw Valley* and GWR 2-6-2T No. 4150, with others in line first.

Meanwhile, Ivatt 4MT 2-6-0 No. 41306 had been sitting outside in Bridgnorth Yard looking rather forlorn minus smokebox numberplate. It is now inside the carriage shed awaiting decisions.

The locomotive last worked on January 7, 2024.

Efforts of heritage railway volunteers praised in the House of Commons

THE ongoing efforts of the many volunteers in the heritage railway sector were acknowledged at Parliament in the House of Commons on November 20. Dave Robertson, Labour MP for Lichfield, said: "This weekend, a very special service will leave the station at Chasewater Railway in Burntwood in my constituency. The hospital Santa special trains are a Christmas service for seriously ill children and are offered completely free of charge.

"This year, 1300 kids and their families are expected to attend. Will the Leader of the House join me in congratulating Chasewater Railway, its trustees, and its fantastic volunteers on their wonderful work to spread the festive spirit?"

Sir Alan Campbell, Leader of the House, replied: "I am happy to join my honourable friend in congratulating Chasewater Railway on spreading joy this holiday season. He says that a huge number of people will be part of it, and I thank Chasewater Railway for that. These initiatives happen thanks to volunteers playing their part, so we thank them – and indeed volunteers across the country."

Oldest Nigel Gresley locomotive set for comeback in his 150th anniversary year

By Robin Jones

THE oldest-surviving locomotive designed by Sir Nigel Gresley successfully completed its steam test at Weybourne workshops on the North Norfolk Railway as its six-year overhaul nears completion – and an appeal to finish the job has raised a third of its target.

The Gresley Society's 1921-built GNR N2 0-6-2T No.1744/4744 (BR No. 69523)˜was withdrawn from service late in 2018 for an overhaul that has proved to be considerably more extensive and costly than anticipated, but it is now on the road to returning to traffic in spring 2026.

The overhaul began in 2019 but was impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which affected both timescales and costs.

> "The Gresley Society was created to preserve a working Gresley locomotive, and we owe it to our founders and for the benefit and education of today's generation to maintain that vision."

Worse then expected

Once the locomotive was stripped down, it became evident that far more work was needed than first anticipated, resulting in an extensive programme of both mechanical and boiler work leading to an eventual overhaul cost of about £650,000.˜

Since arriving at the NNR in mid-December 2024, work completed includes the successful non-destructive testing and examination of the two carbon steel steam pipes that serve from the superheater header to the steam chests, with all historic welds subjected to magnetic particle inspection (and the pipe wall thickness measured with an ultrasonic thickness device. The two pipes were then clamped together to form a single unit to allow them to be subjected to a hydraulic pressure test to 1.5 times the boiler's safe working pressure, which equated to 255psi.

All the new No. 17 washout plugs have been procured, which will now be fitted to the boiler following the successful completion of the steam test. A final hydraulic pressure test of the boiler once the reassembly of the engine is complete will reset the clock for the boiler's 10-year boiler certificate.˜

The superheater header is currently being prepared for hydraulic testing to 255psi and one of the NNR's fitters has been carefully preparing the lubrication pipework and fittings for fitting to the engine during its reassembly. The new expansion links were delivered in September. Boiler cladding is now underway, together with discussions about getting the correct specification of paint – both signs that completion is coming into sight.

The NNR is initially funding the completion of the overhaul, with the value reimbursed later through operation of the locomotive for a period without charge.

GNR N2 No. 1744 in the workshop in Weybourne on August 28. GRESLEY SOCIETY

However, The Gresley Society faces a substantial funding shortfall to meet the final overhaul cost and has launched The N2 Overhaul Completion Club to raise the required £100,000 from 100 people each donating £1000 in up to eight instalments.

Support and perks

Special benefits for those supporting the club include a certificate signed by John Cameron (president) and Philip Benham MBE (chairman); an exclusive opportunity to visit No. 1744 under overhaul at the NNR; the opportunity to buy a ticket (seat already reserved) on one of the first trains hauled by No. 1744; an exclusive limited-edition print (100) of No. 1744 in GNR livery created by renowned railway artist Matthew Cousins (GRA); and a year's membership of The Gresley Society Trust.

The club was launched to society members in late November 2024 and has already raised more than £30,500. Details of how to join can be found at˜gresley.org

Philip said: "The Gresley Society was created to preserve a working Gresley locomotive, and we owe it to our founders˜and for the benefit and education of today's generation to maintain that vision.

"I'd encourage all LNER lovers who want to see it paired once again with the Midland & Great Northern Society's unique set of Quad Art carriages on the North Norfolk Railway to get on board with our appeal."

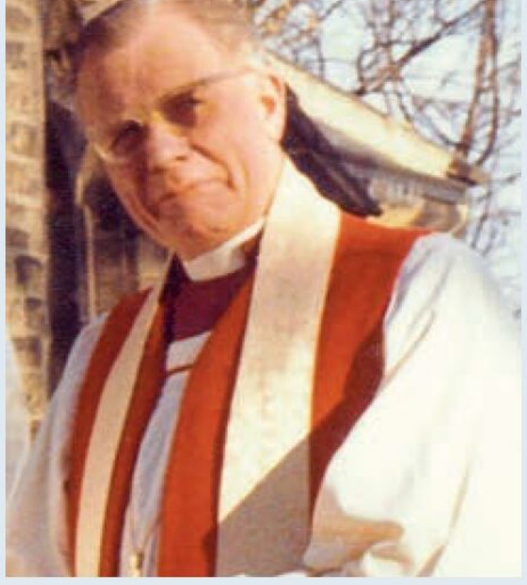
Cathedral to celebrate the photography of Bishop Eric Treacy

By Robin Jones

AN exhibition to mark the life of the man often celebrated as Britain's greatest railway photographer is being staged next August in the city where he was also appointed a Church of England bishop.

The exhibition comes 50 years after Eric Treacy retired as Bishop of Wakefield. Thanks to the eager help of the Science Museum, which holds the Treacy Collection of 1200 pictures at the National Railway Museum, a selection of those taken in both the Wakefield area and elsewhere will be on display for a two weeks, from August 1 to August 14, appropriately, in Wakefield Cathedral, where he is already celebrated with a new meeting and function room suite named after him.

Treacy Hall sits adjacent to the cathedral and is a vital part of its daily life.



Above: Bishop Eric Treacy at Christ Church in Halifax after a wedding in 1971. RJ STOTT/CREATIVE COMMONS

Inset right: Two of the many railway photographic books by Eric Treacy.

His early years were spent in Merseyside where, by the mid-1930s, he was already becoming known for the quality of his railway photographs. His work was regularly published, and his wonderful eye for a great steam locomotive image was being widely acknowledged.

His progress as a clergyman sent him to West Yorkshire, where he became Rector of Keighley, a canon, and eventually Bishop of Wakefield, one of the highest honours in the Church of England. After his retirement in 1976, he continued to keep his camera busy, sadly dying in 1978 at Appleby station while waiting to photograph a special train hauled by BR Standard 9F No. 92220 *Evening Star*. A slate plaque is displayed on the main station building in his memory.

Exhibition organiser John Evans said the display would introduce

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A3 *Centenary* nameplate loaned for anniversary

By Robin Jones

THE Gresley Society has formally loaned the nameplate from A3 Pacific No. 2555 *Centenary* to Doncaster's Danum Gallery, Library and Museum for display.

The handover took place during the society's annual general meeting on November 29 and was presented to Coun Tim Needham, the City of Doncaster's civic mayor, to mark the start of the trust's year-long Sir Nigel Gresley 150th anniversary celebrations.

No. 2555 *Centenary* was completed at Doncaster Works for the LNER in February 1925, its naming celebrating the centenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway that year. During its 38 years of service, *Centenary* hauled express passenger trains on the East Coast Main Line and was allocated to sheds including Doncaster, Grantham and King's Cross before its withdrawal on May 13, 1963, having covered 1,867,962 miles.

Scrapped at Doncaster Works thereafter, it joined the fate of all but one Gresley class A3 – No. 4472 (60103) *Flying Scotsman*, now part of the National Collection.

The nameplate was bequeathed to the society by the late Stuart Nichols, a longstanding member from North London, who died in 2016.

Society chairman Philip Benham MBE FCILT said: "This loan precedes our major celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Sir Nigel Gresley's birth in 2026.

"By placing the *Centenary* nameplate in the Danum Gallery's Rail Heritage Centre, we honour Doncaster's pivotal role in Gresley's designs and invite visitors to connect with our shared past."

The trust has been awarded £16,700 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to support its celebrations in 2026. This funding will enable the trust to deliver an enhanced programme of events under the heading A Legacy of Innovation, Speed and Elegance, in partnership with Doncaster City Council and other railway heritage organisations.

The grant will directly fund key elements of the programme including the digitisation of the trust's extensive archive for wider public access, the production of a short film on Gresley's life and achievements, and the creation of a permanent exhibition at Doncaster's Danum Gallery.

The centrepiece of the celebrations is, as previously reported, a symposium and gala dinner on Saturday, June 20 at the Mansion House, Doncaster. The day-long event will feature expert presentations on Gresley's career, from his early days with the Great Northern Railway to his influence on the modern railway.

The evening's 1930s-themed gala dinner will evoke the glamour of LNER's express trains, with menus inspired by 'The Flying Scotsman,' 'The Silver Jubilee' and 'The Coronation.' Tickets for the symposium cost £25 for members and £30 for non-members, while the gala dinner is £75 for members and £85 for non-members, with limited spaces available.

Further highlights include a Gresley theme to the Festival of British Railway Modelling at Doncaster Racecourse on February 7/8, a special Thanksgiving Service and Talk on April 11, at St Peter's Church, in Netherseal, Derbyshire (held close to the 85th anniversary of Gresley's death and burial at the church on April 9, 1941) and a commemorative logo for use by partner organisations.

The Gresley Society chairman Philip Benham (left) and City of Doncaster civic mayor Coun Tim Needham with the nameplate in the Danum Gallery, Library and Museum. GST

No. 2555 *Centenary* was originally a Class A1 and later rebuilt to specification with long-travel valves fitted in March 1927. It was converted to left-hand drive in February 1954, fitted with a Kylchap double blastpipe and chimney in July 1959, and German-style smoke deflectors in August 1961. It carried a GN-style tender throughout its life. No. 2555 was renumbered to No. 56 in July 1946 and to No. 60056 in May 1949. COLOURISED IAN MCCABE

The trust also cares for N2 No. 1744 (see separate story) and Gresley Buffet Lounge Car No. 1852 – the sole-surviving vehicle from the 1938 'Flying Scotsman' train and the subject of a future Heritage Fund bid.

Enquiries about signing up to become a member of The Gresley Society can be made by email to membership@gresley.org. Details of how to donate can be found at gresley.org

Bishop Treacy to two audiences, one being the current population of West Yorkshire, where a new generation of people may know his name, but probably not his legacy as a railway photographer.

The other is today's generation of railway enthusiasts who undoubtedly have seen his pictures published in books and magazines but may not know that he was also a much-loved bishop.

John Coiley, a former keeper of the NRM, once described Bishop Treacy as "a truly remarkable man who loved people, life, and steam engines."

Bishop Treacy was commemorated by having two locomotives named after him in 1979 – LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45428, which is based at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, and Class 86 No. 86240.

LMS 'Black Five' No. 45428 *Eric Treacy* in service on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on September 27. OWEN HAYWARD

Fresh face for Dartmouth's Standard

By Owen Hayward

RAPIDLY nearing the end of its boiler ticket, Dartmouth Steam Railway's BR 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75014 *Braveheart* received a slightly new look just in time for the start of the line's annual illumination trains.

Due to be withdrawn during 2026, the BR standard's smokebox detailing and buffers have been picked out in white, a look which was common for locomotives allocated to work on the Western Region's Cambrian route. Furthermore, the number and shedcode plates have also been given red backings as seen on locomotives of the Midland Region in the early 1950s.

During its working life, No. 75014 worked in both regions, being shedded at depots such as Llandudno Junction and Croes Newydd for the former and the likes of Patricroft and Stoke for the latter.

DSRRBC's Chief Mechanical Engineer Steve Masters said the change of look came after one of the workshop's staff asked to undertake the work involved as the locomotive neared the end of its ticket, as well as smartening its appearance in time for the Christmas services.

With the previous overhaul completed in December 2016, the 4MT will be withdrawn at some point during 2026, after which there will be a short wait, with the overhaul of GWR 2884 class 2-8-0 No. 3803 currently the main focus.

Successful steam fleet

"We currently have seven serviceable locomotives out of our fleet of eight, which I think is an incredible achievement and quite unusual in the current times of heritage railways," Steve said. "This includes four currently running here at Paignton, with three out on long-term hires. It is the intention that as soon as No. 3803's overhaul is completed, the 4MT will be straight in for its own overhaul to commence.

"Speaking of No. 3803, work is progressing well. The frames have now been reunited with the wheels following the fitting of new tyres. The tender is also back on its wheels following tyre turning, and this will soon enter the paint shed once fully reassembled. The boiler has received its new throatplate, doorplate and front tubeplate and is awaiting the firebox side wrapper sheets, after which it will be turned back upright again to be tubed and have a number of crown stays replaced. It is hoped we will see the locomotive completed sometime in 2026."

No. 75014 outside Churston on the Dartmouth Steam Railway following the application of white smokebox details and red-backed number and shedcode plates. BEN TOLMAN/DSRRBC

HST Class 43 swapped for spares

THE 125 Group has taken InterCity High Speed Train Class 43 power car No. 43190 from the Romic Group in exchange for redundant Mk. 3 coaches.

Based at the Midland Railway – Butterley, the 125 Group intends to use No. 43190 as spares for its other vehicles.

"Many thanks to the team at Romic who have been excellent and very supportive of preserved HST users in the UK, recognising the challenges we face in accessing spares," said a statement.

"No. 43190 will provide the missing pieces of our spares pool, so that we may keep our fleet operational well into the future but also make improvements by providing float items to allow material to go away for overhaul."

Elsewhere, the Colne Valley Railway's final event of the year will be a HST day on Sunday, December 28, featuring Class 43s No. 43082 and 43023 in British Rail grey/blue livery.

Like us facebook.com/heritagerailway

Sad farewell bade to expert *Heritage Railway* contributor Mark Smithers

NARROW gauge expert and author Mark Smithers, a contributor to *Heritage Railway*, died at the age of 64 on November 8, we are sad to report.

Mark succumbed to renal failure and hypertension in St Leonard's Hospice in his home city of York.

Mark had a lifelong interest in railways, particularly industrial and narrow gauge lines, and counted the Middleton Railway among his favourites.

He had been writing about railways since his teens, and his first book, An Illustrated History of 18 Inch Gauge Steam Railways, was released by Oxford Publishing Company back in 1993.

His subsequent volumes included Sir Arthur Heywood and the 15 Inch Gauge Steam Railway, The Royal Arsenal Railways: The Rise and Fall of a Military Railway Network, and Locomotive Builders of Leeds.

Highly regarded writer

One observer commented: "Smithers' work is well-regarded for its detailed research and informative content, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in railway history."

His most recent feature in *Heritage Railway* was 'A new Mountaineer on the climb!' in issue 333, outlining plans to construct a replica of the Ffestiniog Railway's first steam locomotive, filling a major gap in the UK narrow gauge fleet.

Mark toured the world extensively to visit narrow gauge lines, often with his brother Nigel. He became involved in the preservation of a narrow gauge locomotive in Brazil, and his travels also included visiting Argentina, Chile, India and New Zealand.

Nigel said: "Railways and the theatre were his overriding passions."

Mark had also been involved in the historical research used in the construction of replica narrow gauge steam locomotives, both in full-size and large-scale model form.

Heritage Railway magazine editor Robin Jones said: "Mark's contributions always illustrated his deep and inspired affinity with the subject."

Mark's committal was held on December 1.

Among the many locations Mark Smithers visited around the world to further his knowledge of narrow gauge was the Rewari Railway Heritage Museum in Haryana, India. Built in 1893, it is the sole-surviving steam locomotive shed in India and houses some of the country's heritage locomotives. Mark (right) is pictured on the footplate of Hudswell Clarke metre gauge 0-8-0ST No. 1644 of 1930, which worked at Riga Sugar Mill in Bihar. NIGEL SMITHERS

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22 - 25 JANUARY 2026

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WINTER STEAM GALA

We're thrilled to announce that the BR 9F No. 92134 is the first guest that will be appearing at our annual Winter Steam Gala.

Join us for a journey behind the only single-chimney 9F along the UK's only double-track heritage main line, through the frosty Charnwood countryside – the perfect way to start the year!

Joining the 9F will be a strong supporting cast from the Great Central Railway's home fleet, along with more guest locomotives to be announced very soon – look out for updates.

With special events and offers alongside an intensive timetable running throughout the weekend and calling at all of our beautifully restored stations, this is a steam-powered celebration for both enthusiasts and families alike.

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GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

Discover 200 years of railways online like never before!

By Robin Jones

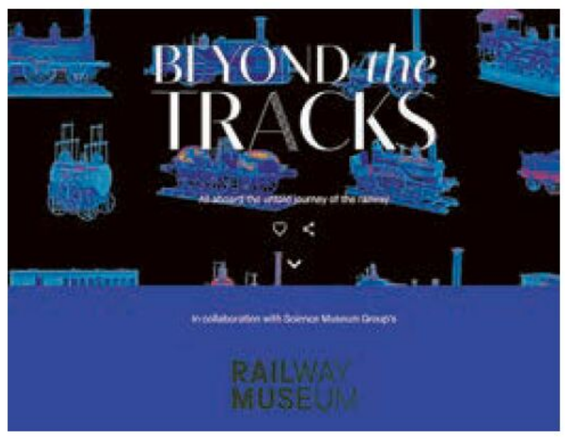
A GROUND-BREAKING new digital partnership between the National Railway Museum and Google Arts˜&˜Culture˜ismaking nearly 1000 artefacts available to a global audience for the first time.

Highlighting 200 years of the modern railway, Beyond The Tracks has seen items from the National Collection digitised to reveal untold powerful stories that reshaped the globe. The project has taken one year to create and ensures that this important record of history is accessible to everyone, everywhere.

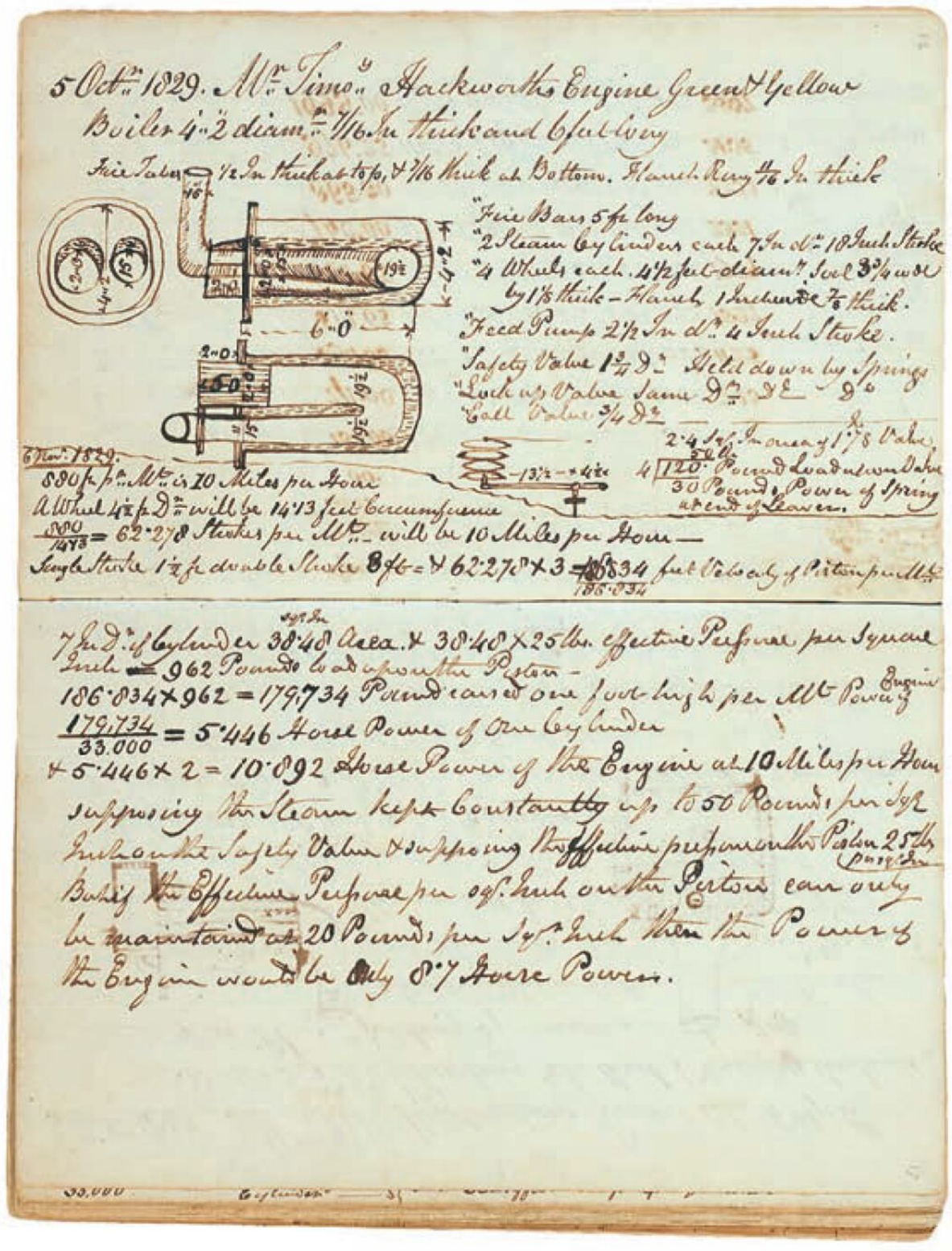
Google Arts & Culture is an online platform of high-resolution images and videos of artworks and cultural artifacts from partner cultural organisations throughout the world, operated by Google. It utilises high-resolution image technology that enables the viewer to tour partner organisation collections and galleries and explore the artworks' physical and contextual information. The platform includes advanced search capabilities and educational tools.

As part of the collaboration, the NRM is one of the first to use the new AI-powered metadata enhancement service from Google Arts & Culture to digitise artifacts. The service's optical character recognition capabilities helped transcribe text from handwritten documents and historic artifacts, making the collection more searchable.

This tool is part of a broader effort to help cultural institutions thrive in the digital age, supporting researchers and curators in providing rich information for their collections online.



Above: The landing page of Beyond The Tracks on Google Arts & Culture. GOOGLE



Right: Pages 16 and 17 of the Rastrick notebook.

The content includes an overview of the history of the railways and shares untold stories that go far beyond the iconic engines on display at the NRM in York to reveal the human and societal revolution the railway ignited.

Among the digitised the artefacts are objects including the Rastrick Notebook, which offers a first-hand account of the world-changing 1829 Rainhill Trials, as well as images of Puffing Billy, the world's oldest preserved locomotive, and a model carriage crafted from the wood of the sunken paddle steamer *PS Princess Alice*, revealing a fascinating morbid Victorian secret.

For the first time, virtual 360-degree tours inside the NRM's sister site, Locomotion in Shildon, have been created, showcasing highlights of Europe's largest undercover collection of historic railway vehicles. The two new virtual tours pass through the immense Main Hall, appreciating heritage rail vehicles at their true colossal scale, and New Hall, which was designed as a traditional engine shed and housing more of the collection's significant passenger and freight rail vehicles.

Users can even trace history itself by walking the Brusselton Incline, part of the Stockton & Darlington, the world's first steam-hauled public railway from 1825.

Another unique element of Beyond The Tracks are the two immersive Pocket Gallery 3D exhibitions, featuring items from the NRM's extensive art and poster collection not currently on display at the museum.

Left: This early 19th century model of steam locomotive *Sans Pareil* has been attributed to clockmaker William West and influential engineers Timothy Hackworth and Richard Trevithick. Although the exact maker remains uncertain, the model's importance is clear.

Left: What looks like a typical model of a third class carriage was crafted in 1:12scale using wood salvaged from the wreck of the *SS Princess Alice*. The paddle steamer sank in the River Thames in 1878, resulting in a huge loss of life.

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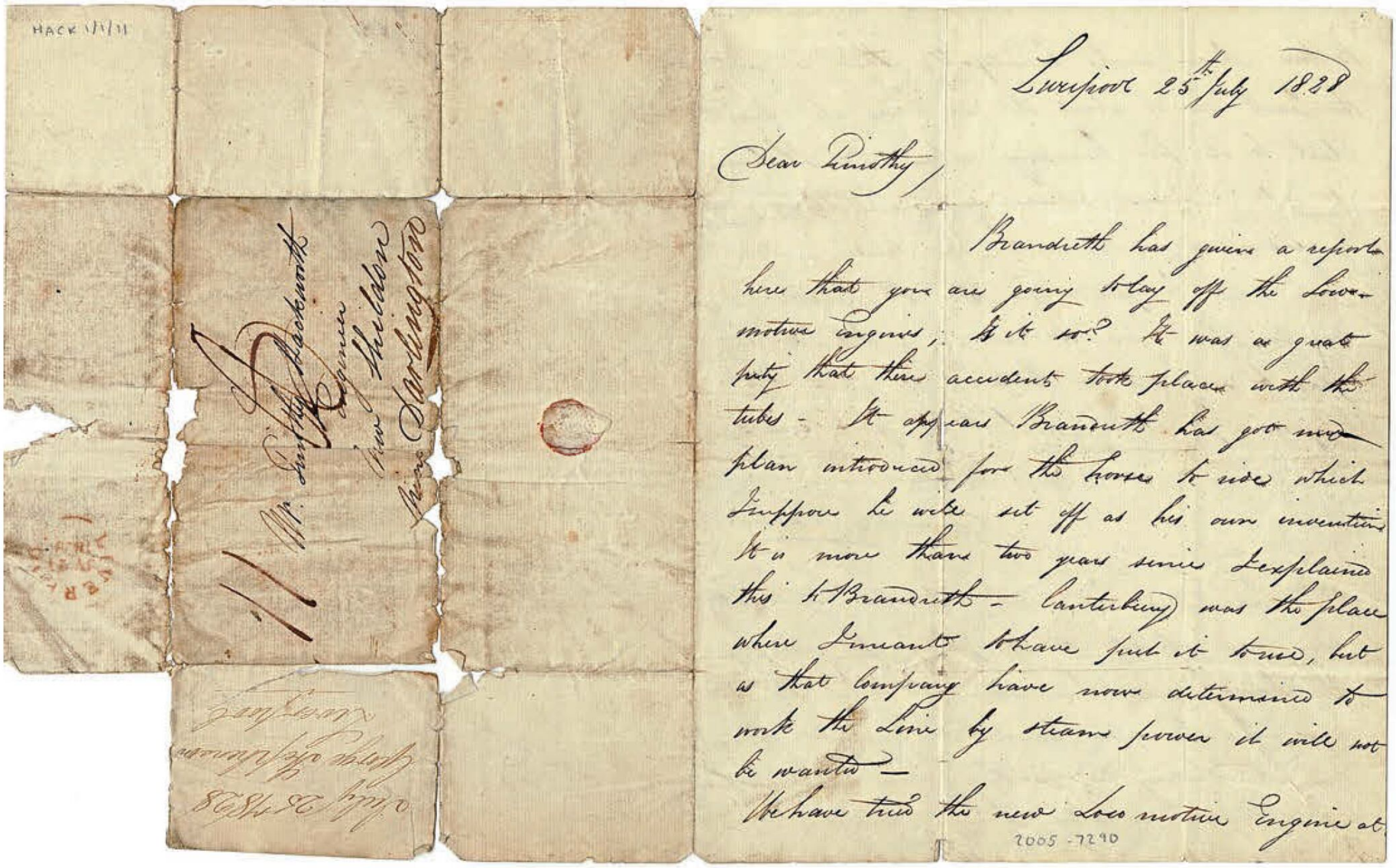


Liverpool 25th July 1828

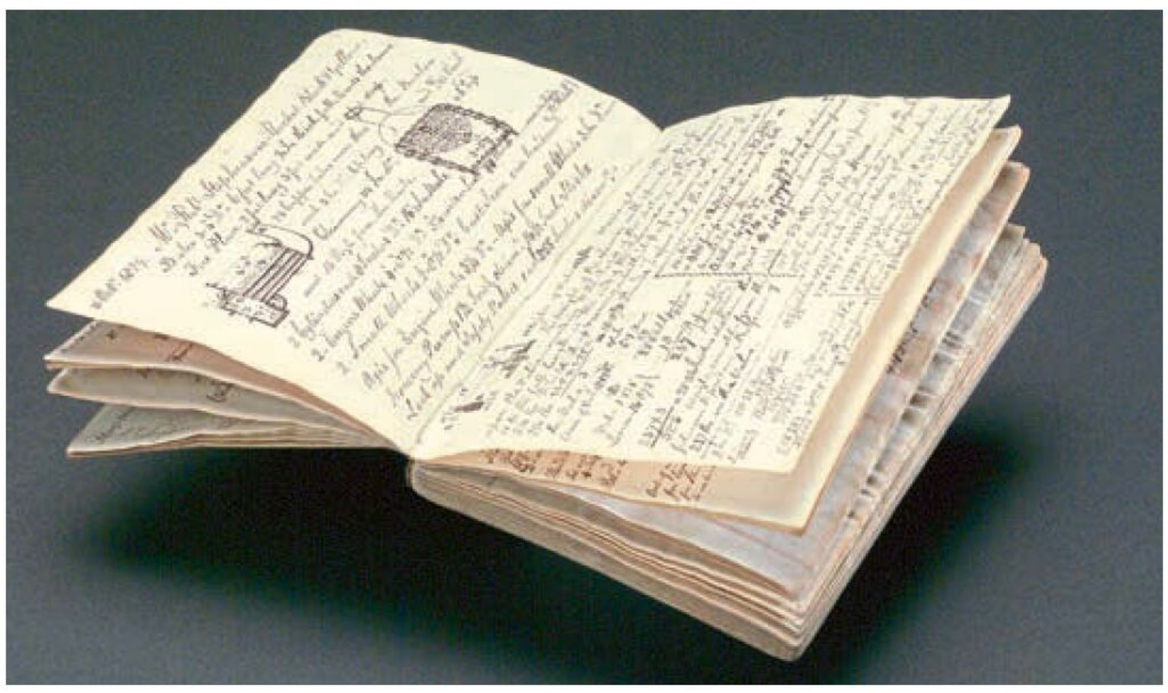
Dear Timothy

Brandreth has given a report here that you are going to lay off the Locomotive engines; Is it so? It was a great pity that this accident took place with the tubes - It appears Brandreth has got one plan introduced for the horses to ride which I suppose he will set off as his own inventions It is more than two years since I explained this to Brandreth - Canterbury was the place where I meant to have put it to trial, but as that Company have now determined to work the Line by steam power it will not be wanted -

We have tried the new Loco motive Engine at

2005-7290

Letter from George Stephenson to Timothy Hackworth dated July 28, 1828.



Complete with immersive audio, the online audience can delve into the archives to view how art was inspired by and reflected the railways, and also gain a glimpse into early rail travel advertising.

NRM director Craig Bentley said: "Through this digital project, the NRM is making its unparalleled National Collection accessible to all.

"Beyond The Tracks is an expansion of the museum experience, bringing to life the transformative story of the railway in this special bicentenary year."

Science Museum Group chief executive Sir Ian Blatchford said: "We have been delighted to work with Google Arts & Culture over many years to bring our collection to life in surprising and innovative ways. Beyond The Tracks will ignite curiosity in fundamental scientific concepts among learners around the world, unlocking the full potential of railway history."

Google Arts & Culture director Amit Sood added: "The story of the railway is one of world-changing innovation.

"As the National Railway Museum celebrates its 50th anniversary, we are proud to deepen our long-standing partnership with the Science Museum Group.

"Beyond The Tracks brings this pivotal chapter of history to a global audience, making it possible for everyone, everywhere to experience these incredible machines and their powerful stories."

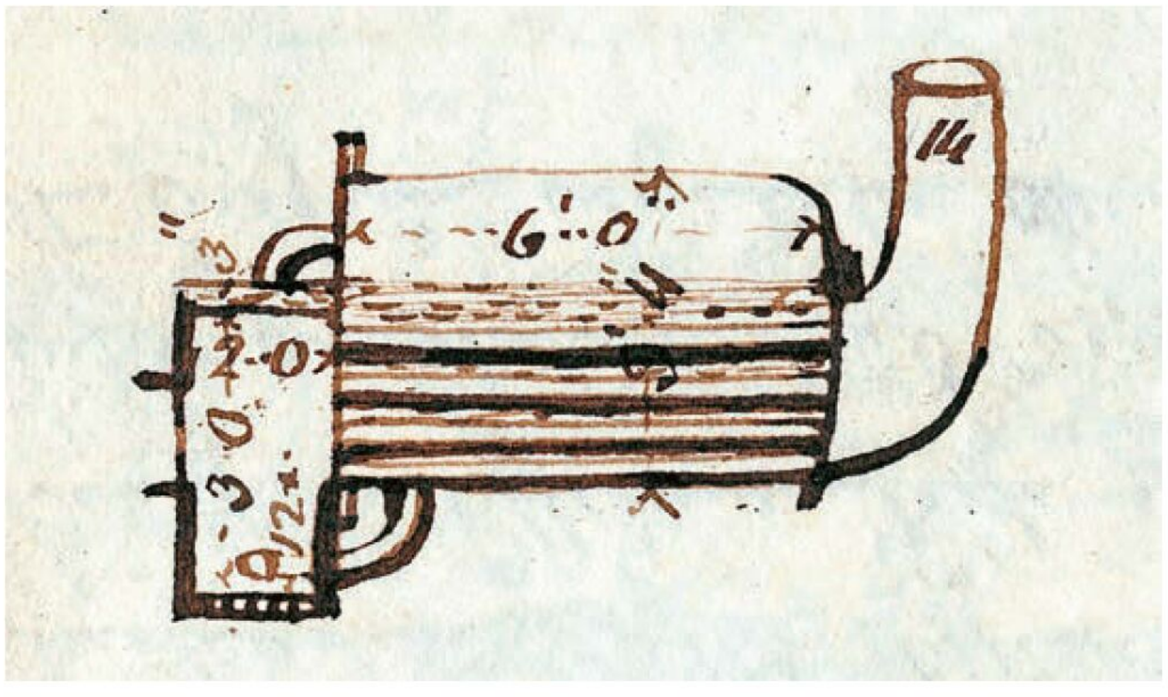
➜ To explored Beyond The Tracks, visit https://artsandculture.google.com/project/national-railway-museum

➜ Pictures are courtesy of the board of trustees, Science Museum Group.

Right: Queen Victoria was the first British monarch to travel by train in 1842, when she journeyed with GWR from Slough to Paddington. This headlamp, one of a pair, was made by the GWR in commemoration of her diamond jubilee in 1897.

Left: Manuscript notebook belonging to John Urpeth Rastrick, Rastrick was one of three judges at the Rainhill Trials of 1829 which conclusively proved the benefits of Stephenson's Rocket. Rastrick's diaries and notebook of the trials are valuable records of the performance of locomotives of that era.

Below: A detailed ink drawing from the Rastrick notebook dated 1829, illustrating a horizontal steam boiler with dimensions and a chimney.



Protest as Devon's Pecorama announces closure for 2026

By Robin Jones

A SOCIAL media group set up to save Devon's Pecorama attraction has been joined by hundreds of people.

Fears have been sounded for the future of the venue which in November, only weeks after celebrating the 50th anniversary of its 7¼in gauge Beer Heights Light Railway, which was officially opened by Thomas the Tank Engine creator the Rev W Awdry on July 14, 1974, announced that it would not open in 2026.

A statement from the attraction, which includes many model railways, gardens, and a shop, said: "It is with great sadness and after much soul-searching we have decided to close Pecorama, our well-loved family attraction, for the 2026 season.

"Despite Pecorama having had a busy year of trading involving its 50th anniversary of the Beer Heights Railway and concluding this past half term week with rewarding Halloween events, the business continues to make a loss.

Not covering costs

"What is generally not known is that Pecorama is only profitable for about four months of the year; the remaining months have to be supported financially. This has been the case for many years.

"With the challenging economic climate and costs continuing to rise, the PECO parent company cannot continue to give this support each year to Pecorama.

"There is sincere hope that Pecorama can reopen in future in a new format which will continue to give inspiration, fun and pleasure to our visitors. For the moment, PECO will be focusing on growing the core businesses of manufacturing and publishing.

"This decision of immediate closure sadly means that a few members of loyal staff have opted for voluntary redundancy, and we must point out that this decision is no reflection on the efforts and commitment of our staff who have worked extra-hard this year. Our sincere thanks go to all our staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work in making Pecorama a wonderful, friendly place to visit.

"If you hold a gold card membership with us, we are happy to offer a refund for any months that cannot be used. Email info@pecorama.co.uk for details.

"Finally, we want to thank our lovely visitors for bringing the site to life and we look forward to welcoming you all again in some form in the future."

Exmouth-based supporter Steve James subsequently founded the Save Pecorama page on Facebook and as this issue of *Heritage Railway* closed for press, more than 1200 people had joined.

He posted: "It's a wonderful family day out, and look at those views! We are looking for as much support as possible, whether it's just to follow the group page, offering to help raise awareness, or coming up with ideas on how we can get Pecorama open for 2026. To quote a large, well-known supermarket chain, every little helps.

Pecorama's Beer Heights Light Railway has eight steam and two diesel locomotives and one electric. PECORAMA

No pressure applied

"This group is by no means a way of putting pressure on Peco to reopen. We want to work with them to help them find a solution for the 2026 season and beyond."

Responding in a statement, Pecorama said: "While we look forward to potentially welcoming visitors through our gates at some point in the future, our on-site model shop remains open Monday to Friday, from 10am to 3pm. All stock has now been relocated from the Beer Heights Light Railway ticket office, following requests from many of you to continue purchasing Pecorama goods.

"Our tours, courses, and driver experiences will continue as planned, and we are committed to ensuring that our gardens, track, and locomotives are carefully maintained throughout 2026."

PECO was founded in 1946 as a manufacturer of model railway accessories by Sydney Pritchard and includes the Pritchard Patent Product Company Ltd, Peco Publications and Publicity Ltd, and Pecorama.

Tramway heritage champion gets a working model!

A CUSTOM-MADE special award has been presented to local historian Bill Smith, who has championed the Wisbech to Upwell Tram Project.

A year after the installation of the last of six mementoes of the tramway and historical information boards at station stops along its route, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 326, Bill, their creator, was given a working scale model of the original Y6 (GER G15) 0-4-0 steam tram No. 132, immortalised by the Rev Wilbert Awdry, vicar of nearby Emneth between 1953 and 1965, as Toby the Tram in his Railway Series books featuring Thomas the Tank Engine.

The presentation was made by Grahame Seaton, chairman of the Well Creek Trust, as Bill was giving a summary of his project at Upwell village hall on November 7. The trust, the project's sponsor, is a charity dedicated to maintaining the survival of the Well Creek navigation that runs through Upwell, Outwell, Nordelph and Salters Lode.

Left: Bill Smith receives his surprise award from the Well Creek Trust.

Right: The working scale model of the original Wisbech & Upwell Tramway Y6 0-4-0 steam tram.
BOTH PHOTOS: WCT

At its peak, six trams a day ran in each direction along the tramway from Wisbech through Elm, Emneth and Outwell before terminating at Upwell.

Built by the GER and opened in 1883, the tramway carried passengers until 1927, and later agricultural produce, closing in 1966.

Bill said: "There was very little left of this iconic tramway, which has become internationally famous. The tram memorabilia illustrates what the tramway was like when it was fully operational."

The trust's Sue Lowe said: "It is important for the whole of the history of the area. If it had not been for Bill, we would not have the six mementoes, which means the Wisbech tram will not be forgotten."

The display can be found at Elm Road crossing, Outwell, Upwell goods yard, the Lance Hunter-Rowe Boat Haven, Birds Corner (Boyce's Bridge), and next to the B&Q store in Wisbech.

W&UT coach No. 7, built in 1884, survives as part of the North Norfolk Railway's vintage carriage set.

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Great Central benefactor David Clarke's model railway will remain open after decision U-turn

A 40FT model railway attraction built by the late Great Central president and benefactor David Clarke is to remain open for the 'foreseeable future' after a U-turn on closure plans was made.

The Shuttlewood Clarke Foundation, which owns the David Clarke Model Railway at Ulverscroft Grange in Whitwick Road, Markfield, Leicestershire, said in October that it needed to pull the plug on the attraction to increase revenue due to rising employment and energy costs, and finding a new home for the model was a priority.

However, a change of heart led to an announcement on November 26 that the decision had been reversed.

A statement said: "Constructive discussions have taken place between the volunteers and the trustees, and alternative plans have now been submitted to meet the foundation's requirements. These plans aim to enhance the entire area, including both the model railway and the donation point/goods-inwards area.

"We are grateful for the dedication and passion shown by everyone involved, which has been instrumental in reaching this positive outcome."

Foundation founder David began building the model railway in 1977, it having been initially situated in a factory drawing office in Mountsorrel, where he was born in 1929. It was designed from the outset to be a˜technical exercise in the operation of points and signals based on the GWR of the 1930s. Both colour light and semaphore signals are represented as realistically as possible, including signals and points operated by mechanical interlocked levers and track circuiting in a near-prototypical manner. Controllers operate from a signalbox as if they were driving an actual locomotive around the layout.

The model is also unique in how it is controlled. It was first operated by radio when it was built in the 1970s but is now also wi-fi controlled.

Subject to volunteer availability, it is open on Wednesdays from Easter to Christmas, and on Fridays from 10am to 3pm. Admission and parking are free and donations are welcome.

In the 1990s, businessman and racing driver David became honorary president of the GCR and approached the railway about the possibility of making the heritage line double-track. As a signalling enthusiast, Clarke aspired to operate a signalbox on a double-track main line, and so the campaign to raise funds to double the section between˜Quorn & Woodhouse and Rothley˜was launched, with David himself providing a large amount of capital. David died in 2002 aged 72. The David Clarke Railway Trust was set up and supports many historic and educational projects on the GCR.

The foundation supports the elderly, adults with disabilities and young people through well-being activities. Ulverscroft Grange has tea rooms where groups, individuals, carers, couples and families can meet, and a series of charity shops in the grounds for bargain hunters.

Part of the large model railway built by David Clarke, which will remain open at its Ulverscroft Grange home. SCF

Saddle tank undergoes a further repaint back into GWR

AT the behest of the owners, GWR 0-6-0ST No. 813 has gone into the Severn Valley Railway's Bridgnorth Shed paint shop for a complete repaint by master painter Ronan O'Brein into Great Western livery.

It is anticipated to be out early in 2026 but is not expected to be in attendance for the railway's winter gala on January 3/4.

This surprise move has followed its recent transformation as NCB Backworth No. 11, which proved very popular. That livery came about because its replacement saddle tank was in red primer, so green undercoat was applied for it to take part in the September 18-21 Autumn Steam Gala, as featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 338. However, as Backworth No. 11, it would have originally been painted black.

Originally numbered 26, 813 was built by Hudswell Clarke in 1900 for shunting the Port Talbot Railway's network of sidings and for tripping coal trains to the main line junctions.

The locomotive was absorbed into the Great Western and after overhaul at Swindon was outshopped in 1924 as No. 813.

Its time under the GWR was only 11 years due to Chief Mechanical Engineer Charles Collett's standardisation plans. In 1934, it was sold to Backworth Collieries Limited in Northumberland and renumbered 12, later becoming No. 11 under the National Coal Board after a new boiler was fitted by the original manufacturer Hudswell Clarke in 1950, followed by a new firebox in 1962. It arrived at the SVR in 1967.

Not capable of hauling long trains, No. 813 is ideal for local two-coach trains and often double-heads with other locomotives at galas.

No. 813 inside Bridgnorth's paint shop on November 23. JOHN TITLOW

Bagnall 0-4-0ST No. 2807 of 1918 *Leonard* played a starring role in the Abbey Pumping Station Christmas Steam Day on November 30, heading trains around the Leicester venue's 2ft gauge line with rides costing just 50p each. The locomotive was built in 1918 for the Ministry of Munitions, which never took delivery of it. Instead, it ended up at Birmingham Tame & Rea Drainage Board at Water Orton, working at Minworth Sewage Works. In the 1950s, it was acquired by the now defunct Birmingham Museum of Science and Industry in Newhall Street for static display and later by the Leicester museum and restored, rekindling its waste water legacy as the 1891-built site was until 1964 used as a sewage pumping station. MIKE SPENCER/APS

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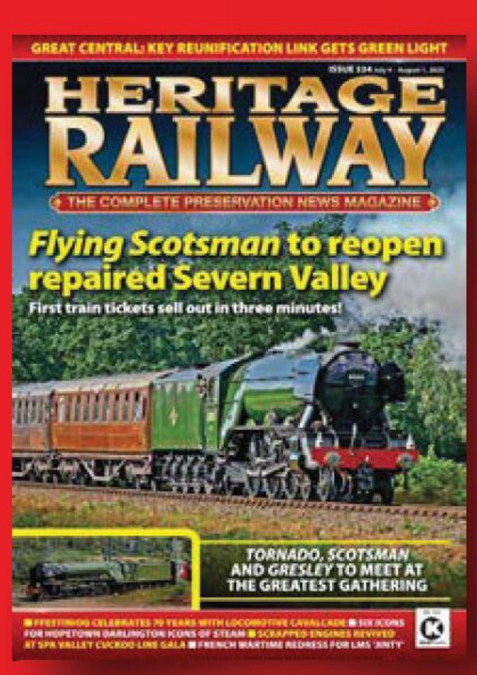

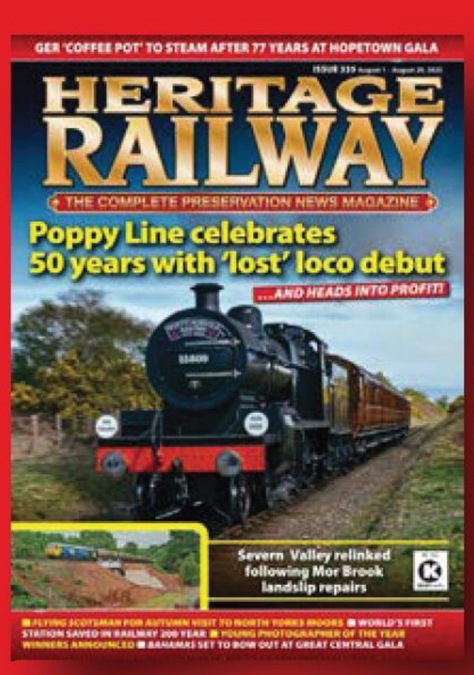

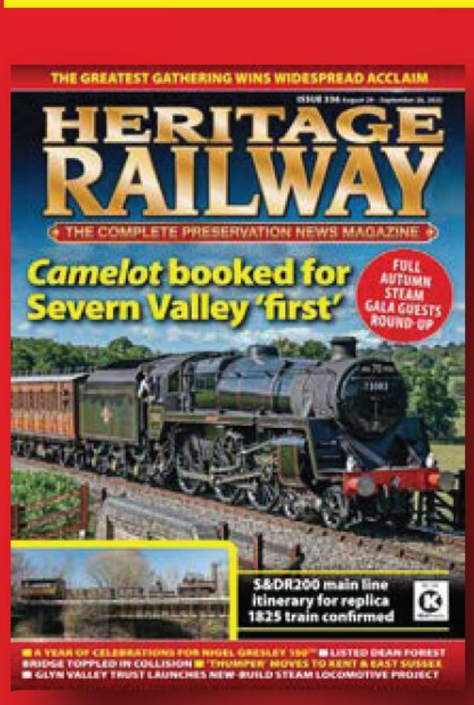

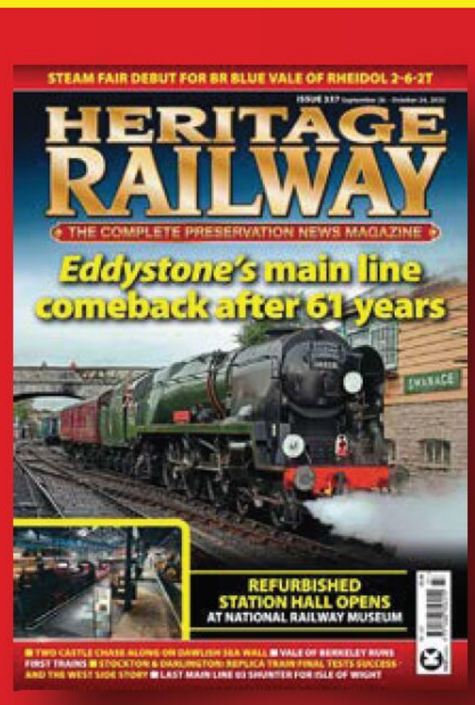

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Class 27 D5370 crosses Swithland Viaduct. The reservoir just behind is gradually starting to refill after the long, dry summer. PAUL MAYO/GCR

BR Standard 2MT No. 78019, working the 9.55am Loughborough to Leicester North service, passes classmate No. 78018 and the 'Windcutter' mineral wagons at Swithland Sidings on November 16. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Last outing for visiting Scottish Sulzer heading Great Central's 'Last Hurrah'

By Owen Hayward

THE extended visit of Class 27 D5370 to the Great Central Railway was rounded off in style on November 15/16 when the line's annual Last Hurrah gave enthusiasts their final opportunity to enjoy a gala-style weekend before festive services fully took over heritage lines around the UK.

The Last Hurrah has become a staple of the GCR events calendar for that reason, and this year's line-up comprised five steam locomotives, one DMU, and two diesels, the latter pair having both been guests brought in for the September 4-6 autumn diesel gala (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 337). Owned by the Caledonian Railway diesel group at Brechin, Class 27 D5370 was making its final appearance in service there before returning north of the Scottish border, to where it departed by road on November 18.

Meanwhile, Class 35 D7018 has been confirmed as staying on the line into 2026. Owned by the Diesel & Electric Preservation Group and based at the West Somerset Railway, D7018 was built in 1962 at Beyer Peacock (Hymek) Ltd's Manchester works for the Western Region. A total of 101 were built between 1961 and 1964, but only four survive in preservation. The nickname came from their Mekydro-design hydraulic transmission units, and it was this feature becoming classed as non-standard by BR that led to withdrawals as early as 1971, with the final class member retired in 1975.

The WSR is also home to classmate D7017 which, as also reported in issue 337, returned to service at the end of the summer following extensive bodywork repairs and a repaint, with the two running together on the weekend of August 30/31 to mark the golden jubilee of the class's preservation.

The other two preserved classmates are D7029 (owned by the Diesel Traction Group and currently undergoing restoration at the Severn Valley Railway) and D7076, which is operational at the East Lancashire Railway and owned by the Bury Hydraulic Group.

No. 73156 leads *Witherslack Hall* past Kinchley Lane on November 16, the service bound for Rothley, where the Standard 5MT would detach and leave the Hall to continue onwards to Leicester North. OWEN HAYWARD

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Class 35 Hymek D7018 rattles through Kinchley Lane with the 'Windcutter' mineral wagons bound for Loughborough. OWEN HAYWARD

End-of-steam flavour

The steam roster comprised all available locomotives: BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73156, BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0s Nos. 78018 and 78019, WR 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall,* and Hudswell Clarke Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 1752 *Robert* (running as scrapped J94 No. 68067). With the majority of these carrying variations of BR black (apart from No. 6990, which wore lined green) and running alongside the two diesel locomotives (each carrying BR green and small yellow warning panel) and the line's Class 101 Metro-Cammell DMU in BR blue, there was a definite end of steam era feel to the weekend. All seven locomotives took it in turn to work both passenger and freight services throughout the two days, with allocation changes between Saturday and Sunday allowing for different workings to be witnessed.

With the weather in November seeing temperatures drop into single figures, steam heat in the carriages was a welcome relief to visitors across all three loco-hauled passenger sets throughout. While the steam locomotives were able to provide this luxury directly, the two diesels saw their dedicated rake reap the benefit of a train-heating boiler carriage.

Originally built in 1955 as a brake corridor second (BSK), No. 34590 was converted into a steam-generating van and regauged for Irish Rail in 1972. It arrived on the GCR in April 2007 and was fitted with replacement bogies to bring it back to UK standard gauge, returning to use in the winter of 2008/09, still in Irish Rail livery. In 2022, it was repainted into unlined maroon but now wears BR plain blue.

Although some diesels were fitted with steam heat boilers, many of them saw that feature removed as electric train heating was introduced. Few such locomotives that were so fitted still retain their boilers; the provision of vehicles like this enabled carriages to be warmed where locomotives are unable to do so.

Also making a rare appearance was LMS inspection saloon No. 999503. Normally only seen on private charter workings, it was coupled to set B throughout the event, with passengers given a choice of two upgrades to travel aboard it, either with or without refreshments served at their seats. General manager Malcolm Holmes said that this offering had been "very well-received" and was something that would be considered for future events.

A (BR) Standard affair

With Christmas services commencing the weekend after, the next opportunity to enjoy non-Christmas travel will be Betwixtmas Steam Days, from December 26 until January 1, including the December 31 'Night Rider,'when Nos. 73156 and D7018 will work four round trips of the line in the lead-up to midnight. The new year will be welcomed in at Leicester North, with an on-board bar serving a selection of beers, ciders, and hot food throughout the evening.

Then, on January 22-25, BR Standards will take over the line with the visit of 9F No. 92134. The sole-surviving single-chimneyed example comes in from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and will be a welcome sight on the line, filling the gap left by the GCR's resident classmate No. 92212, which bowed out of service for overhaul in 2024.

An additional visiting locomotive was being explored as this issue went to press but had not yet been confirmed. The four-day gala will also be the final opportunity to catch No. 78018 in service before it is withdrawn pending overhaul.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "It was wonderful to be wrapping up the gala season with the Last Hurrah. The volunteer team who ran the event created an innovative timetable that provided plenty of interest, using a mix of traction as well as making use of our steam heat van and the Director's Saloon. All in all, a tremendous event that was enjoyed by all and which made a valuable financial contribution to the railway as well."

Visiting Class 27 D5370 races into Quorn & Woodhouse station. The first carriage is the train-heating boiler van, which provided steam heat to the carriages being pulled by the two diesels throughout the weekend. OWEN HAYWARD

BR Standard 2MT No. 78018 departs from Loughborough yard with the van train, passing Austerity No. 68067, which had arrived in the loop with the mineral wagons. PAUL LAWRENCE

Dunrobin restoration makes progress inside Bridgnorth Shed

By John Titlow

THE overhaul of repatriated Sharp Stewart 0-4-4T No. 4085 of 1895 *Dunrobin* inside the Severn Valley Railway's Bridgnorth shed has taken considerable steps forward after the boiler passed its tests and fittings were reinstated onto the backhead.

Blanking-off plates can be seen where the boiler has undergone testing. A successful trial fitting has taken place and the boiler now sits in front of the locomotive for work to continue. Its valve gear and motion are assembled.

Dunrobin was constructed for the fourth Duke of Sutherland and ran with carriage No. 58A, built by the Highland Railway at Lochorm works in 1909.

The third duke had financed the construction of the line from Golspie to Helmsdale, which opened in 1871. At Dunrobin Castle, the duke built his own private station and had negotiated running rights over the Highland Railway to Inverness. The Highland Railway W class members were near-clones of *Dunrobin*.

BR revoked the duke's running rights in 1949, so he sold the loco and private four-wheel saloon to Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway owner Captain Jack Howey, who placed the locomotive on static display at New Romney.

Following Capt ain Howey's death in 1963, the locomotive and carriage 58A was sold to Harold Foster and exported to Canada.

Foster went bankrupt in 1965, and the locomotive and carriage were sold to the Government of British Columbia and displayed at the nascent Fort Steele heritage town near Camloops, BC, where it ran round a loop with BR Mk.1 carriage No. E3733.

With no historic connections to Canada, *Dunrobin* and carriage 58A were sold to Beamish Museum for CN$160,000 in December 2010, returning to British soil the following year. The locomotive was transported to Bridgnorth for assessment and removal of asbestos, while No. 58A went direct to Beamish.

Estimated costs to complete the restoration of the locomotive and carriage, including purchase and shipping, are about £500,000. Much of *Dunrobin* will be new when finished, and the intention is to make the first overhaul in 10 years' time easier. As yet, there is no completion date.

Left: The connecting rods are now fitted on *Dunrobin*, and its boiler is in front after testing inside Bridgnorth Shed on November 23. JOHN TITLOW

***Dunrobin*'s boiler has been tested successfully, and fittings are being attached.** JOHN TITLOW

First train over Somerset & Dorset bridge in 59 years

THE North Dorset Railway was celebrating after the first locomotive in nearly 60 years crossed newly-renovated Lamb House Bridge on a rainswept November 22.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0DM D1186 of 1959 *Ashdown*, formerly Manchester Ship Canal D1, hauled a ballast wagon over the bridge spanning Bere Marsh.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 336, the railway completed a four-year project to double the length of its running line to half a mile, with the aim of offering brake van rides to visitors to Shillingstone station.

During the extension work, the bridge was stripped down to its brickwork.

A NDR statement said that the "nearly 60-year wait for a locomotive to cross Lamb House Bridge was finally rewarded."

"For four years, the permanent way guys, all volunteers, have gone from breaking through scrub to seeing a train cross the bridge – out in all weathers, heavy rain, freezing cold, blazing sun, it matters not. Quite an achievement!"

The previous locomotive to run over the bridge was a Class 35 Hymek hauling a track removal train in 1966.

Another landmark for the North Dorset Railway as Oxford Blue-liveried Hudswell Clarke D1 crosses Lamb House Bridge on November 22. NDR

Meldon Viaduct carried the LSWR main line over the valley of the West Okement River. ROGER CORNFOOT/ CREATIVE COMMONS

LSWR Meldon Viaduct needs £3 million repairs

DEVON's Meldon Viaduct, a scheduled monument and one of only two surviving railway bridges in the UK built with wrought iron lattice piers and trusses, will need up to £3 million spent on repairs in the next decade, a report has claimed.

Built by the LSWR and opened in 1874, the landmark 540ft-long viaduct 2.5 miles west of Okehampton was part of the main line from Exeter to Plymouth and last carried passenger services in 1968. The viaduct was afterwards used for shunting by freight trains accessing Meldon Quarry, but the remaining single track was removed in the 1990s.

It is now used by the Granite Way, a cycle track skirting Dartmoor and linking Okehampton to Lydford.

The Meldon Viaduct Company, set up in 1998 to maintain the viaduct and attract funding for maintenance, is being dissolved, with Devon County Council taking over management. A report to the council's cabinet said: "The viaduct requires significant renovation works estimated at £2-£3million over the next decade. Survey works have been initiated to prepare for these renovations, but the funding has not yet been found."

The local authority is to look at applying for grant aid from bodies such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England.

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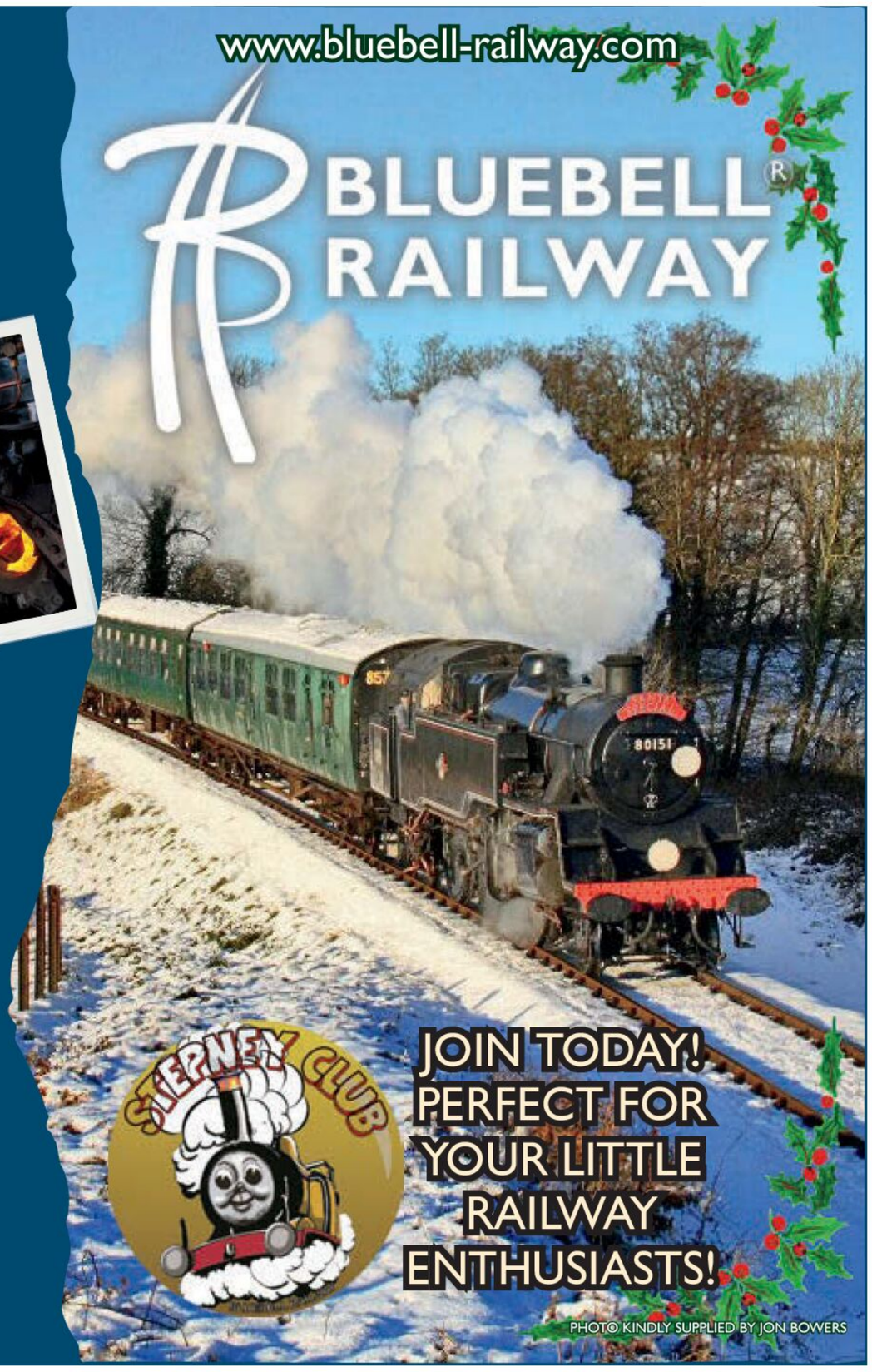

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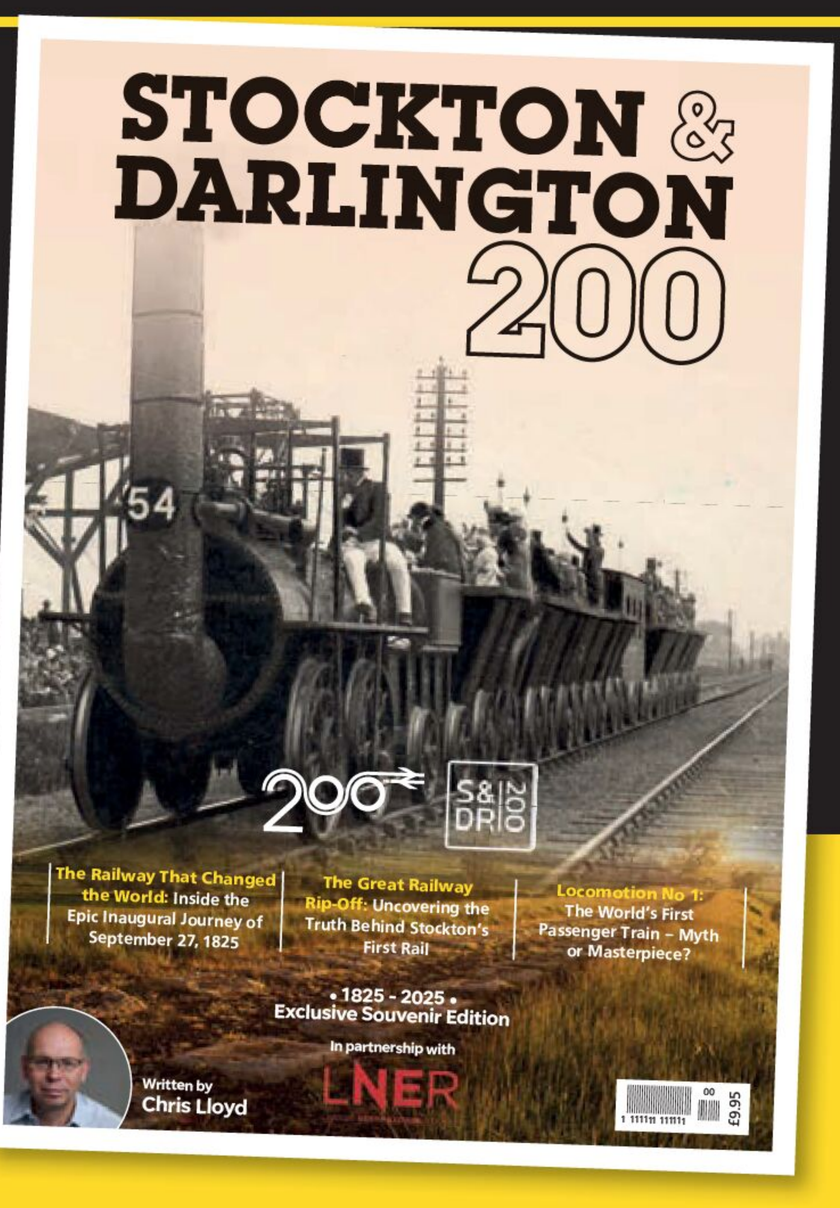

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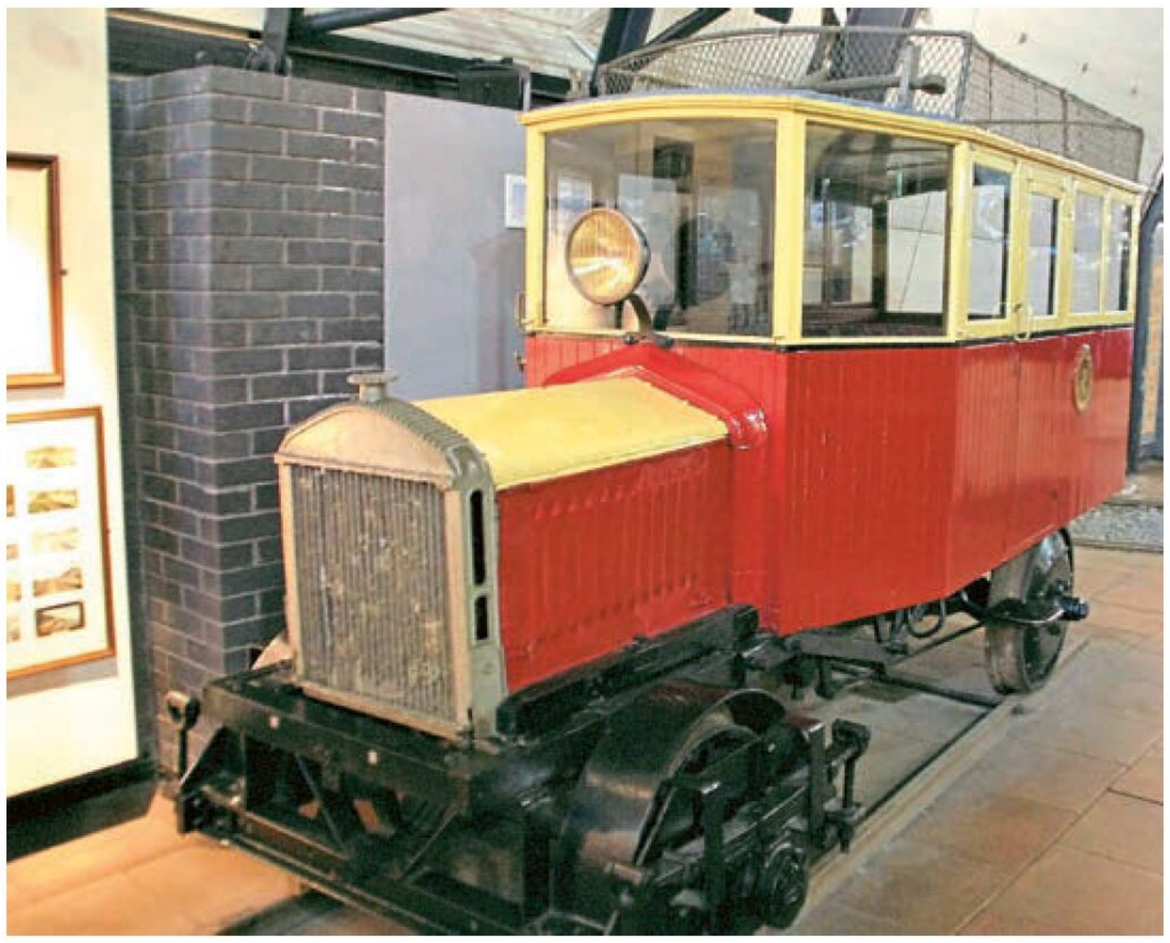
‘No plans in place’ for pioneering Irish railcar as centenary year nears

By Hugh Dougherty

HOUSED in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, one of the world’s first petrol-driven railcars is reaching the centenary of its entry into regular timetabled service.

However, the museum has plans to draw special attention to former County Donegal Railways railcar No. 1, which entered traffic on the Stranorlar-Glenties line in 1926 when it was short of coal as a result of the General Strike that year.

The unique railcar, which originated as an open track inspection car built by Alday and Onions in 1907, was gifted to the former Belfast Transport Museum by the CDR in 1956, when it was withdrawn from service. It was one of the first pieces of Irish narrow gauge rolling stock to be preserved thanks to the CDR recognising its historical importance as a pioneer of railcar development.



Today, railcar No. 1 is a popular exhibit at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum’s Irish Railway Gallery at Cultra. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Never mind the width! This front-on shot of the railcar at Cultra shows its tight proportions, even on the narrow gauge. Passengers and the driver were very close to one another on a journey! HUGH DOUGHERTY

Rebuilt and repurposed

Rebuilt with a covered body at the CDR’s Stranorlar workshops in 1911, the car saw little use until the CDR’s famous manager, Henry Forbes, realised its potential and entered it into regular service on the Glenties mail run during the General Strike year. Despite its limited passenger capacity, having seats for just seven – although Forbes claimed that it could accommodate 10, plus the driver in its 3ft 7in wide and 8ft 5in long wooden body – the tiny railcar was an immediate success.

Over the years, it acquired a more powerful engine with a new front-axle assembly and was able to haul a trailer on the level Finn Valley section between Strabane and Stranorlar. That provided the genesis of Forbes’s concept of the articulated diesel railcars which became the hallmark of the CDR, long before they were common on other railways, and which prolonged the lifetime of the line. No. 1 also hauled the line’s weedkiller train on its annual outings over the line’s 124 miles of track.

Moving museums

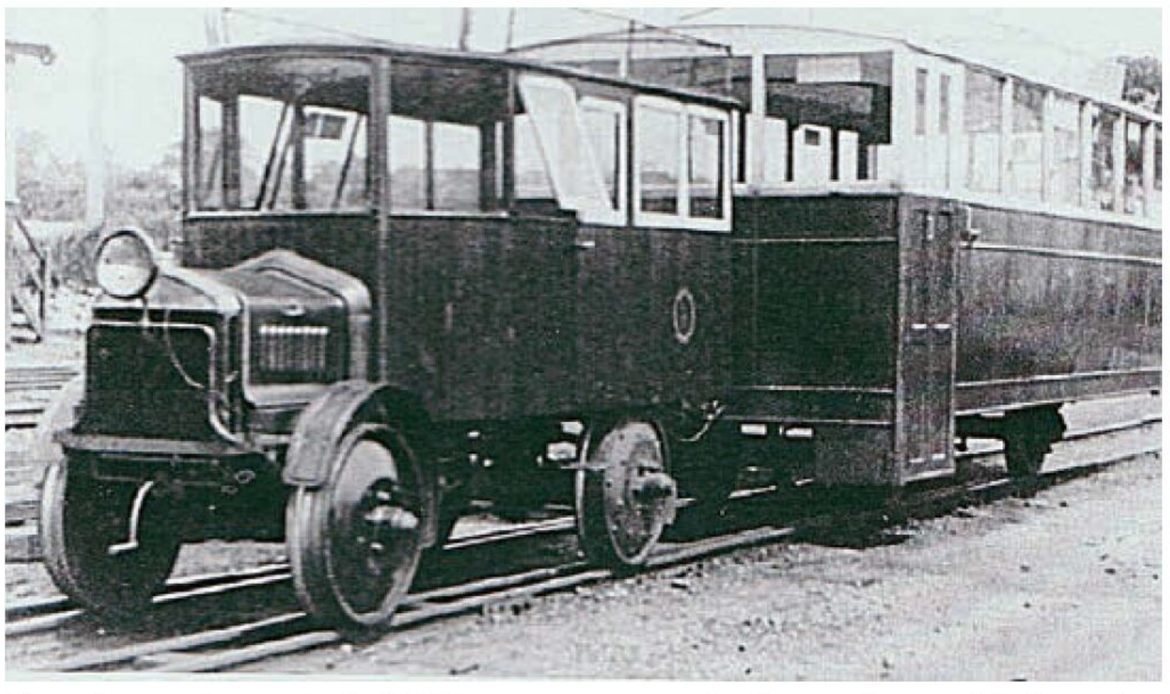
Originally displayed in the Belfast Transport Museum in Witham Street, the railcar was moved close to its Donegal home for temporary display in the then new Foyle Valley Railway Museum in Derry, and there was speculation that it might be returned running order on the FVR itself. However, the car was moved to the newly-opened Railway Gallery at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum at Cultra in 1993, where it remains as a static exhibit.

Despite there being no plans to mark the centenary of the railcar’s pioneering entry into service, the UFTM said it appreciates the historical importance of the car and values it as a significant exhibit. Museum history curator Clare Ablett said: “County Donegal Railways Joint Committee No. 1 was the first railway vehicle in Ireland with an internal combustion engine and one of the first in the world.

“It was a pioneering example of rail innovation at the time, built shortly after the first petrol-driven road car had been invented. Cheap to run and popular, its success during the General Strike of 1926 encouraged the CDR to introduce petrol and, later, diesel railcars for passenger services, marking the beginning of a new era of railway travel in Ireland.

“This historically significant rail vehicle was acquired by the museum in 1956 as an important development of the rail collection. It is on permanent display at Cultra, along with other examples of County Donegal Railways rolling stock.”

On loan from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, GWR 2-8-0 No. 2807, with a US-style cowcatcher fitted, and Class 25 No. 25262 on the rear, approaching Staverton on the South Devon Railway with the 12.40pm Buckfastleigh to near Totnes Riverside and return ‘Polar Express’ Christmas service on November 30. COLIN WALLACE



The railcar at Stranorlar in 1931 between runs on the County Donegal Railways’ Finn Valley section while towing trailer No. 5. Built for the car in 1929, allowing it to handle a total of 35 passengers, the trailer is preserved at Donegal Railway Heritage Museum. DRHM

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Wrongly loaded excavator caused the collapse of historic Victorian footbridge on Dean Forest line

By Robin Jones

A Grade II-listed footbridge on the Dean Forest Railway line was pulled down after a volunteer loaded a digger on to an engineering train incorrectly, a Rail Accident Investigation Branch investigation has found.

The 133-year-old lattice-girder structure at St Mary's Halt in Lydney collapsed at about 10.55am on Thursday, August 14. Constructed of wrought iron beams and supported on cast iron columns, which spanned the tracks and platform and carried a public footpath providing access to a lake and a residential area, it was said to be the last-surviving piece of infrastructure from the Severn & Wye Railway.

The railway owns two 360-degree excavators, a six-tonne model purchased in 2009 and an eight-tonne one bought in 2024. The RAIB found that the eight-tonne digger had been loaded by a railway volunteer who had not completed the necessary training and misjudged the height of its arm.

The accident scene, looking to the rear of the train. RAIB

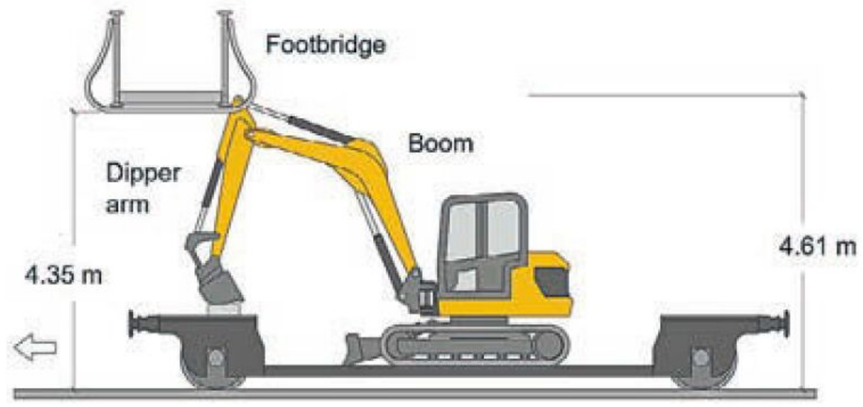

Diagram showing the height of the eight-tonne excavator compared with the footbridge. RAIB

Insufficiently qualified

The loading and unloading of the digger on to the BR 1950s Loriot well wagon should have been undertaken by a qualified operator, the RAIB report said. However, after the volunteer with the relevant qualification had been delayed, a second one who had passed only the theory test was asked by a railway manager if he would be willing to load the excavator to load the digger at Lydney Junction and offload it at Whitecroft three miles away. The second volunteer agreed, despite having had insufficient experience to pass the practical test, and he had previously loaded the six-tonne digger on to the engineering train with the bucket resting on the raised deck at the end of the open wagon.

While this arrangement meant the six-tonne vehicle would remain below the maximum permitted height, the eight-tonne digger's arm was raised 10.2in higher than the underside of the footbridge "making collision inevitable," the RAIB report said. Had the bucket been stored on the lower deck, the digger would have cleared the bridge without incident.

The investigation found that the railway did not have a written set of instructions stating where the excavator's bucket should be stowed during transportation on an open wagon.

The report said that since acquiring the eight-tonne digger, the railway had not checked its height against its structures.

During the loading, the train driver and shunter had gone to inspect a different wagon in another part of the station yard and did not witness the loading activity, with no requirement for either to check the load before the train departed. Furthermore, there is no equipment to allow out-of-gauge loads to be detected at Lydney Junction.

Bridge struck

No one was hurt in the incident, and no pedestrians were using the footbridge when it occurred, but parts of the bridge collapsed onto the station platform and the moving train, which consisted of Class 08 No. 08769 propelling two four-wheel well wagons and a bogie brake van carrying six volunteers, including a shunter.

The railway was not open to the public at the time.

The RAIB report also said that railway did not have a written instruction to indicate the correct location for an excavator's bucket when stowed on a Loriot wagon, one of three it owns. Its generic risk assessment relating to digger operation, prepared in 2010 and reviewed in 2013, 2014 and 2016, did not address transporting an excavator by train.

Furthermore, since acquiring the eight-tonne excavator, the Dean Forest Railway had not checked its loading gauge against structures on the railway, including the footbridge.

This risk was intended to be managed by training operators to correctly stow the bucket on the lower deck.

There was also no method – or requirement – for staff or volunteers to check the height of loads on trains departing Lydney Junction, which meant that out-of-gauge loads could not be identified.

Since the accident, the Dean Forest Railway said that structural engineers have now examined the bridge and were in the process of producing a detailed survey. The railway said that it has reviewed and updated processes and procedures as a result of the incident.

Help give a facelift to historic ironstone Peckett

A £4000 appeal for the cosmetic restoration of Peckett 0-4-0 ST No. 1257 of 1912 *Uppingham* has been launched at Rocks by Rail: The Living Ironstone Museum.

The locomotive was delivered new to the Uppingham Ironstone Quarry, operated by James Pain Ltd, and became the first standard gauge steam locomotive to operate in a Rutland ironstone quarry.

The Glebe Quarry commenced full production in 1914 as demand for ironstone increased to meet wartime needs, and the locomotive was used to push the empty wagons up a short, steeply graded mineral railway from a junction on the Seaton to Uppingham branch into the workings, where they were loaded by hand. A second pit, the Adderley Quarry, was added in response to wartime needs. *Uppingham* was transferred to the company's other quarry at Market Overton, where it worked until 1947. It was then moved to the firm's limestone quarry in Wirksworth, where it was used until 1972, when it entered preservation in storage at the Midland Railway Trust base at Normanton Barracks, Derby.

Declared surplus to requirements, *Uppingham* was privately purchased and returned briefly to Market Overton before moving in December 1979 to Cottesmore Mines Sidings, the new home of the Rutland Railway Museum, known today as Rocks by Rail.

After many years in open storage, *Uppingham* is now inside the museum's Simon Layfield Exhibition Centre.

As part of an initiative to mark the 100th anniversary of the closure of Uppingham Ironstone Quarry, the museum is to mount a display on the workings and also undertake a cosmetic restoration of the locomotive. It is planned to move the locomotive into the conservation workshop and remove the cab and saddle tank in order to remove corroded platework and weld in new sections as required.

Stored component parts would be refitted as part of the conservation scheme. When completed, *Uppingham* would be returned to the exhibition centre on public display, together with new interpretation boards.

Money raised by the appeal will be used to carry out repairs and purchase conservation materials. Any cheque donations should be made out to Rutland Railway Museum and handed in at the museum or sent to: RBR Treasurer, Uppingham Locomotive Conservation Appeal, 4 Main Street, Stanford on Soar, Loughborough LE12 5PY. Those who wish to donate with Gift Aid should email curator@rocks-by-rail.org

Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1257 of 1912 Uppingham at the Rocks by Rail: The Living Ironstone Museum. RBR

Two major accolades for Downpatrick & County Down Railway volunteers

By Robin Jones

THE Downpatrick & County Down Railway has been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service 2025 – the equivalent of the MBE for volunteers. It follows the extraordinary efforts of the team who led the railway from flood recovery to a full reopening being Highly Commended in the Outstanding Team of the Year category in the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards 2025.

DCDR chairman Robert Gardiner said: "We are deeply honoured and proud to receive The King's Award for Voluntary Service as we celebrate our 40th anniversary year. This is a tribute to every volunteer who has helped build, maintain, and grow this railway over the past four decades.

"In recent years we have faced some of the toughest and most unprecedented challenges in our 40 years, from the Covid-19 shutdowns to the devastation of the 2023 Downpatrick floods, which left much of the site literally under water.

"This is fantastic recognition of our volunteers. They give their time, skills, and passion to preserve Northern Ireland's railway heritage and to make Downpatrick a welcoming and vibrant destination for visitors. This recognition means so much to our entire community, and we hope it inspires more people to get involved in volunteering and heritage."

The Downpatrick & County Down Railway's Robert Gardiner, David Crone, Morgan Young and Shea McKee with the Highly Commended certificate in the Social Enterprise NI Awards. DCDR

Volunteers at the Downpatrick & County Down Railway in front of the Irish Traction Group's unrestored Córas Iompair Éireann B181 Class No. 190, built by General Motors in Illinois and one of several stored in the main line facilities at Moyasta, County Clare, which was delivered to Downpatrick on June 1, being started for the first time in preservation six days later. The railway identified the need to get a second air-braked locomotive into service to support its 141 class No. 146. DCDR

The railway was one of 231 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups in the UK to receive the prestigious award this year.

Challenging time

DCDR representatives will be receiving the award crystal and certificate in the coming months from Gawn Rowan-Hamilton, the Lord-Lieutenant of County Down, while two volunteers will attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

The flood recovery team guided Northern Ireland's only full-sized heritage railway through one of its most challenging periods. As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 313, the devastating floods hit on November 2, 2023, inundating Downpatrick after several consecutive nights of heavy rain that caused the River Quolie to burst its banks.

This wreaked havoc on the railway terminus, workshops, and historic carriage gallery. In the aftermath, the team led a complex reinstatement programme throughout 2024, reopening the line to the public in September 2024.

The judges commended the DCDR's ability to demonstrate teamwork, community impact, and resilience under pressure, highlighting how the railway's volunteers, trustees and part-time staff worked together as a unified social enterprise to safeguard the line's future.

Robert, who was shortlisted in the Leaders of the Year category in the Social Enterprise NI Awards, said: "Being Highly Commended in such a strong field is a huge honour and a real testament to what teamwork can achieve. Every single volunteer, trustee and supporter played their part in bringing this railway back from disaster.

"We went from flood damage to full reopening in under a year – that's an incredible achievement for any organisation, let alone one run almost entirely by volunteers. This award is a powerful recognition of every person who rolled up their sleeves and

Sentinel's brief main line outing as Plym Valley recovers once-abandoned railway vehicles from a Network Rail yard in Devon for preservation

By Owen Hayward

A TRIO of abandoned railway vehicles have been donated to the Plym Valley Railway in Devon – with the recovery of one seeing its Sentinel diesel make a brief appearance on main line metals.

Abandoned wagons are not an uncommon sight on the rail network; some end up being left behind through mechanical faults, such as hot axleboxes, that prevent any further movement, while others are stabled when the work for which they are used ends.

Network Rail's Tavistock Junction yard had been home to three railway vehicles, and many had wondered what the fate of these would be.

One of those to be saved is ZUA 'Shark' ballast plough brake van DB993840, which had been used for Cattewater scrap workings. These trips would see scrap wagons taken by a Class 09 locomotive out of the yard towards Plymouth Friary, where they would be loaded with scrap. Unable to run round, the stock would be propelled back with the brake van at the leading end, which would then be uncoupled and left in the yard when the wagons were collected.

The last of these scrap workings took place on July 3, 2009, and the Shark has remained at the end of one of the sidings ever since.

Special delivery

BR Mk. 1 'Super BG' (later NBA) No. 94540, meanwhile, was employed on the Royal Mail Travelling Post Office services, including the last such working into Penzance on January 10, 2004, after which it served a few further weeks in a 'van' set. Following the demise of these workings, No. 94540 and other vehicles were stored in the Tavistock Junction yard until being taken away for scrap. However, due to the discovery of nesting birds in the vehicle, No. 94540 could not be moved and was left behind, remaining there ever since.

On November 18, the Shark and NBA were collected and moved by Railway Support Services from the Junction to the PVR's base at Marsh Mills, which is just a short distance away and the route of which once connected to the yard directly.

The following day, Sentinel 4WDH No. 10077 was moved by road and

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The King's Award for Voluntary Service

helped rebuild, reopen and restore this railway for the community we serve."

"This commendation isn't just about getting trains running again – it's about people, purpose, and persistence. What we've achieved as a team proves that when you put community and collaboration at the heart of everything, you can overcome almost anything."

Passionate volunteer

One of the DCDR's youngest operational volunteers, Shea McKee, made the shortlist for Young Person of the Year.

"Since joining the railway, Shea has shown remarkable dedication to heritage engineering and visitor experience, helping to bridge the gap between generations of volunteers," said Robert. "His passion for developing the skills needed to maintain and operate historic rolling stock has made him an invaluable member of the team.

"His nomination highlighted how the DCDR's inclusive volunteer training programme creates pathways for young people to gain confidence, technical ability and teamwork experience within a social enterprise setting."

The Social Enterprise NI Awards is Northern Ireland's largest celebration of the social economy, recognising organisations that use business as a force for good. This year's ceremony, held in Belfast's Crowne Plaze Hotel, attracted record entries from every part of the sector.

GWR 0-4-2T No. 1466 starting its saviour Jon Barlow's farewell journey on November 22. FRANK DUMBLETON

Auto-tank heads farewell trip for the pioneer who saved it – and much more

ON Saturday, November 22, Didcot Railway Centre said farewell to Jon Barlow, one of the four 16-year-old schoolboys who in 1961 started the fund to preserve GWR 0-4-2T No. 1466, which blossomed into the Great Western Society and later the venue itself.

Jon sadly died on September 1, aged 80, and his ashes made their final journey behind none other than No. 1466 in the cold, driving rain.

The locomotive carried his initials and the figure 3, his Great Western Society membership number. It hauled auto-trailer No. 231, which was also preserved as a companion to No. 1466. As highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 337, No. 1466 returned to service for the first time since 2000 at Didcot's August bank holiday weekend event – a week before Jon died.

Achieving the impossible dream

Interviewed in 2008 for the BBC television programme The Last Days of Steam in the Timeshift series, Jon said of that decision by the four schoolboys to buy a steam locomotive: "We had no concept of the fact that, probably, what we were trying to do wasn't possible. Which is why we went on and did it."

This neatly encapsulates the go-getting attitude of teenagers in the 1960s – the reason that decade is fondly remembered for the breadth of its creative output. It also sums up the sector's now long-established principle that preservation is the art of the possible.

The Last Days of Steam programme has been broadcast many times, most recently on September 17 as part of the Railway 200 celebrations.

November 22 was also the day when names of members of the society who made a significant contribution and have recently died were unveiled on the memorial board. The names, with brief biographies, were read aloud by John O'Hagan, former deputy chairman of the GWS, and the service was conducted by the railway centre's chaplain, the Rev Fran Childs.

unloaded in the main line yard. There, it was used to retrieve MTA ballast wagon No. 395285, which had been laid up in a siding there since November 30, 2014, when it was removed from an engineering train travelling between Westbury Yard and Plymouth after sparks were discovered coming from it.

Yard shunter to main line

No. 10077 was built at the Rolls-Royce Shrewsbury works in 1961 and spent its working life at the Raisby Tarmac Quarry in County Durham. In 2002, it was preserved by the Durham Locomotive Preservation Group, first moving to the Weardale Railway before later relocating to the Locomotion museum at Shildon in 2011. Sold in 2014, it moved to the Wensleydale Railway before changing hands again and moving to Marsh Mills that same year.

A railway statement said: "The PVR would like to thank Morgan Sindall, Railway Support Services, Network Rail and DB Cargo for their conjoined efforts which have allowed the recovery and preservation of these vehicles. We will share our plans for these wagons in due course but are pleased to have them on site after many years in the yard."

BR Mk. 1 'Super BG' No. 94540 removed by road to its new Marsh Mills home. PVR

Sentinel 4WDH No. 10077 retrieving MTA ballast wagon No. 39528in Tavistock Junction yard.PVR

Help L&B return First World War survivor *Axe* to steam

By Robin Jones

THE Lynton & Barnstaple Railway has launched an appeal for the overhaul of First World War Kerr Stuart 0-6-0T *Axe*.

A Joffre class locomotive, No. 2451 of 1915 dropped its fire for the last time after the Remembrance Day service for local schools on November 11, 2024, when its boiler ticket expired and has since waited its turn in the overhaul queue at Woody Bay.

Axe was part of a batch of 30 ordered by the French government in February 1915 for service on the Western Front. The name of the class came from the French commander-in-chief.

When the French were forced to concentrate on the defence of Verdun in February 1916, the British took over the front line section north of the Somme, the scene of the devastating battle which began on July 1. British forces inherited three operational 600mm gauge light railways built by the French to supply food and munitions to troops on the front line because horses and solid-tyred lorries would become bogged down in the mud. The military railways bequeathed to the British in the valley of the Somme came with wagons and locomotives, probably including No. 2451.

After the war, No. 2451 was used in reconstruction work on the former battlefields of north-eastern France and then entered industrial service. It ended its working life in a large stone quarry at Marquise Rinxent, in Pas de Calais, where it joined four sister locomotives.

In 1956, a party of visiting British enthusiasts discovered all five abandoned in the quarry, and they were eventually repatriated to the UK in 1974. No. 2451 was purchased for the revived L&BR in 1983 and christened *Axe,* in the L&B tradition of naming engines after three-letter Devon rivers.

It was restored for operational use initially by volunteers and then at the Gartell Light Railway, where it was fitted with a new boiler supplied by Israel Newton. On November 11, 2008, the 90th anniversary of the Armistice, *Axe* was dedicated by the Bishop of Exeter, the Rt Rev Michael Langrish, to all those who served on the Western Front railways. It entered service at Woody Bay in March 2009.

Until the boiler is lifted out, the engineering department will not know exactly what repairs are required, but because *Axe* has been well-maintained, it is not thought that much work will be needed. Among the expected jobs required are replacing the boiler tubes, stripping down and refurbishing the running gear, and improving the pipework in the cab.

Axe is not powerful enough to pull four of the rebuilt original Lynton & Barnstaple carriages up the 1-in-50 gradient from Killington Lane, but it remains invaluable out of the main summer season, not least of all for Remembrance Services.

***Axe*'s last day in operation on November 11, 2024, after the schools' Remembrance Day service at Woody Bay.** TONY NICHOLSON/L&BR

A special episode of the L&BR's YouTube video Steam On The Moor was shown at a members' forum in Lynton on November 8 when the appeal was launched.

Contributions towards returning *Axe* to service in the form of regular donations or a single payment are invited, to be made to the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust at Woody Bay Station, Parracombe, North Devon EX31 4RA or online at www.lynton-rail.co.uk/project-axe. Rewards are offered for larger donations: for donations of more than £2000, gold donors will get their name on a plaque on *Axe*, behind-the-scenes updates before everyone else, exclusive access to see progress at the Woody Bay workshop, and the opportunity to travel behind *Axe* before it returns to public service.

For donations of more than £1000, the silver level offers behind-the-scenes updates and access to workshop progress, while bronze, for donations of £500-plus, offers updates before everyone else.

Right: Visiting DC Rail Class 56 No. 56045, recently repainted into original BR blue livery and suitably adorned with a wreath, is seen piloting home-based Class 25 No. 25262 and the 11.20am Buckfastleigh-Totnes Riverside service alongside the River Dart at Hood Bridge on Remembrance Sunday, November 9, the second day of the well-supported South Devon Railway Diesel Gala. RUSSELL AYRE

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Preserved Merseyrail EMU back on the third rail!

By Robin Jones

THE Class 507 Preservation Society's Merseyrail EMU No. 507001 has run for the first time since it was acquired by the group.

The unit was driven along train builder Alstom's test track on November 18 at Litchurch Lane in Derby, powered from the energised third rail.

Since welcoming about 6000 visitors on board No. 507001 during Alstom's The Greatest Gathering event held on August 1-3, society volunteers have been working hard to prepare the unit for this, its next heritage era landmark. The milestone was passed when No. 507001 made several faultless journeys under its own power along the test track.

The Class 507 fleet served Merseyside for more than 46 years, carrying the last passenger on November 28, 2024. A week later, an empty stock move of Nos. 507003 and 507029 marked the last time that Class 507 units operated under their own power on the national network.

After delays due to flooding and then a landslide, the society took ownership of No. 507001 in January, moving it to Derby for the Railway 200 event. Visitors were able to have a pit tour beneath the unit and sit in the driver's seat of the train, which carried Queen Elizabeth II when she opened the Merseyrail network.

Not content for their unit to be a static exhibit, the volunteers have been working hard to keep it in operational condition. Since August, a whole range of on-board systems have been tested to prove that the unit is safe to operate.

At 1.30pm, the brakes were released, and the power controller was put into notch one, drawing power for the first time in more than a year. The train then travelled the full length of the track at 5mph, stopping exactly as planned – passing its first set of tests.

A range of tests were also carried out on the traction and braking systems as speed was gradually increased to 20mph, making No. 507001 the fastest preserved EMU in the UK.

Society chairman Robert Hampton said: "The test track run proves our determination that – contrary to what some naysayers believe – No. 507001 will not be 'stuffed and mounted' but preserved as a living, working train.

"The run is a testament to our hard-working volunteers, as well as to the work of those who created the PEP family of trains in the 1970s. Their design has truly stood the test of time."

Class 507 EMU No. 507001 shunting at Alstom's Litchurch Lane plant. C507PS

Head of operations Jake D'Arcy said: "The support afforded to us by Alstom's operations team and all the staff at Litchurch Lane has been fantastic.

"While on the test track, the test team drivers reported that the train performed well, although they were slightly bemused by our old train which features both a power and a brake handle – in stark contrast to the state-of-the-art traction that they drive on a day-to-day basis. Our own team of engineering and operations specialists worked collaboratively with Alstom for this to happen, and I would like to thank everyone for their efforts."

The society is now looking to the future, with more testing planned, potentially utilising the full capabilities of the test track, as well as continuing to be used as a training tool for engineering apprentices and graduates while in Derby.

The society was formed in November 2024, and No. 507001 was donated to it by Angel Trains for a token £1.

Following the withdrawal of the Class 313 fleet in 2023, the members of the 507 fleet were the oldest units operating on the main line until their withdrawal in 2024. Following its introduction in 1978, it is estimated that No. 507 001 has travelled more than five million miles.

Live the dream and drive trains at HRA's 2025 Railway of the Year!

THE Lappa Valley Railway is offering the job opportunity to become a train driver.

The attraction at St Newlyn East, near Newquay, is looking to appoint a full-time railway operations assistant – a position which includes driving trains across its 15in, 10 ¼in and 7¼in gauge railways.

As highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 329, the line, which occupies a section of the former GWR Newquay to Chacewater branch, was named Railway of the Year in the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2025. Attracting more than 100,000 visitors annually, in June 2024 it celebrated its 50th birthday.

Operations director Ben Harding said: "The year 2025 has been incredible for Lappa Valley, with a record numbers of visitors. We are looking to evolve and expand our team in anticipation of another period of growth.

"As well as driving regular services throughout the year, the successful applicant will also help maintain our fleet of 13 locomotives, passenger carriages, various wagons and over two-and-a-half miles of railway. This is a year-round position for an established and successful business and although we are looking for someone with experience, we will provide in-house training."

A railway operations assistant at the Lappa Valley Railway fills the coal bunker on the line's flagship locomotive, 1974-built Severn Lamb 0-6-4T *Zebedee*. LVR

The railway has been named as one of the top tourist attractions in the Cornwall Tourism Awards for four years in a row.

➜ Full details of the job and how to apply can be found at Lappavalley.co.uk/work

Topping-out ceremony for new Apedale museum

THE Moseley Railway Trust has passed a landmark stage developing its new museum at next to the Apedale Valley Light Railway in Staffordshire.

Planned to open in 2026, the museum has now reached the topping-out stage, meaning the building has reached its maximum vertical extent.

The museum will complement the AVLR, operated by the trust using historic steam and diesel locomotives.

To mark this achievement, the trust hosted the Mayor of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Coun Robert Bettley-Smith, and Mayoress Mrs Judy Bettley-Smith to the site on November 1.

The mayor said: "I am delighted to be here celebrating the topping-out ceremony. What has been achieved here is truly amazing, as are the plans for the future.

"The museum, which I believe will be world-class, will be a centre of excellence for the study and display of narrow gauge railways.

"We are so fortunate to have the AVLR in our borough as, apart from the proposed world-class museum, the railway already offers rides and entertainment for families."

Simon Lomax, acting trust co-chairman, added: "We still have a lot of work to do to transform this building into an actual museum. Some of that work is physical, but much is to harness the creativity and insights of our membership to bring this project to life.

"We are actively seeking the support of local businesses and our local supporters to complete this transformational project".

The trust is seeking donations and other support to ensure that the fitting-out process can be carried out to the highest possible standards It can be contacted via www.avlr.org.uk.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Mayor Coun Robert Bettley-Smith speaking at the topping-out ceremony for the new Moseley Railway Trust building. MRT

Members of the RPSI site squad from Whitehead who laid the track in Omagh on November 4. From left, with the completed memorial panel, are David Linton, Gordon Hunt, Peter Lindsay, Colin Stewart, Roy Thompson, George Smyth, Dermot Mackie and David Orr. RPSI

RPSI president Dr Joan Smyth is presented with a Civic Recognition certificate by Coun Barry McElduff, chairman of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, in the company of RPSI site officer Dermot Mackie. RPSI

RPSI lays track panel to remember fatal Omagh tragedy 75 years later

By Robin Jones

THE Railway Preservation Society of Ireland has been presented with a Civic Recognition certificate for its contribution to the Omagh Heritage Railway Memorial Project marking the exact 75th anniversary of a tragic accident in which five workers lost their lives.

The presentation took place on November 24 prior to a remembrance service at the memorial in Omagh which honours the memory of the five victims, and which was attended by more than 200 people.

The RPSI built a six-metre panel of Great Northern Railway (Ireland) track as the centrepiece of the newly improved memorial garden, funded by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, at James Street on the site of the original stationmaster's house and in the shadow of the bypass road which now runs along the route of the Derry Road through Omagh. The certificate, issued by the council, was presented to RPSI president Dr Joan Smyth by the local authority's chairman, Coun Barry McElduff, who expressed gratitude to the society and the role it played in marking the anniversary of the accident. A late-running Derry to Belfast train hit a gang of permanent way workers, local men John Cassidy, John Cleary, John McClory, Dan McCrory and Charles Flanagan, at Omagh station after a dense fog descended. They did not see or hear the incoming train bound for Belfast because of the noise of the Enniskillen train idling in the station.

Two of the workers died instantly, two more succumbed to their injuries later that day, and Mr Flanagan died the following morning. Their deaths left 19 children without fathers.

Dr Smyth said it had been an honour for the society to be involved, and that it is keen to preserve and pass on to a new generation skills such as track laying and locomotive engineering.

RPSI site officer Dermot Mackie said he was proud of the way his team had delivered the project, which involved assembling and laying chaired wooden sleepers and rail on a bed of ballast at the memorial site.

"It's gratifying for us as railway enthusiasts to be able to restore this short section of the Derry Road as the line from Portadown to Londonderry was known," he said.

"As well as paying tribute to the men who died, we hope this display will remind upcoming generations of the important role Omagh once played in the railway network."

Back into view

In the 25 years since the original memorial was built, it had become obscured from view, but local volunteers, including Mark McGrath and Paddy Hunter, led the restoration project.

All the track materials were genuine GNR(I) items from Whitehead and rails had originally been recovered from the Derry Road line which served Omagh and closed in February 1965.

Descendants of the victim called forward one by one to lay single white roses on a memorial plaque installed 25 years ago to mark the 50th anniversary.

Coun McElduff said the ceremony provided a chance to pause and reflect on the lasting impact that the loss of the five lives. After the speeches, two members of the clergy from the Omagh Churches Forum gave a blessing and said prayers for the families of those involved in the accident and those who came to their aid.

Music was provided by St Eugene's Brass and Reed Band, which played at the funeral services for the deceased in 1950. Among the present-day members of the band is Tony McGartland, author of the book Omagh Railway Station – A Journey Through Time.

More than 200 people, including specially invited members of the RPSI site squad, attended the ceremony, and the event was covered by UTV and BBC Northern Ireland, along with local newspapers.

Before the ceremony, the RPSI squad was entertained to a light lunch hosted by Coun McElduff at the Strule Arts Centre in Omagh.

White roses laid by relatives of the five tragedy victims on the memorial plaque. RPSI

The memorial panel completed with memorial sign. RPSI

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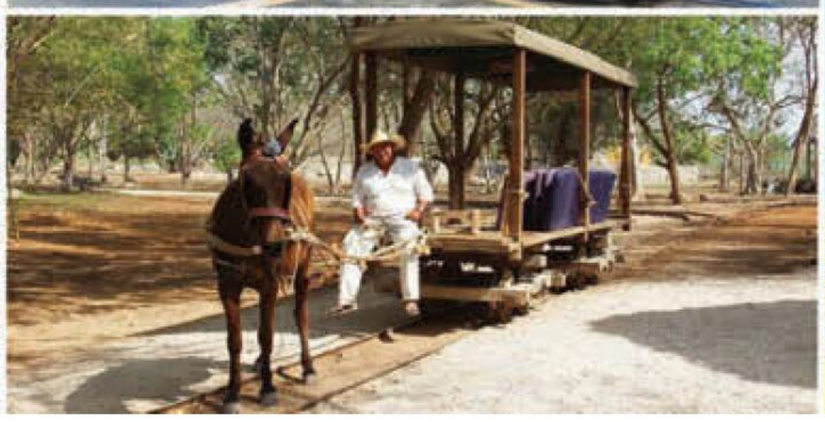

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March, 28 to April 10	China in your Hand
April, 6 to 15	Vintage Puglia
April, 17 to 27	Galician Paradores
April, 29 to May 7	Trieste, Ljubljana and Lake Bled - by Private Train
May, 1 to 5	Slovenia One More Time - Maximum Power
May, 7 to 14	Railway Ramble - Tamega and Chaves
May 28 to June 4	Rotterdam and Dordt Steam Festival
May 28 to June 10	Great Canadian Rail Adventure
June, 5 to 12	Central Wales – Trains, Ales and Gardens
June, 12 to 16	Portmeirion and Railways of Snowdonia
June, 12 to 20	Scenic Railways of Asturias and Basque
June, 13 to 27	Gorgeous Georgia
June, 19 to 28	Classic Bulgaria and the Cherry Festival
June 26 to July 6	Southern France and the Pyrenees
June, 27 to Jul 4	The Stunning Railways of Norway
June 30 to July 9	Denmark and Northern Germany
July 2 to 11	Poland with Petras
July, 10 to 22	Rail & Natural Wonders of Alaska
July, 15 to 29	By Train to the Midnight Sun
August, 7 to 14	Railways of Estonia
Sept, 3 to 10	Magical Romania
Sept, 10 to 17	Vintage Port
Sept, 11 to 21	Berlin, Dresden and the Harz Mountains
Sept, 17 to 26	Vintage Baltics
September TBC	Portugal CP tour - Vouga and Beira Alta
September TBC	West Country Food and Wine
Oct, 2 to 8	Pisa and Corsica - Unescorted
Oct, 3 to 23	USA Western States
Oct, 4 to 11	Classic Montenegro
Oct, 7 to 15	Undiscovered Bulgaria Autumn Colours
Oct, 7 to 17	Rail Wonders of Sardinia
Oct, 15 to 22	The Railways Around Bilbao
Oct, 15 to 22	Undiscovered Portugal
Nov, TBC	Mexico

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HAPPY VALLEY (WITH CAREFUL PLANNING)

There's no doubt that larger heritage lines face greater challenges, particularly when costs are rising and visitors are seeking greater value for money. Severn Valley Railway managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster explained to Owen Hayward about the importance of making practical business decisions to steer the railway without being heavily swayed by emotion.

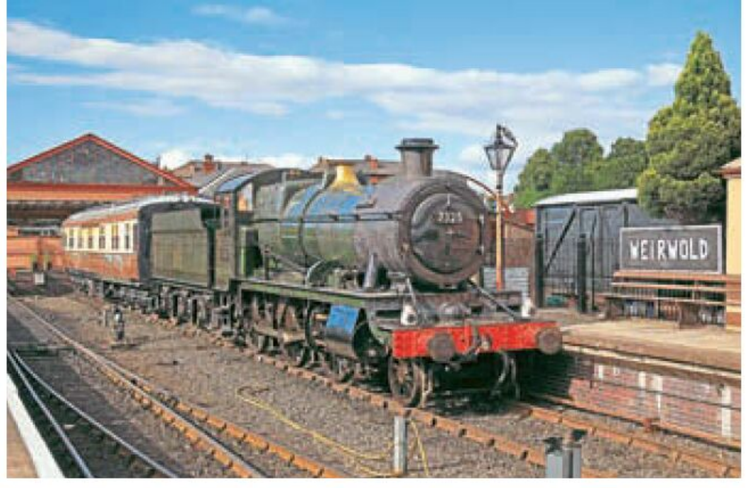
There's no denying that the Severn Valley Railway's 60th anniversary year has been eventful – 2025 had only just begun when news came in of the embankment collapse at Mor Brook, which severed the line between Eardington Halt and the main engineering hub at Bridgnorth. A gargantuan effort following this saw the full line reopened in style on July 25 with the visit of LNER A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. Before that, the railway also hosted the public launch of the Railway 200 exhibition train *Inspiration,* and its own events have gone from strength to strength. The railway is a vastly improved position compared to that of 2023, when a £1.5 million survival fund appeal was launched as it struggled to balance declining passenger numbers with rapidly rising costs.

Despite the initial setback brought about by the unexpected dividing of the line, managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster is pretty satisfied with how the SVR's diamond jubilee year has gone.

"The Mor Brook landslip in January was our all-consuming focus for much of it," he said. "To rectify it in just six months was quite an achievement and I'm really pleased it proved some of the doubters wrong when we stated our target.

"It did, however, hit us quite hard. Even though we still had 12 miles of railway available to operate, I think the perception in many places was that the railway was closed, despite what we'd said right from the outset – that we'd still operate those 12 miles.

BR 4MT No. 75069 begins to climb Eardington Bank on April 19, 2024. Along with other Grouping era vehicles, the rake of LNER teak carriages is, Jonathan believes, one of the railway's strong selling points and more will be made of these in the railway's future marketing. OWEN HAYWARD



Above: Is GWR 4300 class 2-6-0 No. 7325 on the cards to return to steam once more (News, page 21)? Last operational in August 2000, it would prove an economical choice for the railway's services and something a little different to otherwise more common classes of locomotives found running on UK heritage lines. SVR

Left: One of the sights the SVR can accurately portray is that of a LMS locomotive on matching stock. On April 18, 2024, LMS Stanier mogul No. 13268 works a 10-coach train of LMS vehicles towards Bewdley Tunnel. OWEN HAYWARD

"Despite the fact most family visitors don't necessarily come to travel to Bridgnorth – many start at Kidderminster and go to the Engine House at Highley – we still saw quite a reduced footfall through that period. That's why we went for such a high-profile reopening with *Flying Scotsman*, because we wanted to get the message out there that we were fully open. Coming as it did at the start of the school summer holidays, we didn't want that to get 'lost in translation.'

"This meant August numbers came back quite nicely; in fact, we were almost on a par with last year, which was really good. The *Flying Scotsman* reopening weekend was particularly strong, selling out within minutes of tickets going on sale. Now, though, we are looking to build ourselves back up to where we started from.

"The steam gala was a big part of that as it's our biggest enthusiast event of the year and led into a diesel event, Halloween, and then of course Christmas, all of which are also key events for us."

Innovation and partnerships

Those events are among the vital ways of addressing one of the biggest challenges facing the sector at the moment. As has been cited many times by numerous railways, reliance on the 'traditional' audience is no longer a viable means of operation. It may not appease the purist type amid railway enthusiasts, but innovation and appealing to new markets is essential.

"The whole movement is currently at a bit of a crossroads. We must apply ourselves to new markets. Looking around at the moment, it's encouraging to see that some lines are doing just that, and we are starting to see a positive response to it. I don't think the future for heritage railways is a massive concern as long as we continue to adapt and, most importantly, remain relevant. We've been relevant almost by default for the first 50 years because of a generational connection to steam, but that isn't something we can depend on any more. We need to move ahead and constantly look at what we need to be to remain relevant.

"Steam finished in general usage in 1968 – that's now 57 years ago, so the large numbers of people who had that lifetime connection are getting older or are sadly no longer with us. The days of heritage railways and even other types of heritage attractions getting several hundreds of thousands of visitors a year just because you're running steam trains is no longer viable.

"That doesn't mean to say that steam is dead – of course it isn't – but what it does mean is that you must appeal to a different audience, and they are, in my opinion and experience, people who don't necessarily have an interest in railways at all.

"We can see there is still a buoyant interest in railways in this country, but it's a much broader one than just steam trains. This is why we've done events such as the Boogie Lights Express, effectively a disco on rails. That was a new venture in the spring and massively well-received. We found that 95% of the people there had never been to a heritage railway before. That is the trick – to use your railway as a venue. Obviously, you use your trains at the centre of it but put things on to get people in who may not be interested in railways and who – once they have experienced what is on offer – will tell friends and family and so are likely to come back again. We can't rest on our laurels and expect that to happen. We must go and actively look at what market segments we can pitch to and broaden our appeal.

"We are seeing encouraging signs. We are doing a lot of children's character visits, dance weekends... if you look through our calendar you'll see things that might not, on the face of it, appear to be linked to a heritage railway, but we have a 16-mile-long venue, and by spreading things across it, people will want to travel on the train to experience it all, even if they're not particularly interested in the trains.

"Hopefully, this helps build that experience for them and generally, it does seem to be the case. The feedback we get is very positive."

Of course, building your audience is one thing, but maintaining your railway to serve it is another. Forming partnerships with other organisations can bring about a number of benefits to suit both parties, and the SVR witnessed this first-hand following the Mor Brook slip.

"We are looking carefully our five-year strategy through to 2031, and educational outreach and diversification form part of that. In 2024, we started a partnership with

A popular locomotive from the SVR's fleet is Ivatt Class 4MT 2-6-0 No. 43106, which was withdrawn in January 2024 and is seen here at Orchard Crossing on October 25, 2017. There is no plan for an overhaul to commence, but it will soon be going into the Engine House at Highley for static display, proving that static locomotives have a beneficial use. MARTYN TATTAM

A view which has drastically changed since it was taken on April 19, 2024: No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* starts away from the speed restriction at Sterns. Just out of sight behind the train is Mor Brook, which suffered an embankment collapse in January 2025, and which was rebuilt in just six months, thanks in part to the many partnerships the SVR has with the wider rail industry. OWEN HAYWARD

Network Rail which is really productive and beneficial to both parties. We work closely with the wider national rail industry too, because we can provide services when we have infrastructure, assets, and workshop space available which doesn't compromise our own requirements. We use our main line connection both internally and externally to the optimum, too.

"We work with groups physically to train operatives on vehicles; we have people from all walks of life to train with hands-on practical experiences, such as seeing how mechanical interlocking works or testing brand-new, state-of-the-art equipment. Heritage lines should, I think, be considered a part of the whole UK rail industry – we're not some little show on the side. Most of the legislation that applies to the main line rail network applies to us also, so it makes sense to work within that industry as far as we can.

"As we've discovered over the last few years, we can do a lot in partnership, and they get as much out of it as we do. It's a virtuous thing, and I do believe you benefit from being a part of the wider industry. It might not suit every railway, but it's worked for us.

"Mor Brook, in the worst of circumstances, showed us the power of those relationships because we received great support from the industry, be it detailed advice on how to address it or firms giving their staff volunteering days to help with the repair work."

Striking the balance

As well as meeting the expectations of an ever-changing audience demographic, the other big challenge facing heritage railways is the sharp rise in base operating costs. Cutting trains may save money on fuel, but it can have a detrimental effect on the product you offer in the long term.

"There are many positive things that need to happen, and this being more relevant is only a part of that, but there are some warning signs that we would be unwise to ignore," Jonathan continued. "If you run a railway like this simply on emotion, you will fail. I've been involved here for more than 30 years and that much is very clear to me.

"It would be very easy to make emotional decisions as that's how we are all invested in it, not just in the time and money we give, but you have to take a step back and think that the railway has got to be relevant and viable – and viable means financially so. Sometimes we must take decisions that in our heart of hearts we don't want, but you can't let your heart rule your head.

"We celebrated our 60th anniversary in 2025, and while some of the founder members are still with us, the rest of us have a profound obligation that what they started remains relevant and viable for another 60 years."

Much focus in the sector has been on building a timetable to suit the passenger numbers you realistically expect to see travel so as not to run 'fresh air' trains which result in unnecessary wear and tear on rolling stock and infrastructure. "We run all sizes of trains, depending on what we forecast needing," Jonathan explained. "Sometimes it will be a DMU, at other times a four or five-coach diesel-hauled train. Then, when it gets busy, it could be a seven, eight or nine-coach train behind a larger steam locomotive. That does mean we need a variety of locomotives to put out trains suitable for the number of visitors we expect to see. We wouldn't just blanket say a train will be steam-hauled all the time – we play to what we know.

"The first train out of Kidderminster being steam-hauled works because that is our busiest train – it's our highest footfall station, so we can justify that decision. With the other trains, we tend to play about with how many carriages they have and what motive power we use. This means we regularly need some Class 4 or 5 locomotives (such as Nos. 75069, 13268 and 4930) because they can handle more or less anything we operate, but we don't need to use them all of the time, so we also need the likes of Nos. 7714 and 1501. They're smaller locos, but versatile ones, so there's actually not much we can't do with them.

"It's not all about having a named locomotive on long trains – it's as much about some of the other things as well. We've also got the smaller locomotives, such as Nos. 1450 and 813. People say they're not much use to the SVR, but actually, they are. No. 1450 with the autotrailers is perfect for low season activity, while No. 813 on four GWR Toplights is an experience in itself. Those two will come into their own now we have them back in service.

"Running a steam-hauled service from Bridgnorth at the start of the day is quite challenging as we don't get the same footfall there as Kidderminster, but visitors still like to see steam starting there. We've found it is clearly viable to have that on Saturdays during the operating season as that is generally our busier day, but these two smaller locomotives will allow us to have a low season service which wouldn't otherwise be viable from there. They both have interesting stories – No. 813 has a unique history all of its own, while No. 1450 and the autotrain is a quirky thing, and people love that. We won't flog them to death, but we will lean on their marketing when we do use them. There's all sorts of things we can do with them, and we are thinking more carefully as to how they fit both commercially and into the visitor experience."

The right locomotives

When it comes to fixed costs, coal is currently a hot topic, but without a locomotive in which to burn it, it becomes moot. However, steam locomotive overhauls are increasingly more expensive as they age or when past cost-saving measures begin to bring about consequences.

"When you talk about overhauling steam locomotives, you'll never really get any or much change from £500,000 – even if it's one that doesn't need much doing to it. For the more comprehensive ones, it can be well over the £1 million mark, and you find you have to ask for all the steam locomotives currently in existence in the UK, is it actually viable for them to all be continuously operational? I can tell you the answer – no – certainly not in my opinion.

"There are several factors behind this: the skills by which to conduct the overhaul, the materials required, and the costs involved all mean that it won't be possible to keep everything operational. We've seen other lines developing visitor centres primarily to provide an additional attraction but also as a means to keep what are very expensive and complicated assets essentially in stasis so

Above: Set to make its preservation debut in 2026, GWR large prairie No. 4150 is nearing the end of restoration from Barry scrapyard condition at Bridgnorth. As costs for restoration and overhauls continue to rise, this is likely to be the last such restoration the SVR undertakes. JOHN TITLOW

Right: Visiting for the autumn steam gala, Merchant Navy No. 35006 *Peninsular & Orient S. N. Co.* climbs Eardington bank with a rake of mixed GWR carriages, some of which date back to 1912. OWEN HAYWARD

On May 15, 2025, No. 50035 *Ark Royal,* one of the SVR's residing fleet of diesel locomotives, passes Orchard Crossing during the annual Spring Diesel Festival. KENNY FELSTEAD

The SVR is home to a plethora of diesel locomotive classes, ranging from early to late BR, and includes the likes of BR Class 52 D1048 *Western Lady* (left), which is currently awaiting restoration, and Class 20 No. 20048 (centre), along with several Class 50 locomotives such as that on the right. OWEN HAYWARD

Carrying a representation of its NCB Backworth livery, No. 813 (as NCB No. 11) heads a Highley shuttle away from Bewdley on September 20, 2025. As with No. 1450, this is another small locomotive with an interesting story that can help with the broader interpretation of railway history being told to visitors. OWEN HAYWARD

GWR 1400 0-4-2T No. 1450 propels its autocoach out of Highley on September 18, 2025. While limited in operational suitability, its branch line connotations, including autotrain working, offers an interesting story to tell visitors and makes overhauling locomotives like it a viable decision in terms of interpreting the history of this former GWR branch. OWEN HAYWARD

they don't deteriorate. In some cases, these are locomotives that won't ever steam again, but they perform a really valuable function because people can get up close in a safe environment.

"That's probably quite an important thing. Some of us are at an age where we can remember walking around a locomotive yard unimpeded at a heritage railway – I certainly did – but we can't do that now. The way you address that appetite is to provide a safe space in which they can do so. This has the benefit of keep these locomotives in reasonable condition so that if and when the time ever comes when you do think it can be overhauled, you're not starting with basket case, which you would have been in the past, when they were all kept outside in the rain for years on end.

"We saw this with locomotives such as No. 75069 and *Hagley Hall* – they were both massive rebuilds.

"We must be realistic beyond this, too – the number of serviceable locomotives in the sector will probably reduce and a core fleet of known condition will establish itself that will continue to be put through the works, because their ongoing overhauls will be quantifiable and affordable.

"We are coming to the end of a major restoration of large Prairie No. 4150, which will be the last ex-Barry locomotive we return to steam. It's in the final throes of work at the moment and we are looking forward to seeing it enter service next year, but we are unlikely to ever carry out something requiring that extent of work again.

"It's very clear to me that the cost of doing such things is disproportionate; you can't recover your investment in these locomotives over the course of their 10-year cycle just from the farebox revenue. That is the stark reality of things at the moment, and we need to accept that there are probably locomotives that will never steam again – or if they do, it will only be because of a very generous bequest to finance it.

"That's not to say they won't prove useful in other ways – you can still use them positively for other means, such as education. Having steam locomotives you can get close to and that tell stories from the Industrial Revolution to the present day are all part of broadening our appeal, and we are very much starting to get our educational programme back up and running again. Schools and colleges are really looking for partnership organisations like us, where they can bring students to see things live and not just in textbooks."

Future overhauls

With that in mind, what lies ahead for the SVR's steam fleet? While you might expect the choices to only fulfil the requirement of what meets the operational needs, the reality might be slightly more reassuring.

"You need some marquee locomotives that attract people," Jonathan pointed out, "and *Hagley Hall* is regarded as our flagship for a number of reasons, but we don't use it extensively so as not to flog it to death.

"We really majored on it in August when we reopened the railway in full; as the busiest time in terms of visitor numbers, that was the best time to make full use of it. You don't push it all of the time; otherwise, it's no longer special.

"We will probably do more to push that for the casual visitor in future.

"No. 7714 is currently nearing the end of its boiler ticket, so we are actively looking at No. 1501 coming back to replace it. That's had some preliminary work done already, which has been paused while we finish some of the other projects, but it will restart, and so that will be the next one to enter the workshops.

"*Taw Valley* is now partway through its overhaul and should be back in steam again; we have a great relationship with the owners, but obviously it's definitely a locomotive better suited to high days and events. It's good to have a locomotive which can wow people, but they all have their place. There's nothing in our collection which I don't think we couldn't really use, but the smaller locomotives are perhaps coming more into their own – for some of the reasons I've outlined.

"Then, of course, you've got the new-build 3MT No. 82045 which, one might say, is the perfect locomotive for any heritage railway. I'm really excited to see that; whenever I'm showing people around, I take them into the workshops and ask them how old they think it is. They're always amazed when you reveal it's actually brand-new and being built from scratch in our works by a team of volunteers.

"The 2857 Group are really pushing on with the overhaul of that 2-8-0; that's being partly done through subcontractors and our own internal resources. It's quite popular with our volunteers and, despite being a sizeable locomotive, it is very economical to run, perhaps on a par with a Manor if handled carefully. It ticks all those boxes; plus, for storytelling, it covers the movement of

freight by rail, having been built as a goods locomotive. The aspiration for that is to have it running again by 2030, which seems a long way off but is anything but!

"After that though, it's not yet fully decided. There are quite a few locomotives to pick from. No. 75069 doesn't have much longer left and is due to be withdrawn in 2028, so we'll need to consider what we do. Given it had such an extensive overhaul last time round, it's unlikely to need an awful lot doing to it to get it out again. Speculating based on practicality, I would say it stands a good chance of a relatively quick turnaround, subject to all the usual caveats. In the background, you've got the Erlestoke Manor Fund beavering away with another large prairie – No. 5164 – at Tyseley Locomotive Works. We'll be doing the boiler for that at Bridgnorth and so at some point in the coming years I'd expect that to appear here.

"We are three years into the boiler ticket on *Hagley Hall*; there's no way we're not going to push that through when its time comes. It was done to possibly the highest standards we've ever done here, and we are very confident in the level of workmanship. We won't work it hard, so when the time comes, it will definitely go round again fairly quickly.

"There are a couple of locomotives stored that – certainly in terms of their practical use – would be good to see done, such as LMS Ivatt Class 2 No. 46443. Another which people are enthusiastic about is GWR 4300 class mogul No. 7325. Both of these are perfect for a railway of this size. The only challenge is that when they were overhauled last, they were done to a standard that applied at the time, which was in a period when many locomotives were entering service but perhaps without receiving the extent of work that we see now.

"That's not a criticism of the standards and work done in the past, but things were different then. When you do a light overhaul to bring something back into service quickly, which is what happened to No. 46443, then at the next overhaul, the work it will require will be even greater. As we are now in a position where we have locomotives coming out of heavy overhauls, we know the next time round they'll likely need less doing, so all the economic factors point to putting them through again because they're already at a higher standard.

"No. 7325 has now moved to Bridgnorth for an assessment to be carried out to ascertain its condition and estimate what it would cost to bring it back into service (News, page 21). From there we hope to come up with a plan with its owner, the Great Western (SVR) Association, about the future possibilities, but there's no commitment yet. I'd be surprised if nothing came of it, though."

Above: Set to enter the workshops in 2026, the overhaul of unique Hawksworth 1500 class pannier No. 1501 will see it replace 5700 class 0-6-0PT No. 7714 when that comes out of service in the coming years. KENNY FELSTEAD

Right: Trying out new events to attract different audiences is essential to ensuring the railway's continued success. The Boogie Lights Express is one such example, which is a development of the illumination trains that have become popular on heritage railways in recent years. SVR

Standing out

The choice of locomotives such as No. 7325 plays in to one major marketing strategy – identifying what makes you unique – and there are several areas in which the SVR can boast being so.

"A heritage railway is a time capsule, and we are very fortunate in having an almost unparalleled collection of vintage carriages. I think those are probably our greatest strength because you really are travelling back in time, seeing a prewar GWR carriage, LNER teak saloon or LMS corridor third. We are going to make much more of that in terms of how we market the railway.

"Many railways rely on Mk. 1s and we do have two sets of them, but the experience of travelling in a full rake of prewar GWR carriages behind *Hagley Hall* is something truly great – similarly too is No. 1450 on an autotrain. These are all compartments in time, and I think we need to market the whole product, not just what the locomotive might be. When I talk to visitors, it is clear that the locomotive choice is not upmost in their concerns. It's the whole atmosphere – the stations, the rolling stock – and their interpretation of what it means to them. There's a lesson in that because I think heritage railways can be guilty of forcing their particular interpretation on the customer... this is our product and that's it. Actually, a visitor's interpretation will likely be completely different to mine, but there's nothing wrong with either – you will still get your enjoyment out of the SVR but in a different way to me.

"As long as we can create that environment where people do have an immersive experience and take from it what they want, that's doing good. It can be grandparents reminiscing to their grandchildren about *Flying Scotsman* or people who were born and brought up in the late BR era and recollect what they travelled to school on – it doesn't matter what your connection is, that's good, but we want to get out there, reach that wider audience, and convince them that what we offer is a great, immersive experience.

"It's not a phrase I'm normally keen on, but you need to find your unique selling points and really go with them. We push locomotives such as the Stanier Mogul because of this; there are plenty of BR standards and LMS 'Black Fives' about at the moment – not that there's anything wrong with either, of course, but you always have to look at what you can do to draw people in, and this includes capitalising on your unique assets. You may be able to ride behind a Manor on several other lines, but you can only do that with a rake of GWR coaches here. Find what sets you apart from any other heritage attraction anywhere else." HR

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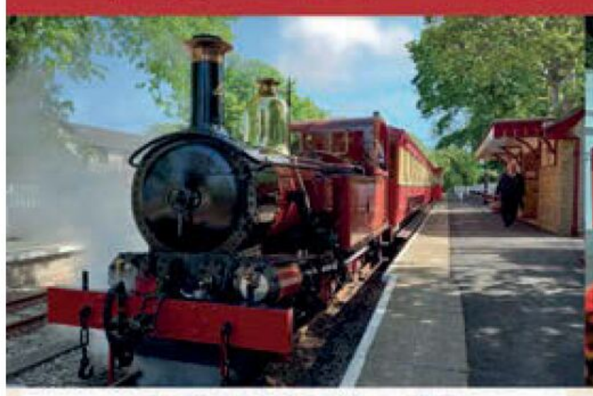

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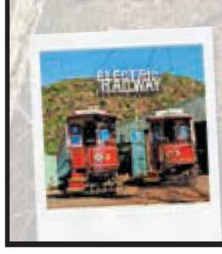

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On November 29, No. 60532 *Blue Peter* crosses the Forth Bridge with a Steam Dreams circular tour to Dunfermline City from Edinburgh. The tour began in London two days before and returned there the following afternoon, forming part of a long weekend in Scotland with the BR(E) A2 Pacific to visit the city's Christmas markets. DAVE COLLIER

Awkward Week adventure!

UK Railtours has once again planned a tour for the week between Christmas and New Year, on Tuesday, December 30 titled 'A Simple Awkward Week Adventure.'

Starting from Peterborough behind a Class 37, the tour will take the East Coast Main Line to pick up additional passengers at Stevenage, Potters Bar and Finsbury Park. Taking the line via the now-closed Primrose Hill station to pick up the West Coast Main Line, the tour will head to Willesden and negotiate the various lines via the Kew triangle and on to the Southern Region.

Following the final passenger pick-up at London Victoria, the tour will head via Clapham Junction to East Croydon and Purley, and then on to the branch to Caterham. Following a reversal at Caterham, the train is planned to return to Purley and take yet another branch to Tattenham Corner. Heading back toward Croydon, the tour is scheduled to take the branch towards East Grinstead, before returning to Hurst Green and heading to Uckfield.

Retracing steps

After a brief pause at Uckfield, the tour retrace the route to the ECML via Clapham Junction, Gospel Oak and Harringay Curve. This return trip avoids London Victoria and Finsbury Park, so for those passengers who boarded there, the train will stop at Kensington Olympia for them to alight there. Heading back up the East Coast Main Line, passengers will be set down at Potters Bar and Stevenage before journey's end at Peterborough.

There is no dining option on this tour, but tickets are available in First Class non-dining and Standard Class, with a buffet car provided for refreshments.

For more information and to book a place, visit www.ukrailtours.com

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Blue Peter back on home turf in Steam Dreams long weekender

By Owen Hayward

***Blue Peter* passing through Newcastle without stopping on November 27.** RODNEY TOWERS

A FOUR-DAY excursion to Edinburgh including a rare steam outing over the Forth Bridge saw BR(E) Peppercorn A2 4-6-2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* return to familiar territory – after first taking over from a Deltic working its first public tour this year!

Outshopped from Doncaster Works in March 1948 by the newly-formed BR and so painted in the apple green livery of the old LNER but with British Railways lettering on the tender, after a brief stint allocated to York North shed, No. 60532 – the first of its class with BR numbering – was moved across the Scottish border to Haymarket motive power depot near Edinburgh on November 27, 1949. From there it was primarily employed on expresses from that city and Glasgow to Aberdeen. Subsequent allocations saw it based in Scotland for the remainder of its BR career, moving to Aberdeen Ferryhill on January 7, 1951, Dundee Tay Bridge on June 19, 1961, and then returning to Aberdeen on December 4, 1966, from where it was withdrawn at the end of that month.

However, 76 years after it first moved north of the border, *Blue Peter* returned to Edinburgh working what was its first main line charter tour to the city since its overhaul was completed in 2024.

Its visit was not the only notable part of Steam Dreams' November 27-30 excursion to the city's Christmas markets, for it was also the first public outing of a Class 55 Deltic on the main line network this year, as Locomotive Services Limited's D9000 *Royal Scots Grey* was allocated to work part of the tour.

Deltics, once a common sight on the East Coast Main Line, were built in 1961-62 following the construction of prototype DP1 in 1955 and replaced the A3 and A4 Pacifics, the top link expresses. D9000 was the first of the production run to enter service on February 28, 1961, and was allocated to Haymarket, and so likely shared yard space with *Blue Peter* before that moved on.

On June 18 the following year, the Deltic was named *Royal Scots Grey* at a ceremony at Edinburgh Waverley, the name having been previously carried by LMS Royal Scot class No. 46101.

D9000 remained at Haymarket until December 1967 and would also have seen the A2 both return there and be retired just weeks later. Its next move would see D9000 head south and take up residence at Finsbury Park on December 12, 1967, although its stay there was brief and it returned to Haymarket on June 29 the following year. There it remained until withdrawal on January 2, 1982, following which it was stored before being bought on September 7, 1983, by the Deltic 9000 Fund (later Deltic 9000 Locomotives Limited).

Now under the ownership of LSL, it has been returned to main line operating condition, although over the past two years it has been undergoing maintenance work at Crewe; on July 25, following an absence of two years, it returned to the national network on a test run between Crewe and Chester.

In October, it travelled with BR Standard Class 7 No. 70000 *Britannia* to Sheringham to appear at the North Norfolk Railway's 50th finale gala weekend on November 1/2, the

D9000 *Royal Scots Grey* passes through Doncaster on its way to York with the first leg of Steam Dreams' four-day Edinburgh excursion on November 27. KENNY FELSTEAD

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A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* on its southbound return from Edinburgh to Carlisle via Abingdon and the West Coast Main Line on November 30. In South Lanarkshire, there had been a touch of overnight snow; skies were forecast cloudless for most of the day, virtually no wind, and temperatures of 4-5C – all good for long- trailing exhausts, as happened as No.60532 came hammering around the approach curve, very much on time and making a visual steam spectacular passing Crawford on the final three miles of its ascent to Beattock Summit. RODNEY TOWERS

first opportunity for the public to ride behind D9000 since its return to service, but it was not until this Steam Dreams charter that it worked its first public main line tour.

Four-day getaway

Departing from King's Cross at 8.47am on November 27, *Royal Scots Grey*'s return to the ECML was a welcome sight. Often running ahead of time, it received a clear run all the way to York where it gave way to*Blue Peter,* which took over for the rest of the run northwards.

Departure from York was delayed by 19 minutes, although this was quickly made up as a booked stop in one of the Darlington loops to allow another train to pass was no longer required.

The remainder fluctuated between running as much as 18 minutes late and seven minutes early, with the final arrival time at Edinburgh being 7.14pm – 17 minutes down on its booked time. The following day was given in full to passengers for exploring the city and visiting the Christmas markets.

For those who were content with their day of exploration, on November 29 *Blue Peter* then worked a circular lunchtime tour out of Edinburgh to Dunfermline City and back, which saw it take in the Forth Bridge (as pictured on centre pages 50/51). This was the first steam tour this year to cross the structure, which dates from 1890 and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; the Bo'ness-based charter firm Scottish Railway Preservation Society had planned to run a number of these circular tours during the summer, which would have employed LNER A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* for motive power, but insufficient bookings resulted in them being cancelled .

Blue Peter set off with the southbound journey to the capital at 9.28am on November 30, bound for Carlisle, where it gave way to diesel traction; it had originally been planned to see D9000 feature once again, and it had even moved there in readiness to do so. Unfortunately, a late fault saw it end up being substituted by Class 37 No. 37409, which took the train back to King's Cross working top-and-tail with Class 57 No. 57311 *The Institute of Mechanical Engineers*, the latter having been attached to the rear of the train for the whole duration of the four-day charter. While passengers returned to the nation's capital, *Blue Peter* towed *Royal Scots Grey* back to LSL's depot at Crewe.

This trip was the A2's final publicised outing for the year; the organiser's two subsequent charters (to Bath on December 9 and Oxford on December 17) were both due to be worked by newly overhauled BR Standard Class 8 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*, while the firm's annual Christmas circular tours out of London Victoria on December 20 and 22 were booked for *Britannia* at the helm. Following them, Steam Dreams was to take a break before its first advertised outing for 2026, a trip from Ipswich to Bath on April 15.

'Winter Cumbrian' double starts Railway Touring Company programme

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company's first steam-hauled tours of its 2026 season will be the 'Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' on Saturdays January 31 and February 7.

The first tour will start from Manchester Piccadilly and head to Wigan North Western to pick up additional passengers. Taking the West Coast Main Line north, the next pick-up point is scheduled for Preston before a spirited run to Carnforth for a water stop.

After leaving Carnforth, it will climb the first gradient to Grayrigg, followed by the steeper gradient from Tebay to Shap summit. A decent to Penrith will then see the tour arrive in Carlisle at lunchtime. Passengers will have just under two hours to look around the border city.

Leaving Carlisle for the journey south, the scheduled route will be over the Settle to Carlisle line. There is a planned water stop at Appleby before the climb through Kirkby Stephen to the summit at Ais Gill, contining through Garsdale and Dent, before crossing the Ribblehead Viaduct to Settle Junction.

Taking the Leeds-Morecambe Line, there is another planned water stop at Hellifield before continuing on through Clitheroe to Preston, where a diesel will take over for the run back to Manchester Piccadilly.

The second tour follows a similar format but starting from Euston and hauled by an electric locomotive. Heading north on the West Coast Main Line, the passenger pick-up points are Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe and Preston. There is an option for passengers to join the tour from Northampton but will connect using a local service train at Rugby.

From Preston, the tour will run through Lancaster to Carnforth to change locomotives in favour of steam traction.

From Carnforth, the tour follows the route of the previous tour, heading north to Carlisle, which passengers will have just under two hours to explore before the return trip over the Settle to Carlisle line via Hellifield and Clitheroe to Preston.

At Preston, steam is planned to be exchanged for a blue Class 86 electric locomotive for a fast run to London, setting down passengers en route.

Tickets are available in Premier Dining, First Class and Standard Class, with a discount for junior travellers and families.

For more details, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Carlisle Upperby to house steam again after six decades

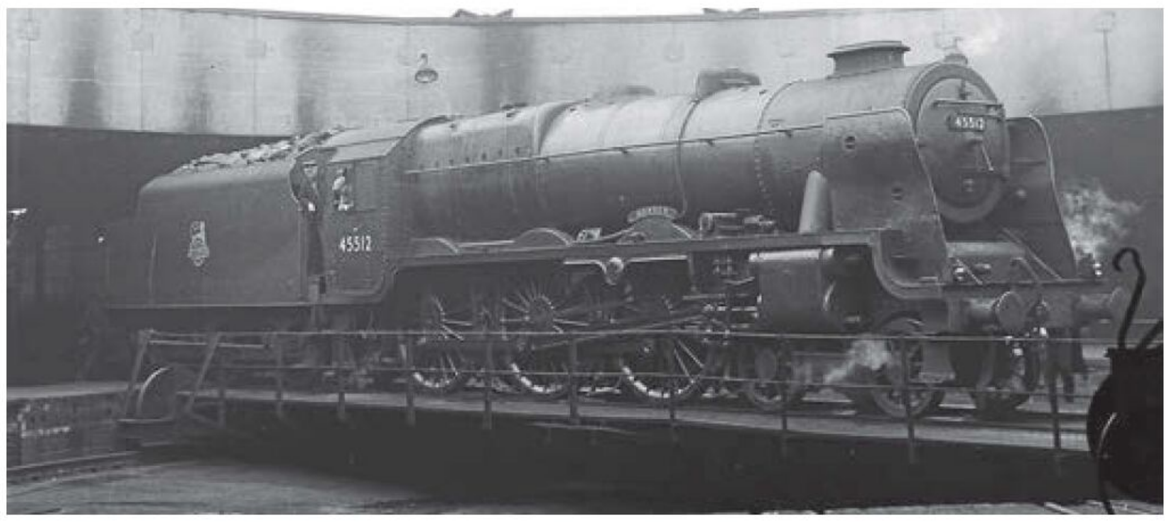
By Robin Jones

STEAM locomotives are set to return to Carlisle Upperby depot after plans to store them there were approved by Cumberland Council.

It has granted planning permission for a 460ft-long steel-framed canopy at the former Carlisle Upperby Diesel Depot' 12B carriage shed, off St Nicholas Bridges, to provide covered accommodation for steam locomotives and heritage rolling stock, enabling their preservation and protection in a manner that is sensitive to the site's longstanding railway heritage.

A planning officer's report said that the new structure will be located within the existing confines of Carlisle Diesel Depot on the site of a former railway storage building. Accordingly, the principle of the proposal is acceptable, it said.

Built by the Lancaster & Carlisle Railway, the depot passed into LMS ownersgip at the Grouping of 1923. The old steam shed used to be known colloquially as 'the Lanky' because of its origins as the main depot of the Lancaster & Carlisle.



LMS Patriot 4-6-0 No. 45512 *Bunsen* in the Carlisle Upperby roundhouse in April 1956. TRANSPORT TREASURY/WILLIE HERMISTON

In 1948, the London Midland Region rebuilt the depot to an LMSA design, replacing the original structures with a large concrete roundhouse and associated carriage sheds. The facility featured multiple roads (tracks) for servicing locomotives and carriages.

Carlisle Upperby closed to steam on December 12, 1966, but continued to service steam until the end of 1967.

However, once the new purpose-built diesel depot at Carlisle Kingmoor was completed, Upperby closed as a locomotive depot on January 1, 1968. The roundhouse was demolished in 1979, but the remaining buildings continued in use as a carriage maintenance and servicing facility until they too were closed in1994 during privatisation of BR. The carriage sheds were demolished in December 2016 while the depot was under the ownership of DB Cargo UK.

In September 2023, the depot was reopened by LSL.

The new canopy will sit over the existing rail head on the brownfield site using goosewing grey cladding and 9ft-high side panels to give weather protection while remaining largely open-sided.

The report said: "Although the development will be of a large scale, the building will be viewed in the context of the existing built development at the railway depot and Network Rail buildings to the north and west."

LSL'splanning statement said the development will provide "a secure and weather-protected environment for historic steam locomotives, contributing to the preservation of the nation's railway heritage," and that the facility has the potential to "attract visitors, support tourism, and provide educational opportunities related to railway history."

An icy blast chills Euston again!

'THE Polar Express' returned to Euston for a second year running.

Following a sell-out first year in 2024, the charter train was booked for 14 days between November 29 and December 23.

On board were festive musical and theatrical performances, with Santa himself making an appearance.

Mark Haynes, marketing manager for PNP Events, said: "We are thrilled to bring 'The Polar Express' train ride back to London, sharing the timeless message of belief and the magic of Christmas with families once again.

"The experience creates moments of pure wonder, and we are excited to welcome guests aboard for a festive journey that inspires joy, togetherness, and a renewed sense of Christmas spirit. Once again, we'd like to thank the team at Network Rail and Euston station for welcoming us back as we work together to bring this cherished Christmas tradition to life for even more families."

Right: 'The Polar Express' arrives at Platform 16 behind 'Black Five' No. 44871 in November. NR

A second farewell for Class 455 tour after initial swift sell-out

By Tim Hobman

A SECOND Branch Line Society farewell tour for South Western Railway's Class 455 EMUs has been arranged to run on Sunday, December 21.

The extra trip was laid on after the £45.50 tickets for the original trip, reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 339, sold out in just 15 seconds, with more than 9000 customers waiting for 400 tickets.

The British Rail Engineering Limited Class 455s have been in service since 1983 on the SWR suburban network, with 84 four-carriage sets available for service and having the ability to operate coupled together to form larger trains. Replaced by the new £1 billion Class 701 Arterio trains and in their twilight months, the time is right for a railtour to celebrate the 42-year service of the units.

The revised plan is to have two trains (A & B) on the day, both covering the same route, but with train B setting off an hour later. Starting from London Waterloo, the route is scheduled to be via Clapham Junction to Strawberry Hill for a reversal. Retracing the route back to Teddington, the next destination is Kingston for another reversal, then n to London Waterloo for a short break. Next, the tours will head to Epsom and into the Up sidings there, followed by a run to Guildford for another short break.

A reversal here will see the train head to Guildford North Box Sidings, then on to Haslemere for another reversal.

Returning to Guildford, the via Woking, Staines Up Loop, Feltham Loop, then another reversal at Twickenham. Heading back to Strawberry Hill and Fulwell, the train is then expected to reverse to New Maiden and Clapham Junction, before a short break at London Waterloo. A quick trip out to Waterloo Carriage South Sidings is then planned to see a reversal back into Waterloo for the conclusion of the tour.

At the time of writing, this tour was fully booked. For more details, visit www.branchline.uk

Lawrence Bowman, managing director of SWR and Network Rail Wessex Route, said: "We have been amazed at the level of interest in our Class 455 Farewell tour and are thrilled to raise so much money for Macmillan, The Alex Wardle Foundation and Railway Children.

"These three charities are ones that have a special significance to our colleagues."

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West Country light Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone* arrives at Platform 8 at Paddington with the Railway Touring Company's 1Z71 5.31pm 'The Bath and Bristol Christmas Express' on November 29. EDDIE BOBROWSKI

New Ruddington pit opens fresh door for main line tour locomotive servicing

By Robin Jones

THE Great Central Railway (Nottingham) has completed the installation of a new 65ft-long locomotive servicing pit as the line gears up to operate more steam services.

While the line's northern terminus at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre in Ruddington has an engineering building with an indoor inspection pit, until now it lacked a dedicated facility for lighting up a steam locomotive, maintaining it, and cleaning it down at the end of the day.

The railway ran a fundraising campaign throughout the summer to pay for the new pit, a state-of-the-art, industrial grade stainless steel construction with lighting and connections for power, water and compressed air.

Constructed by Premier Pits of Spalding, it represents an investment of nearly £100,000 – and means that the GCR(N) is now 'open for business' for main line steam operators using the connection at Loughborough and can offer a locomotive servicing centre in the heart of the country.

This year has seen the first regular steam services on the nine-mile railway since before the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, and more are planned in 2026.

"The pit is an absolute game changer for us," said the GCR(N)'s Andy Fillingham.

"While we have an inspection pit inside our engineering shed, it's not a suitable place to be firing up locomotives.

"We needed a solution, and with grateful thanks to those who have donated towards it, we now have the best possible answer.

"Together with our rewired and updated locomotive running shed right alongside, the pit will immediately help us develop steam services on our section of the Great Central in Nottinghamshire."

Left: The new servicing pit was craned into place on November 17, with the final concreting to be completed before it is commissioned. Final donations for concrete costs can be made at www.emtht.org and clicking on the Forward Fund campaign button. Visitors can view the pit from a nearby public area. NORMAN PANNEL/GCR(N)

˜When the GCR(N) is reunified with the GCR at Loughborough, the service pit will be essential to support operations along the entire railway.

"There's covered accommodation at our running shed and of course the new servicing pit to make preparation and disposal so much easier," added Andy.

"We also have the main engineering shed with overhead crane and we are delighted the Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust is currently resident with us, with B1 No. 1264 making use of everything we can offer."

UKRT pulls a 'Blinder' with January outing to Derbyshire

THE first offering in the new year for UK Railtours is a tour on Saturday, January 24 behind Class 45 'Peak' No. 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman* and comprising Mk. 3 coaches titled 'The Peak Blinder.'

Starting from Norwich, the tour will head towards Thetford and then to Ely to pick up additional passengers at both stations. From Ely, the next pick-up is planned for Cambridge, followed by a routing towards London via Bishops Stortford and Tottenham Hale. The final pick-up point will be Stratford, before the tour heads across London via Temple Mills, Tottenham South Junction and Upper Holloway.

Taking the freight spur at Junction Road Junction, the tour is expected to emerge from the tunnels at Carlton Road Junction and on to the Midland Main Line.

A spirited run north on the Midland Main Line will see the tour pass through Bedford, Kettering and the East Midlands en route to Derby. After a brief pause there, the train is scheduled to continue north through Belper to Chesterfield for a late lunchtime break while the locomotive is serviced at nearby Barrow Hill.

Leaving Chesterfield, the tour will head via Sheffield, Swinton, and Loversall Carr Junction to pick up the East Coast Main Line. Heading south, the train is expected to run fast through Retford, Newark and Grantham, to arrive in Peterborough to set down passengers.

From Peterborough, the route is scheduled to be via March, where the locomotive was stored for three years after withdrawal in 1987, then on to Ely. The tour is not planned to return to Stratford or Cambridge, so passengers can alight at either Peterborough or Ely to return to those stations.

At Ely, the Class 45 is planned to be exchanged for a Class 47 for the final leg back to Norwich.

Tickets are available in First Class dining, First Class non-dining and Standard Class.

For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

GWR gifts *Helston* nameplate to raise funds as class bows out

By Robin Jones

A Castle Class HST at Camborne on an Exeter to Penzance service on May 18. Inset: The Castle Class HST *St Mawes Castle* nameplate. BOTH: PETER KENNAN

THE modern-day Great Western Railway has donated an Intercity 125 High Speed Train Castle Class nameplate to the Helston Railway, to be sold by sealed bid auction to raise funds to further extend the heritage line to the edge of the town.

December 13 was scheduled to be the last day for these iconic trains in scheduled passenger service in England. Introduced in 1976, the last of these sets – which hold the world speed record for a diesel train, with 148.5mph recorded on a test run – will be seen crossing the Tamar and running through Cornwall, where they have operated for much of their lives

Each Castle Class HST power car was named after a Castle around the Great Western network. The Helston Railway was donated *St Mawes Castle*, as it is one of the nearest castles.

In March, Castle Class nameplate *St Michael's Mount* sold at auction for £8500.

Up for secret auction

To ensure fairness and independence, the railway decided to conduct the sale by way of a sealed bid auction, by a specified deadline of 5pm on February 27. For details of how to bid, email Peter Kennan at peterk@helstonrailway.co.uk

Money raised will be used to help acquire part of the former trackbed between Truthall Halt and Lowertown or Cober viaduct.

In a separate nationwide appeal, the railway has raised nearly half the £100,000 needed to buy the viaduct and adjacent embankments in four months as part of its plans to extend south.

This appeal, launched in the summer, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 335, had raised £45,000 as this issue closed for press, with donations still coming in.

The 313ft-long and 120ft-high six-arch landmark granite viaduct is a quarter of a mile from the old Lowertown bridge where the railway hopes to build a new terminus – but only if the viaduct is saved.

Contributors to the appeal can buy shares with benefits for £500. Cap stones are £250, keystones £125, and wall stones £50, with the option of having the donor's name displayed or a dedication made.

The railway has also introduced an option aimed at businesses to buy a share at £650, which apart from the standard benefits will˜allow for a 3ft-by-3ft metal sign displayed on the main fence by the path to the platform at Prospidnick for advertising.˜

While the appeal is ongoing, in the post-Christmas closed season the railway plans to extend the line from Truthall and to also carry on with excavation and ground works towards Nanacegollan to make the site of the new Prospidnick station ready.

How to support

To donate to this appeal, send a cheque payable to Helston Railway Co Ltd, with your name, address, telephone number and details of any dedication you wish to make to the following address: Lowertown Viaduct Appeal, Helston Railway, Trevarno Farm, Prospidnick, Helston, Cornwall TR13 0RY.

Alternatively, you can download a form from the website www.helstonrailway.co.uk/viaduct-appeal and send it to info@helstonrailway.co.uk or pay by BACS transfer to sort code 30-98-90 and account number 17131960, referencing your name so your payment can be matched.

You can also contribute via https://gofund.me/79378faf

East Anglia to Bath with *Britannia* in the spring

ON Wednesday, April 15, Steam Dreams will start its 2026 season with a tour from East Anglia to Bath, featuring BR Standard Class 7 4-6-2 No. 70000 *Britannia*.

Starting from Ipswich diesel-hauled, the tour will take the Great Eastern Main Line, picking up passengers at Colchester North, Witham, Chelmsford, Shenfield and Stratford. Taking the North London Line at Stratford, the tour is bound for West London for a change of locomotive from diesel to steam.

From here, the route is expected to be along the Great Western Main Line via Reading and Swindon to Bath. Passengers will then have three-and-a-half hours to explore the spa city before the return journey via the same route, setting down passengers at their joining stations.

For more details and to book, visit steamdreams.co.uk

New year plans for Hastings Diesels DEMU

HASTINGS Diesels Limited has published outline plans for its 2026 season with four possible dates for customers to travel on board its Southern Region DEMU No. 1001.

The first is Saturday, January 17, with the date confirmed, but as this issue closed for press, the tour was yet to go on sale. The destination is Windsor, but no further details had been released.

The next offering is expected to be to the East Somerset Railway and an as yet undisclosed nearby quarry line on Saturday, April 11. Following this, the next tour is planned be on Saturday, June 20, to Paignton.

The final date on the current list is Saturday, September 19, with a possible tour to Stamford and hopefully some rare metals, with customers treated to a tour over the Old Dalby Test Track.

For more details, visit www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk

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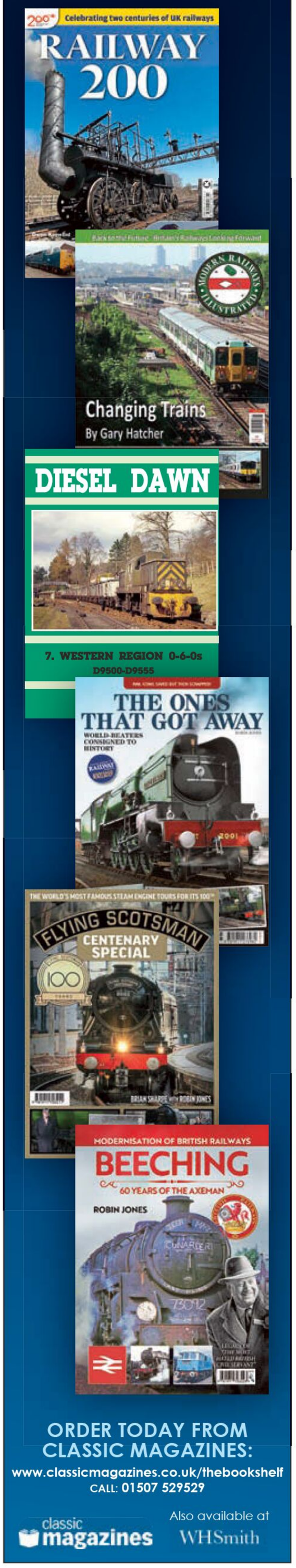

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LMS 'Black Five' No. 44871 arrives at York with one of two 'Christmas White Rose' tours to the city on November 15, this particular service being Railway Touring Company's charter which originated from King's Cross. A second, operated by Saphos Trains, began diesel-hauled at Potters Bar, with A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* taking over at Peterborough, while No. 44871 worked its RTC tour for the full duration. See also Platform, page 89. KENNY FELSTEAD

December

21 'The Class 455 Farewell'
Rare tracks tour from Waterloo and return.
EMU: Class 455 TBC. BLS

21 'The Polar Express'
Return trip from Birmingham New Street.
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

21 'The Polar Express'
Return trip from London Euston.
Loco: 44871. PNP

22 'Santa Steam Express' (am and pm)
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 70000 *Britannia*. SD

22 'The Polar Express'
Return trip from Birmingham New Street.
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

22 'The Polar Express'
Return trip from London Euston.
Loco: 44871. PNP

23 'The Polar Express'
Return trip from Birmingham New Street.
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

23 'The Polar Express'
Return trip from London Euston.
Loco: 44871. PNP

29 'The Dead Simple Positioning Move'
Great Yarmouth to Peterborough only.
Loco: 2x Class 20s + 37243. UKRT

30 'A Simply Awkward Week Adventure'
Rare tracks route between Peterborough, Uckfield, and return.
Loco: 37243, 37418. UKRT

January

17 Windsor excursion
Hastings, Windsor, and return.
DEMU: 1001. HD

24 'The Peak Blinder'
Norwich, Chesterfield, and return.
Loco: 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman*

31 'Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Manchester Piccadilly, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

31 'The Sale of the Century'
Derby, Shildon, and return.
Loco: HST Nos. 43094 + 43122. UKRT

February

7 'Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Euston, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

12 Bath excursion
London Victoria, Bath, and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. BEL

13 'The Golden Age of Trave'
Circular tour from London Victoria. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. BEL

14 'The White Rose'
King's Cross, York, and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

14 'The Stratford Flyer'
Manchester Victoria, Stratford-upon-Avon, and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

21 'Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Euston, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

26 Oxford excursion
London Victoria, Oxford, and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. BEL

27 Bath excursion.
London Victoria, Bath, and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. BEL

28 'Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Euston, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

March

7 East Lancashire Railway excursion
Watford Junction, Bury Bolton Street, and return.
Locos: 2x Class 50s, 1x Class 56. UKRT

8 'The Derby Express'
Watford Junction to Derby only.
Loco: 2x Class 50s. UKRT

13 'The Golden Age of Trave'
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

13 Cheltenham Races excursion
Paddington, Evesham, and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. NB

14 'Buxton Spa Express'
Preston, Buxton, and return. Diesel-hauled between Preston and Manchester Victoria (outward only).
Loco: TBA. RTC

18 'The Whitby Flyer'
King's Cross, Whitby, and return. Steam-hauled between York and Whitby.
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

21 'Cumbrian Coast Express'
Euston, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled from Carlisle to Carnforth.
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

28 'The Golden Age of Trave'
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

28 'Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Euston, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

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
PNP PNP Events londonthepolarexpressride.com
RTC Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

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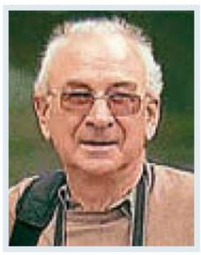
LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



In his latest column, **Don Benn** looks in detail at how No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* got on with the 'Royal Scot' from Crewe to Carlisle on November 6 and compares it with additional runs with this locomotive in 2010, 2011 and 1955.

AFTER the prolonged overhaul of BR Standard Class 8 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester,* the promised member's special ran on October 8, routed round the circuit from Crewe to Chester, Shrewsbury, Bushbury Jn, and back to Crewe on Locomotive Services Limited's test circuit. Sandy Smeaton was on this and his image shows the train at Crewe. His table below gives estimates of No. 71000's power output on five sections of the route. The highest equivalent drawbar horsepower (edbh) value achieved was 1590 on the 1-in-100 climb from Albrighton. Gresford Bank, climbed at relatively low speed, required 1380. Perhaps the engine was not pushed too hard here to avoid slipping in the woods shrouding the line. The sprint along the West Coast Main Line required no more than about 1100 edbhp. From these estimates, it is clear the engine was not worked hard on this run while effectively still being run in. Assisting Class 67 No. 67002 only worked when speed fell below 10mph.

And so to November 6 and its first public outing. The train was booked to leave Euston at 7am, so only possible for me to access it via a long drive and an early departure from home. I decided that this wasn't for me, but my colleague Alan Rawlings is made of sterner stuff and can recount his story of a remarkable day.

"When it emerged onto the national network in the mid-1950s, *Duke of Gloucester* was considered to be the ultimate Class 8 Pacific, so its absence since 2012 for overhaul has been felt by many. The return trip to Carlisle from Crewe on November 6, 2025, was the first public outing after an earlier members' special, and with the challenge of Shap each way, it was arguably the first significant test of the locomotive. That said, while expectations were high, the realists knew there was much still to bed down and so any records were unlikely to be put to the test.

"The train was hauled from London to Crewe by Class 40 D213 *Andania,* which whisked the nine-coach train northwards without any fuss at speeds up to its permitted maximum. Arrival for the changeover was slightly delayed because of a late-running freight on the Northampton to Rugby section, before we were able to pass it on the four-track section.

"No. 71000 looked resplendent as it dropped back with its support coach onto the train. The consist, now of 10 vehicles, included a generator car that would provide electrical power throughout and therefore removed the need for a diesel as a Class 37 was waiting at Carlisle to carry out the shunt movements. Given the multiple occasions when steam has been assisted over Shap, this was a rare solo opportunity and apart from the paying public, there were many other Locomotive Services Ltd staff on board to enjoy the experience. Table One covers the northbound run from Crewe to the water stop at Barton Loop beyond Preston. A steady start was made but after 10 minutes, speed was up to 70mph and it became clear that the plan was to give the Duke a workout, but not excessively so. The pace barely faltered on the short climb beyond Weaver Junction and after a feisty turn of speed in the dip at Moore, we powered up to Acton Grange before sweeping through Warrington at full tilt. The ruling grade from Warrington to Wigan is against the collar but this was barely noticed, and only on the two miles of 1-in-104 to Boar's Head did speed drop below 70mph. The summit at Coppull Hall Sidings was topped at 67mph and we then swept down to Preston, rolling unchecked through the station in even time from Crewe before continuing to the first water stop in the passenger loop at the former Barton and Broughton station.

ESTIMATED POWER OUTPUTS

LOAD: NINE COACHES +57002/ 435 TONS TARE/455 TONS GROSS

Location	Gradient (1-in)	Speed range (mph)	Estimated power (edbhp)
Gresford Bank	83 steady)	29 (assumed	1380
South of Chirk MP 192 to 191¼	143	53.3 to 51.1	1280
East of Albrighton MP149¼ to 148¼	100	52 to 47.4	1590
North of Stableford	590	71 (steady)	1050
Approaching Whitmore MP145.79 to 147.5	398	71 to 70	1110

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Above: No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* passing Hartford on the 7am Euston to Carlisle 'Royal Scot' on November 6, 2025 – its first public post-overhaul working. MICK ROGERS

Left: *Duke of Gloucester* arrives at Crewe with a loaded test run of empty coaching stock on October 7, 2025, ahead of the members' special excursion which came the following day. SANDY SMEATON

Right: No. 71000 enters Bristol Temple Meads on September 19, 2010, with the stock for one of its many 'Torbay Express' workings, on this occasion bound for Kingswear. DON BENN

TABLE ONE: CREWE TO BARTON LOOP

Date	Thursday, November 6, 2025
Train	'Royal Scot'
Loco	BR class 8 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*
Load	10 coaches, 364 tons tare 385 tons gross
Crew	Mike Wylie and Jack Jackson
Recorder	Alan Rawlings
Weather	Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Crewe	0.00	0.00	00	00	3 late
Crewe Coal Yard	0.84	2.00	03	56	29
Coppenhall Jct	3.18		07	22	49
Minshull Vernon	4.91		09	11	61
Winsford	7.46	9.00	11	32	73
Winsford SB	8.81		12	38	70
Vale Royal Viaduct	10.81		14	24	73
Hartford	11.82		15	20	51* sigs
Hartford Jct	12.69	14.00	16	13	52
Acton Bridge	14.48	17.00	18	08	63
Dutton Viaduct	16.10		19	32	71
Weaver Jct	16.65	21.00	20	09	71
Birdswood Tunnel	17.49		20	46	70
Preston Brook Tnl	18.04		21	13	72
Moore	21.30		23	46	78
Acton Grange Jct	22.24	26.00	24	32	72
Warrington BQ	24.11	27.30	26	00	75
Dallam Jct	24.86	28.30	26	37	71
Winwick Jct	27.59	30.30	28	55	73
Golborne Jct	30.05	33.00	31	01	71
Haydock Branch Jct	31.77		32	29	73
Springs Branch Jct	34.58	37.00	34	43	74
Wigan NW	35.85	38.30	35	47	73
Boars's Head	38.01		37	38	68
Standish	39.10		38	34	69
MP 11½	40.76		39	59	67
Coppull	41.73		40	49	72/78
Euxton Balshaw Lane	44.21	46.30	42	50	74
EuxtonJct	45.48	48.30	44	03	67
Leyland	47.00		45	12	69
Farington Jct	48.21		46	24	64*
Farington Curve Jct	49.39		47	36	51
River Ribble Viaduct	50.53		49	32	26*
Preston	50.98	55.30	50	31	26*
Fylde Jct	51.39	56.30	51	32	29
Oxheys	52.31		53	06	36/45
			sigs stop		
Signal PN176	54.73		57	14	0*
			59	46	
Barton Loop, Entry	54.91		61	16	23*
Barton Loop	55.23	64.00	63	10	

* brakes or speed restriction

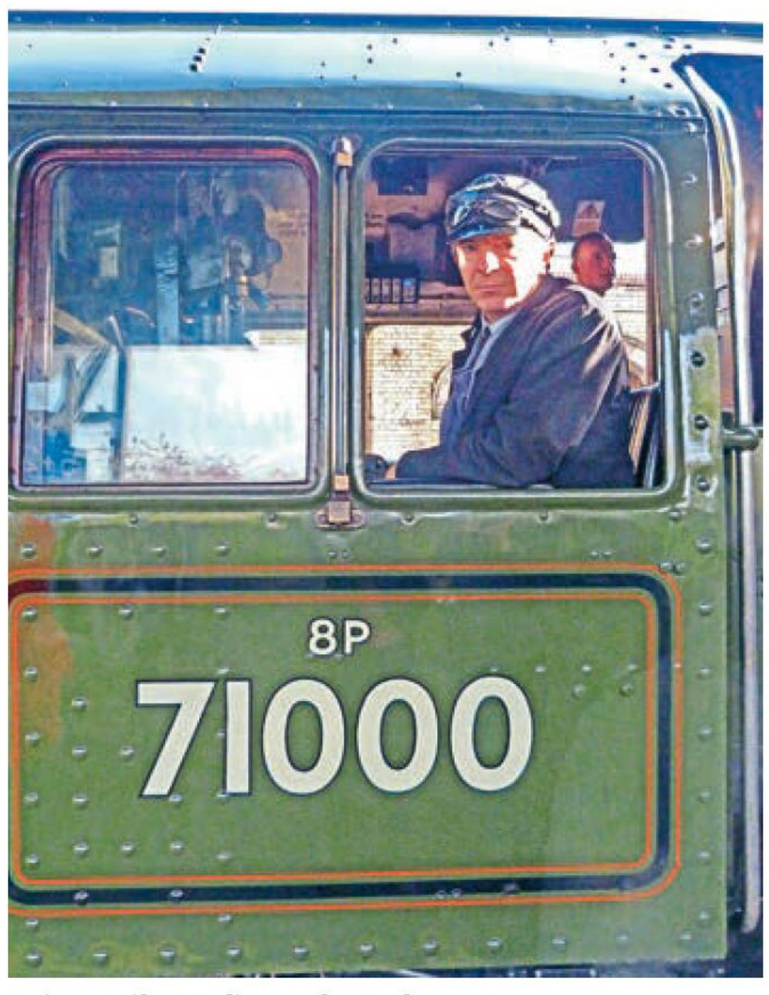
"Everything was easy and clean on the footplate, really calm and no issues. We probably could have gone quite a bit faster."

"Table Two covers the onward journey over Shap to the second stop in the loop at Penrith. The previous tour with No. 71000 had told us that the load was easily manageable for this Class 8. Nevertheless, the next hour would be a challenge for the crew, especially the fireman, even with the benefit of a steam-operated coal pusher. Soon after leaving Barton, ahead of us a late-running Leeds to Morecambe service that reversed at Lancaster was clearing the station, meaning we picked up a signal check quite a way back, but with a clear road through Morecambe Junction, we raced towards Carnforth and No. 71000 took the 1-in-134 hillock over Yealand in its stride. The start of the climb at Milnthorpe was at 77mph and once speed had dropped to about 60mph by Hincaster, a good balance was struck, with the Duke punching away up front and dropping less than 2mph per mile to top Grayrigg at 47mph.

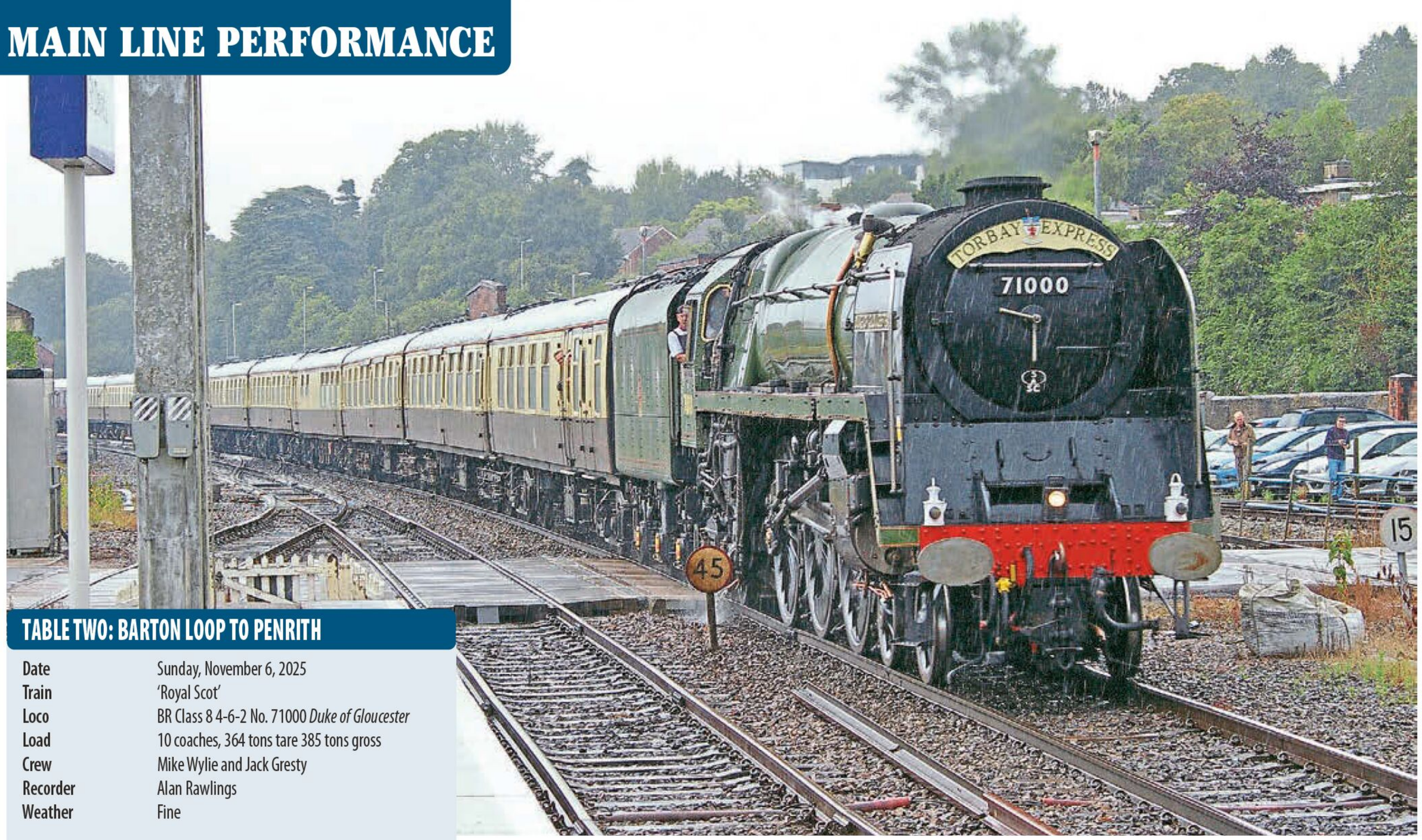
"Recovery through the Lune Gorge was rapid and the final assault was commenced with a pass of Tebay at 77mph. The four miles of 1-in-75 are potentially the nemesis for an unprepared locomotive and crew, but neither of these applied on the 'Royal Scot.' It was a well-judged and pacey climb with a summit speed of 46mph. No records were broken, but it was a masterful performance by loco and crew, and we were now 11 minutes early. The descent to Penrith was rapid, and despite a heavily controlled approach to the South Junction, where we were routed into the loop to take water, our arrival was still eight early. We were released early for the final leg, but our arrival at Carlisle was held back to the booked slot because of other traffic at the station. By comparison, the return journey to the water stop at Lancaster was a little more subdued on what was a challenging even time path. With a cold fire after a three-hour layover, it took a while for No. 71000 to get into its stride and eight minutes were dropped to Shap, with a minimum of 39mph prior to the emergency speed restriction at Shap Wells after the recent landslip.

"Signals approaching Carnforth also checked progress and arrival was 15 minutes down. By contrast, and after a hesitant start on the treacherous 1-in-98 for the first mile and a half, the run back to Crewe was lively and, fortunately, we seemed to slipstream with other services, gaining five and a half minutes on the schedule and coming to a stand at Crewe three early. Overall, it was quite a breathless day."

I have been in touch with the driver on the outward journey from Crewe, Mike Wylie, and he has kindly given his impressions of the trip.



Driver Mike Wylie on the Duke at Crewe on November 6. ALAN RAWLINGS



On August 5, 2012, No. 71000 passes through a wet Exeter St Davids with the 'Torbay Express.' DON BENN

TABLE TWO: BARTON LOOP TO PENRITH

Date	Sunday, November 6, 2025
Train	'Royal Scot'
Loco	BR Class 8 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*
Load	10 coaches, 364 tons tare 385 tons gross
Crew	Mike Wylie and Jack Gresty
Recorder	Alan Rawlings
Weather	Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Barton Loop	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Barton & Broughton	0.26		01	33	24
Brock	2.95		05	23	60
Garstang & Catterall	4.95	7.00	07	14	66
Lingart FB	6.52		08	38	67
Scorton	8.24		10	11	69
Bay Horse	10.75		12	20	68
Calgate	12.19		13	41	61*
Oubeck	13.31		15	10	48* sigs
MP 19	14.52		16	32	48
Lancaster	16.49	18.30	18	31	74/79
Morecombe S Jct	18.40	20.30	20	20	77
Hest Bank	19.54		20	59	78
Bolton-le-Sands	20.89		21	57	77
Carnforth	22.75	25.00	23	23	77
MP 7	23.50		23	59	79
MP 8	24.50		24	46	74/79
MP 9	25.50		25	37	69
Yealand Smt	26.00		26	04	67
Burton & Holme	27.25		27	10	73/78
Milnthorpe	30.04		29	19	77
Hincaster Jct	32.00		31	08	61/60
Sedgewick	33.47		32	37	63/58
Oxenholme	35.50	38.30	34	41	59
MP 20	36.50		35	50	58
MP 21	37.50		36	38	56
Hay Fell	39.00		38	18	53
Lambrigg	40.75		40	19	51
Grayrigg	42.50	48.00	42	29	47
Low Gill	44.50		44	32	66
Dilicar	46.50		46	12	77/78
Tebay	48.71	54.30	47	53	77
MP 34	50.50		49	23	68
MP 35	51.50		50	17	61
MP 35½	52.00		50	48	57
MP 36	52.50		51	20	54
MP 36½	53.00		51	54	51
MP 37	53.50		52	52	47
Shap Summit	54.00	64.00	53	10	46
Shap	56.22		55	24	73
Harrisons Sidings	58.15	68.00	56	38	75/76
Thrimby Grange	59.50		58	02	77/78
MP 45	61.50		59	35	78
Clifton & Lowther	63.50		61	12	74
Eden Valley Jct	64.45		62	11	48*
Lowther Viaduct	65.15		63	06	34/8* sigs
Penrith S Jct	66.74		67	52	21* loop
Penrith	67.75	79.00	70	39	

* brakes or speed restriction
net time with main line finish into Pernrith 67 minutes

" Looking at The Rail Performance website, this is the second fastest time with steam..."

He said: "Jack had it on the mark virtually blowing off from Lancaster to the summit. We run a tight, clean ship based on his firing technique of light and thin. You can see that by his perfect, almost clean exhaust. This then allows me to run the engine in full regulator with short cut-offs. We went steady up Yealand at 15% and then down to 10% for the run to Hincaster. I was concerned about catching the train ahead so shut off until speed was down to 60mph. Our aim on Grayrigg was maximum sustainable, meaning the boiler pressure never moved; water stayed at three quarters of a glass, with the exhaust injector being turned on at Lancaster and staying on until Harrisons. The majority of Grayrigg was taken at 20% cut-off, with the last half at 22% to start the acceleration. My view is that it is one obstacle and needs to be treated as such. In fine fettle entering the gorge, cut-offs reduced to 5% through Tebay, still all full regulator. Then let out a bit at a time up to a maximum of 25% for the last two miles of Shap. A brief easing at Scout for the greaser and sanders switched in for last half-mile. Everything was easy and clean on the footplate, really calm and no issues. We probably could have gone quite a bit faster. We got off spotless, and my engine and fireman hadn't been worked unduly hard. It was probably one of our best days together. I have a full download of it."

I am very grateful to Mike for this, which contrasted with my rough and tumble days on the footplates of Bullied Pacifics at high speed in the last days of steam on the Southern (see issue 339).

Next, in Table Three is Alan Rawlings' log of a run with No. 71000 the year before it was with withdrawn for overhaul. It had a decent load of 13 carriages for 480 tons full and ran fast over both legs of the return journey: "Northampton to Euston in 85 minutes for the 66 miles with drop-offs at Milton Keynes and Watford Junction was tight, but No. 71000 was up for the challenge. The log shows the run from Milton Keynes, where we left four late after dropping time on the 1-in-200 up to Roade. Given that about seven miles were against the collar, we kept time to the summit of the climb at Tring and then flew down to Watford, pulling up only 20 seconds outside of even time. The onward dash to Euston was in similar style and after a frustrating day of time-keeping, we were one minute early into Euston."

Pre-departure atmosphere at Crewe with No. 71000 sporting its 'Royal Scot' headboard. ALAN RAWLINGS

'Torbay Express'

On September 19, 2010, I had my only run to date behind *Duke of Gloucester*, on the 'Torbay Express,' which it worked on several occasions in 2010-2012. On July 10, I had driven down to Somerset to photograph No. 71000 working one of them, first approaching Creech St Michael on the outskirts of Taunton and then slogging up the climb to Whiteball tunnel. This inspired me to book two seats on the September trip, and another long drive got me to Bristol Temple Meads in time to see LNER A4 No. 60019 *Bittern* leaving on the 8.05am to Par. The stock for our train came in on time and we were away just under a minute late with 11 coaches, 395 tons tare 430 tons full. Fred Lewis was driving and Vince Hendserson was on the

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shovel, along with an inspector whose name I have forgotten.

The minimum on the climb out of Bristol was 49mph at milepost 123, but after getting up to 65½mph, we caught a severe signal check to 10mph near Paxton and Worle and so were more than 11 minutes late off Weston-super-Mare. Table Four shows a fine run to Tauton: 26.65 miles done in 27 minutes and six seconds, just outside even time and a gain of seven minutes on the schedule. The start from Weston is always slow on the curving platform and speed is restrained until after Uphill Junction. We were inside even time just after Fordgate and averaged 75.42mph between mileposts 142 and 161. Looking at The Rail Performance website, this is the second fastest time with steam after a remarkable 25 minutes one second behind No. 71000 on July 25, 2010.

We left Taunton slightly early and made a good start to Norton Fitzwarren, then settled down to a steady climb to Whiteball (passed at a minimum of 43mph). After a speed restriction at Tiverton Parkway, we enjoyed a lovely dash down the Exe Valley, averaging 76.24mph between mileposts 180 and 191.5, arriving at Exeter St Davids three and a half minutes early. We continued to Newton Abbot on time with a maximum of 76½mph at Powderham. Here, I jumped ship and returned to Bristol by service train as I needed to be home for a family meal (I added my own high-speed effort to the day's proceedings as I drove the 112.5 miles back in 105 minutes including a slow exit from Bristol to the M4).

Last is a run with No. 71000 from 1955, timed by the late Brian Smith. At the time, Brian, who became a good friend in the last days of Southern steam, was a 19-year-old apprentice at Crewe Works, so he timed many runs on the WCML, including the one in Table Five. Harry Nicklin seemed to be a favourite driver, or perhaps he was the one chosen to show Brian the details of how a steam locomotive worked in practice rather than the theory. If so, he taught Brian well; on

Above: *Duke of Gloucester* at Greenholme on the November 6 'Royal Scot.' SHEP WOOLLEY

TABLE THREE: MILTON KEYNES TO EUSTON

Date	Saturday, March 5, 2011
Train	'The Salopian'
Loco	BR Class 8 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*
Load	13 coaches, 450 tons tare 480 tons gross
Crew	DB Cargo
Recorder	Alan Rawlings
Weather	Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Milton Keynes	0.00	0.00	00	00	4 late
Bletchley	3.18	4.00	05	37	52
Stoke Hammond	5.83		08	30	57
Leighton Buzzard	9.55		12	10	68/72
Ledburn Jct	12.55	13.00	14	19	70
Cheddington	13.72		15	35	69/55
Tring	18.13	20.00	20	01	56
Berkhampsted	21.92		23	23	75/80
Hemel Hempstead	25.34		26	02	78
Apsley	26.74		27	08	79
Kings Langley	28.89		28	47	78/80
Watford Junction	32.38	36.00	32	40	1 late
	0.00	0.00	00	00	1late
Bushey & Oxhey	1.45		03	31	41
Carpenders Park	2.71		05	04	52
Hatch End	4.16		06	34	63
Headstone Lane	4.86		07	15	68
Harrow & Wealdstone	6.05	8.00	08	15	73
Kenton	7.13		09	08	75/80
South Kenton	8.01		09	50	76
North Wembley	8.56		10	16	77
Wembley Central	9.38	11.00	10	53	78
Sudbury Jct	9.89		11	17	74
Willesden Junction	12.05		13	09	65
Kensal Green	12.86		13	55	62
Queens Park	13.75		14	39	61
Kilburn High Road	14.38		15	20	59
South Hampstead	15.00		16	00	54
Camden Jct	16.34	18.00	17	01	43
Euston	17.45	24.00	22	07	1 early

TABLE FOUR: WESTON-SUPER-MARE TO TAUNTON

Date	September 19, 2010
Train	9.15am Bristol Temple Meads to Kingswear
Loco/unit	BR Class 8 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*
Load	11 coaches 395 tons tare, 430 tons gross
Driver	Fred Lewis
Fireman	Vince Henderson
Weather	Cloudy, light SW wind
Position	10 of 11
Recorder	Don Benn, with GPS

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Weston-Super-Mare	0.00	0.00	00	00	11½ late
Uphill Junction	1.65	4.00	04	22	44½
MP 140	3.57		06	35	61
MP 142	5.57		08	23	70½
Brent Knoll	6.09		08	49	72
MP 144	7.57		10	02	73½
Highbridge	8.89		11	05	74½
MP 146	9.57		11	40	75
MP 148	11.57		13	15	75½
Dunball	12.62		14	05	76
MP 150	13.57		14	49	76½
Bridgwater	15.18	19.00	16	04	77½
MP 153	16.57		17	09	76
Fordgate	18.05		18	21	77½
MP 155	18.57		18	44	78½
MP 157	20.57		20	16	75
Cogload Junction	21.99	27.00	21	28	72½
Creech St Michael	23.84		22	48	75½
MP 161	24.57		23	30	70
Taunton East Junction	26.06		25	35	32*
Taunton	26.75	34.00	27	06	4½ late
	0.00	0.00	00	00	¼ early
Taunton West Jct	0.26		01	54	22½
Silk Mills	1.30		03	41	47
Norton Fitzwarren	1.85	4.00	04	24	54½
Victory Crossing	2.90		05	27	60
MP 168	4.84		07	22	63
Poole Siding	5.84		08	25	61½
Wellington	7.04		09	29	62/63½
MP 171	7.84		10	14	60
Beam Bridge	8.86		11	21	52
MP 173	9.84		12	36	44½
Whiteball Tunnel In	10.00		12	50	43½
Summit (MP 174)	10.84	15.00	13	59	43
Burlescombe	11.59		14	52	60
MP 176	12.84		16	02	66½
Tiverton Parkway	14.16	18.00	17	27	49½*
Tiverton Junction	16.00	20.00	19	16	64/62½
MP 180	16.84		20	06	69
Cullompton	18.17		21	12	76
MP 182	18.84		21	43	78
MP 184	20.84		23	14	80
Hele	22.35		24	22	80½
MP 186	22.84		24	45	76
Silverton	23.60		25	24	77½
MP 188	24.84		26	17	76½
Stoke Canon	27.34		28	20	74
MP 191.5	28.34		29	09	70
Cowley Bridge Junction	29.50		30	27	43*
Exeter St Davids	30.75	36.00	32	56	3½ early

* brakes or speed restriction

TABLE FIVE: EUSTON TO RUGBY

Date	Saturday, June 18, 1955
Train	1.30pm Euston to Glasgow 'Mid Day Scot'
Loco	BR Class 8 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*
Load	14 coaches, 468 tons tare 510 tons gross
Crew	Harry Nicklin and Michael Hughes, Crewe North MPD
Inspector	Drury
Recorder	Brian L Smith
Weather	Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Euston	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
MP 1	1.00		03	27	20
Kilburn High Road	3.14		07	02	45
Willesden Junction	5.40	9.00	09	45	55½
Wembley Central	8.05		12	28	58
Harrow & Wealdstone	11.40		16	04	55½
Hatch End	13.30		18	07	55½/54
Bushey & Oxhey	15.98		21	04	56
Watford Junction	17.43	21.00	22	31	64
Kings Langley	20.94		25	52	64
			pwr		30*
Hemel Hempstead	24.50		31	15	50
Berkhamsted	27.96		35	10	60
Tring	31.66	35.00	38	52	61
Cheddington	36.10		42	46	76
Leighton Buzzard	40.20		45	58	78/83½
Bletchley	46.65	47.00	50	55	80
Wolverton	52.40		55	08	86
Castlethorpe	54.75		57	00	74
Roade	59.90	58.00	61	29	67
Blisworth	62.83	61.00	64	00	76
Weedon	69.70	67.00	69	13	85½
Welton	75.30		73	54	67½
Kilsby Tunnel South	76.80		75	16	66
Hillmorton SB	80.30		78	20	74/76
			sigs		18*
Rugby	82.55	80.00	81	42	

* brakes or speed restriction
net time 78½ minutes
Train banked in the rear to Milepost 1

the Southern a decade later, he had unequaled knowledge of the intricacies of Bulleid Pacifics.

Working with some of the crews, they coaxed almost unbelievable performances. The best was the run on the up 'Bournemouth Belle' on April 4, 1965, when Merchant Navy class No. 35012 *United States Lines* touched 3000 indicated hp. Brian helped with the firing and second injector and suggested to driver Gordon Hooper that there was enough steam and water to increase the cut-off to 27% at Winchester and get an all-time record on the climb – which they did. On the run with No. 71000 in Table Five, the load was 14 coaches for 510 tons gross and the net time for the 82.55 miles to Rugby was 78½ minutes. The 80-minute schedule for the 'Mid Day Scot' was tough with the normal load of about 500 tons and needed determined driving. It can be likened to the 80-minute schedule for the 83.8 miles to Salisbury of the 'Atlantic Coast Express', though that was usually 11 or 12 coaches for 400-430 tons full. Next issue I shall be reverting to more normal matters. HR

Above: No. 71000 at Creech St Michael with the 'Torbay Express' from Bristol to Kingswear on July 18, 2010…

Below: …and again at Beam Bridge on the climb to Whiteball Tunnel. BOTH: DON BENN

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THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HERITAGE AWARDS 2025

Guardians of Britain's proud rail heritage, from volunteers to main line operators, were again honoured for their stunning achievements at The National Railway Heritage Awards 2025 ceremony in London on December 3, reports **Robin Jones.**

Railway 200 has made 2025 one of the finest years in the history of the heritage sector, celebrating the bicentenary of the world's first modern steam-hauled train on the Stockton & Darlington Railway on September 27, 1825.

In 2026, we will honour a second major anniversary – that of the world's first volunteer-led heritage railway revival. Due to the efforts of author and historian Tom Rolt, the newly formed Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society effectively took control of the railway on February 8, 1951, and ran its first train on May 14 that year.

The vital seed was sown, and the movement which sprouted blossomed big time, and as Railway 200 showed, it is not only an immense and growing source of national pride, but also a keystone of our tourist industry and an education resource of immense proportions.

It was in 1979 that the first National Railway Heritage Awards were presented, by an organisation dedicated to encouraging and rewarding best practice in the re-use, restoration, and continued upkeep of our rich legacy of railway and tramway buildings and structures.

At first, the awards were focused on the heritage movement, but since privatisation in the 1990s, the categories have broadened to encompass the infrastructure of the national network, and entries from that sector now form a substantial part.

This year, there were nearly 60 entries received for the competition in its 46th year – almost a quarter of that widely-celebrated 200.

Again, the awards were presented at the Merchant Taylors Hall in Threadneedle Street, London, on December 3, with NHRA trustee Tim Hedley-Jones, the executive director of the Railway Heritage Trust, as presenter, and Lord Peter Hendy of Richmond Hill, Minister of State for Rail, as guest of honour.

The top award went to the second heritage line to be revived, in 1955. The National Rail Award for what the awards committee judged to be the best entry in any of the categories was won by the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railwafor the transformational work undertaken at the Top Yard at Boston Lodge.

Boston Lodge Works is considered to be the oldest in the world, having been in operation for almost three centuries. All the original buildings, which were in a poor condition, are Grade II-listed and part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site covering the North Wales slate industry.

In October 2023, work commenced on a 12-month project there; in all, 11 buildings were either restored or recreated. Repair work to the original slate was executed using appropriate materials and mortar. Extraneous porches were removed and walls made good.

The oldest building on the site, known as the barracks, was originally used to house the workers building the Cob and railway. The life-expired original render was totally replaced, with new windows and sills to the original design.

New buildings are scaled to fit the site and other heritage buildings and have design principles respecting earlier buildings on their footprints. The matt black colour adopted for new-builds reduces their visual impact in contrast to the heritage buildings with their striking mortar and colour scheme.

Tim said: "This scheme has conserved a collection of buildings that represent the history and activity in the works. The new additions respect the site's heritage and support the contemporary works. The vision to tackle the site, to conserve and present as well as improve facilities for today's needs, is commendable and the outcome fully reflects this approach. The railway should be congratulated on achieving such a successful outcome in collaboration with their funders, their volunteers, and employees and contractors."

Yet another accolade for Hopetown Darlington

With the Stockton & Darlington Railway bicentenary celebrated in 2025, one entry found itself at its beating heart – Hopetown Darlington.

Tim said: "There was one significant entry that reflected the rich heritage of the region and, because of the quality of the work undertaken on the site, as a mark of our contribution to the celebration of this important event, it was decided that the project deserved to be given a Chairman's Special Award.

"The origins of the site date right back to the dawn of the railway age and the opening of the railway. Its importance has been recognised through listing and its partial use as a museum for some 50 years."

After securing £37 million of funding, in 2022-24, the museum and surrounding heritage buildings were transformed into a new attraction.

The Grade II*-listed stone goods shed, dating from 1833, has been fully refurbished; roofing, stonework, windows and the clock tower, which had partially collapsed, all received major attention. Work on the interior included a cafe and entrance lobby with shop, together with modern toilet facilities. "The result is a sympathetically restored building created with minimal impact on the original structure," said Tim.

"The Grade II*-listed North Road station of 1842 was transformed into the Head of Steam museum in 1975. The 2024 project

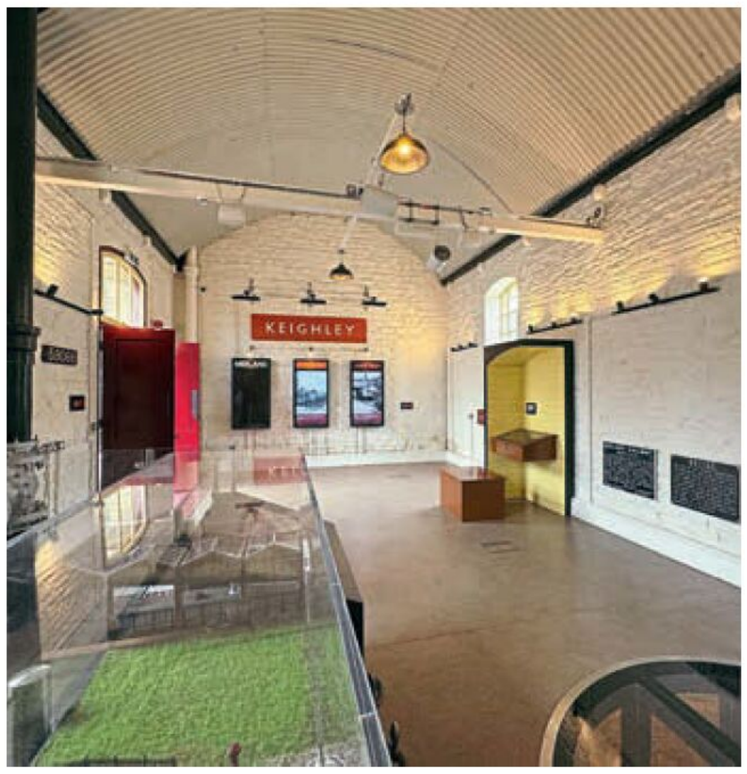
With the National Rail Award are Tom Higginson from Network Rail (far left), Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill (centre), John Prideaux and Nigel Burbidge of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Raiklway and Andy Savage of the National Railway Heritage Awards (far right).

The revamped Top Yard at Boston Lodge. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

NER 2-4-0 No.1463 of 1885 on display inside North Road Station Museum. one of several attractions within the Hopetown Darlington complex. DARLINGTON BC

The refurbished main line platforms at Keighley station.

With the Volunteers Award for the conversion of the Keighley water tower are, left to right, are Greater Anglia's Jonathan Denby, David Pearson and John Hinchcliffe of the KWVR, Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, Matt Stroh of the KWVR and Andy Savage of the National Railway Heritage Awards.



The visitor centre inside the Keighley water tower.

made improvements which removed some of the walls built in 1975, together with opening and replacing the glazing to bring the building back to its form as a station building."

The Grade II-listed Carriage Works of 1853, which has been brought back into the site by reopening the original entrance and the space within, has been converted into artefact storage in one wing and a flexible exhibition space within the other wing. The entrance block in the centre of the building now houses the offices for the site operation.

Tim said: "The whole site is geared towards the heritage, but it engages the visitor, promotes the best aspects of historic building preservation in the modern era, and fully respects the need to make the site fully accessible. This is a fantastic entry, well-presented and one for which the people of Darlington should rightly be very proud."

Prior to the NRHA awards, Hopetown Darlington had been awarded a Visit England Welcome accolade for second year running, based on scores that the attraction obtained following its annual VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme assessment.

The latest accolade follows on from a string of awards and nominations since it opened in July 2024, including Best Museum or Cultural Venue 2024, Willmott Dixon Construction Award, the Heritage Railway Association Railway 200 Special Award for the transformation and expansion of the Head of Steam museum and the HRA Interpretation Award 2025, sponsored by *Heritage Railway*.

The VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Awards were presented at a celebratory lunch at the British Motor Museum in Warwick.

Double win for Worth Valley

The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway carried off two of this year's awards.

The Volunteers Award sponsored by Greater Anglia went to the Keighley & Worth Valley Preservation Society Ltd for its conversion of the base of the Keighley water tower into a visitor centre, as described in *Heritage Railway* issue 323. The tower was built by the Midland Railway in the 1880s to supply about 12 water columns and cranes around Keighley in the 1880s but now supplies only one crane for the heritage railway. The huge void under the tank once housed a steam pump, but since the tank was linked to the mains supply, probably in the early 20th century, it has been derelict. The conversion work began in 2023 and involved the construction of a new heat source pump housing on the location of the long-demolished steam pump chimney.

One major change was the adaptation of the main doorway and floor from platform level to enable level access into the space. The interior has also been fitted with a new floor at higher level to provide level access.

Internally, the space has been fitted out with displays to demonstrate the function and operation of the water tower.

"Overall, this is a highly commendable scheme to bring public access to a previously inaccessible structure and to explain its function and history," said Tim.

The Arch Company Urban Heritage Award – recognising the success of a train operator, station owner or other partnership in ensuring consistently high-quality upkeep and enhancement of the environment of a significant urban station within its care, so as to perpetuate the historic ambience consistent with modern passenger requirements – was won jointly by Network Rail and AmcoGiffen for the restoration of Grade II-listed Keighley station.

The heritage railway uses Platforms 3 and 4 while Northern services, on the electrified main line, uses Platforms 1 and 2.

To tackle significant structural issues, work started on a £9.9 million 18-month restoration project in September 2023 that eventually covered all four platforms, including the installation of new beams to support the structure over the tracks and a new steel framework to support the western side of the passageway. The roof was fully overhauled with lead work, repairs to existing and replacement of missing chimney stacks, and the fitting of an unobtrusive access system across the building.

Work on the timber, resulting from the discovery of extensive rot, included the restoration of the glazed lantern to the ticket office atrium and the replacement, to the original pattern and to match surviving elements, of the timber bench that runs the length of the ticket hall.

"Given the complex structures, along with the issues of maintaining public access to both railway operations, the project is a considerable achievement," said Tim. "It is obvious that the entrants have co-operated very well throughout the scheme to deliver the works to a uniformly high standard across the whole station and the end result is a credit to all concerned."

Network Rail lead portfolio manager Jonny Ham said: "We've maintained the station's 19th century heritage while making sure it's equipped to serve passengers for decades to come, and to be recognised by the judges in this way is excellent for everyone involved."

Cambrian Railway HQ comes good big time

The BAM Nuttall Partnership Award, given for the greatest heritage improvement works made to any historic railway structure as part of a jointly funded project, was won by Shropshire Council for work undertaken on the Grade II-listed headquarters of the Cambrian Railways at Oswestry, now the centrepiece of the Cambrian Heritage Railways which occupies the ground floor.

Funded jointly with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the work was carried out by craftsmen from local building conservation specialist Phillips and Curry Ltd from July 2024 to May 2025.

The external fabric had suffered over the years, with lower levels of brick and stonework having deteriorated by exposure to the water thrown up by passing heavy traffic. The prominent corbels that supported the roof were failing and the roof itself required major attention due to the failure of the asbestos-based tiles.

The front of restored Oswestry station.

The new roof and restored corbels.

The ornamental corbels were originally moulded in Portland cement and pinned to the building with iron nails. Attempts were made to reconnect the corbels by redrilling proved ineffective and the structural engineer recommended remoulding and reattaching them all. Following tests, a mould was created and replacement corbels cast. The asbestos tiles were replaced with 9000 Welsh slates with lead flashing and improved cast-iron rainwater goods.

The weathered stonework was replaced by sandstone sourced from the local Grinshill quarry while the brickwork was patched using recycled bricks from under the roof space.

The building was repainted into its original Cambrian Railways' colours.

The work has also included installing nesting boxes for swifts under the eaves and bat roosting tiles along the roof.

"This is an impressive project and one for which Shropshire Council should be congratulated for having taken it on," said Tim. "The quality of research undertaken and the finished workmanship are exemplary."

Wizard work on landmark viaduct

The Structures Restoration Award, sponsored by Translink and given for the successful restoration, modification or adaptation for new use of any historic railway or tramway civil engineering structure in any ownership, went to AmcoGiffen and Network Rail for the restoration of Category A-listed Glenfinnan Viaduct on the West Highland Extension.

From April 2024, the winners undertook a 12-month restore and repair project to address deterioration in areas of the concrete structure while maintaining its historical and architectural significance as the longest mass concrete railway bridge in Scotland and one of its most recognisable, featuring on bank notes and in Harry Potter films.

Concrete repair mixes were developed and tested for compatibility. Comprehensive testing was carried out to ensure preservation of the structure's heritage and work was supported by conservation experts from the University of Dundee.

Tim said that the restoration was undertaken "just the right time to arrest further deterioration and conserve this magnificent structure for years to come."

From wagon lift to mini museum

The Avanti West Coast Community Award, which recognises the restoration, refurbishment or other improvement of a station of building either by a community group or for a community use that connects communities and promotes social inclusion, was won by MEPC Wellington Place for the restoration of the Grade II-listed wagon lifting hoist and the creation of a mini museum at Wellington Place in Leeds.

The 1850-built lifting hoist was one of a pair which stood either side of the river and canal viaduct. Using steam power and large chains, its role was to transport wagons from the higher-level passenger line down to the ground-level Great Northern Goods yard adjacent to the original Leeds Central station.

The hoist is unusual in that all other rail buildings and lines in the area were cleared in the 1960s. While the building was left in place, all the lifting mechanisms, water tank, and boilers were removed. The land surrounding the tower was initially redeveloped for retail warehousing, but this was subsequently demolished. Since 2006, MEPC has been developing a mixed-use scheme around the structure.

Work on the project began in summer 2024 and the mini museum was opened in May the following year. Wor to stabilise and protect the historic fabric has been extensive and includes the construction of a roof structure to 'cap' the tower and repairs to structural cracks and damage to stonework, including repointing where required using correct mortar and pointing techniques. A major change was the decision to fit glazing to the arch entrances within the building.

The ability to enter the interior allows visibility through the complete structure to roof level and highlights the scale of the structure. The work has included repair and replacement where necessary of high-level structural timber and the conservation of the sections of original lift machinery timbers where they survive.

The floors on the ground have been designed to 'float' above original surfaces and any surviving archaeological evidence.

Tim said: "All things considered, this is a marvellous scheme. The entrant has demonstrated determination in enabling the restoration to a high quality of a significant building using appropriate and informed techniques. In addition, considerable vision has enabled access to and interpretation of the tower for visitors."

Richmond's Art Deco station back at its best

The Railway Heritage Trust Conservation Award for the best restored listed or historic structure to which the trust has contributed was won by South Western Railway, Network Rail and the London Borough of Richmond for the restoration of the station canopy and booking hall at Richmond.

While the current station was initially opened in 1848, the main station building was rebuilt in 1937 to the designs of Southern Railway chief architect James Robb Scott in an Art Deco style.

Many of the period details had over the years been lost or covered up, but the recent restoration of the contemporary Surbiton station indicated what could be achieved and work started in August 2023 on a near two-year £325,000 project to restore Richmond station.

Externally, the façade has been cleaned, and areas of damage have been repaired. The five sets of doors in the façade have been repaired and the bronze cladding elements polished. The modern entrance canopy fascia has been removed. A new bronze canopy fascia, guttering, and glass laylights have been installed to the original design with a classic square clock at the front of the building, the canopy roof finish replaced, and new bronze finish station name lettering has been installed on the façade.

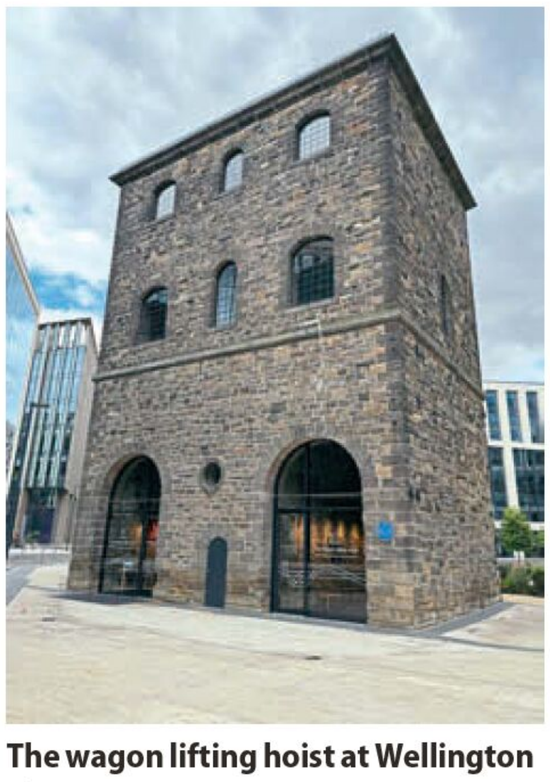
Internally, the missing sections over the entrance doors have been restored and incorporate the green glass heritage-style signage evident in archive photographs, with Art Deco-inspired chandeliers lighting up the booking hall.

The original glass signage was uncovered and preserved in place as far as possible.

Tim said: "The restoration of one of the capital's finest 1930s railway stations is exemplary. This work was based on meticulous research into the history of the station and its design scouring archive sources, and it is a commendable example of collaboration between different agencies."

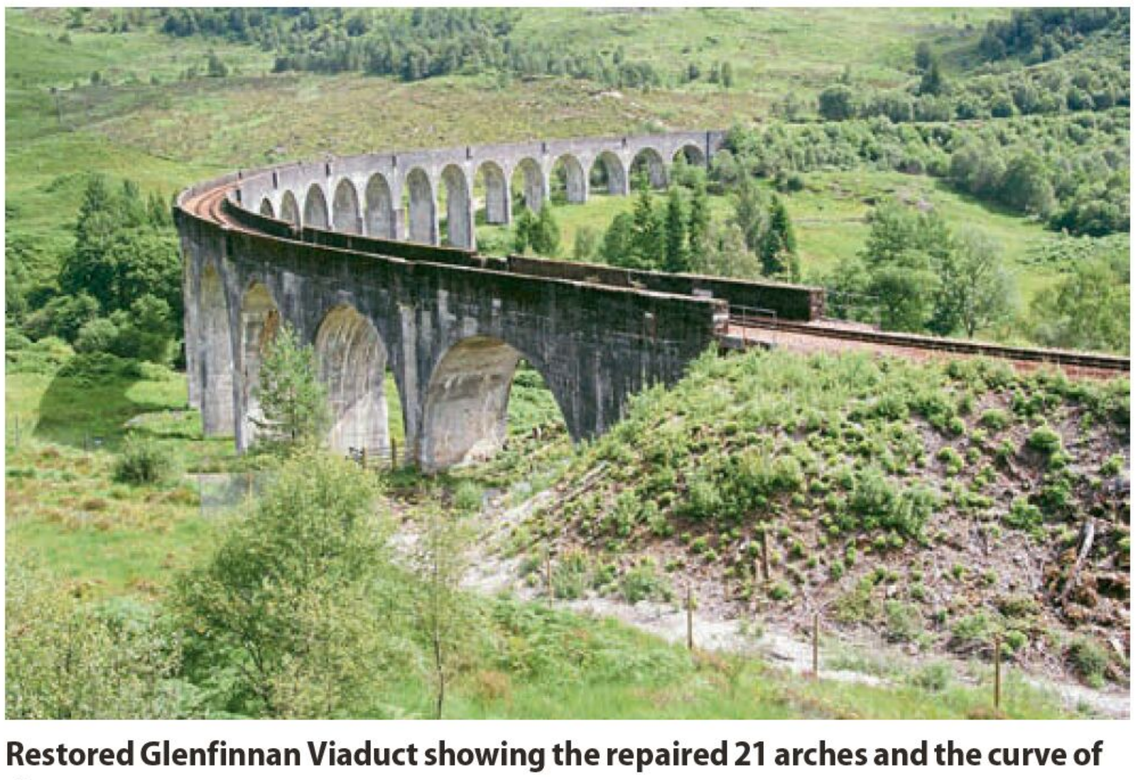
A bridge not too far

The award for a restoration on a closed line, sponsored by the NRHA, which covers the restoration, refurbishment or other means of bringing a building or structure



The wagon lifting hoist at Wellington Place.

The restored central bay façade of Richmond station.



Restored Glenfinnan Viaduct showing the repaired 21 arches and the curve of the structure.

that is no longer in railway ownership back into a sustainable use, was won by National Highways for the restoration of the Category B-listed overbridge at Bonnington in Lanark.

The skewed cast-iron bridge with its stone abutments was built for the Caledonian Railway's extension from Douglas to Muirkirk which opened for freight traffic in January 1873 and for passenger services in June the following year.

The line through Bonnington closed completely in December 1965. The bridge is on the only highway route to the Bonnington Hydro-electric Power Station and is required to carry heavy vehicles. Over the years the condition of the bridge has deteriorated, with the cast-iron girders corroded and both the abutments and parapets indicating accident damage and other problems.

In January 2024, work started on an 11-month restoration programme to restore the bridge, while keeping it open throughout the period. All the cast-iron elements were fully encapsulated in an air-tight and weatherproof membrane to safely allow removal, by grit-blasting, of the lead-based paint prior to being treated and repainted. The damaged stanchions and panels were carefully removed and sent for repair to a specialist, where the work included careful welding of fractured sections and casting of replacement elements to the original pattern.

The brick jack arches were repaired throughout, spalled and fractured stone blocks in the abutments were replaced with indents, and the south west end of the parapet wall rebuilt.

Tim said: "National Highways are to be commended for their adherence to good practice in this scheme to keep a public road overbridge in full use while using original materials where it would have been easier to replace with steel or remove the bridge superstructure and replace with concrete or infill the structure."

A showpiece station 55 years after closure

The Southeastern Commercial Restoration Award for bringing a commercial use to an historic railway or tramway building or structure irrespective of ownership was won by Carol and Mark Benson for Ebberston station, between Pickering and Scarborough

The station at Ebberston opened in 1882, passenger services over the line were withdrawn in June 1950, and the Ebberston station building passed into private ownership in 1955. The current owners acquired it in 1996, with the platform canopy in a dangerous condition and needing removal.

Over the years, the winners completed several projects to restore the station to the condition in which it existed in LNER times to provide self-catering holiday accommodation.

The most recent phase saw the platform canopy restored. Although archive drawings were not available, photographs and elements of the previous canopy had survived so that an authentic restoration could be provided, including a new matching stone corbel and replacement timber dentils.

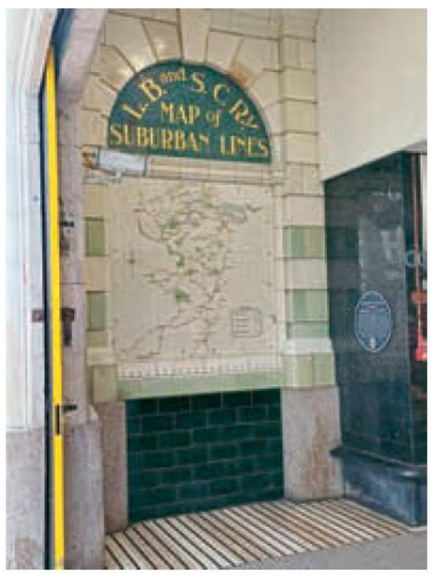
The cast-iron spars were taken down and removed from the site for blast-cleaning and painting before being reinstated. Cast-iron rainwater pipes were installed, as was aluminium guttering to the original pattern. The replacement poster boards were matched to a surviving LNER board at the station.

Top left: Ebberston station and its restored platform canopy.

Top right: The new Hoopers Court entrance to Knightsbridge station.

Below left: The restored Caledonian Railway overbridge at Bonnington, showing the west parapet after reinstatement, it having been removed and repaired off site.

Right: The restored faience and maps at London Victoria.



Tim said: "This work to the canopy completes the platform elevation and must add greatly to the understanding of this typical wayside station and to the enjoyment of its visitors."

For step-free, step back to 1934

The Transport for London Operational Enhancement Award for the scheme that demonstrates the greatest improvement in user accessibility while still sustaining the location's heritage features went to TfL for providing provide step-free access at Knightsbridge station.

The original station, designed by Leslie Green, with a long façade of ox-blood tiles along Hoopers Court, opened in 1906 and incorporated lifts between street and platforms and passageways with the typical cream, green and black tiles.

In 1934, a new entrance added escalators to replace the lifts, which were abandoned, together with the original entrance. In 2016, the Knightsbridge Estate was granted permission to redevelop the space above the station. The existing entrance at the intersection of Brompton Road and Sloane Square was replaced as part of the retail redevelopment and moved to a new entrance at 15 Brompton Street, which opened in 2022.

In 2025, an additional new entrance opened at Hoopers Court which incorporated parts of the station that had not been seen since the 1934 renovation. As part of the work TfL restored architectural features of the facade. The lift shafts were reopened and used for new lifts and an emergency staircase. Electrical cabling in unused passages was relocated into a large ceiling bulkhead. Wall tiling matches the original colours and layout and includes signs to the stairs matching the original typeface and arrows.

"High standards have come to be expected of station work on the Underground, but this one exceeded all expectations," said Tim. "A remarkable result has been achieved in what is a very constrained site. The modern reflection of classic tube station heritage with tiling and signage is excellent, as well as serving an important purpose at a busy location by offering step free access."

Mapping the way right back to the past

The GWR Craft Skills Award recognises the best use of traditional craft skills in restoring a heritage building or structure. The honour went to Benedict O'Looney Architects and Govia Thameslink for the refurbishment of the faience, or stylish glazed terracotta and line maps, at London Victoria station.

In the late 19th century, the LBSCR and the South Eastern & Chatham Railway rebuilt Victoria, the interior spaces being lined in faience with hand-painted ceramic line maps decorating one of the entry passages leading from the forecourt to the station concourse. Over the years these remarkable Edwardian walls and maps became obscured and covered by telephone booths and a news stand. A plan for the scope of repairs and tile replacement work to rectify the damage was established, a significant challenge being to obtain a good match for the large panels of Cornish De Lank granite which forms the plinth of the line maps and walls.

"Obscured for many years, the scheme has restored to view a vivid reminder of the golden age of the late Victorian railway industry to one of the country's pre-eminent stations," said Tim.

➜ Pictures supplied by the NRHA unless otherwise stated. HR

BR'S STANDARD FOURS AND FIVES

Following the formation of British Railways and the appointment of Robin Riddles as Chief Mechanical Engineer, it was decided to begin the construction of several new classes of Standard locomotives for use across all the regions. BR engineman **Dave Wilson** looks at two of the most ubiquitous and numerous of these designs.

The first of the Class 5s emerged from Derby Works in April 1951, although much of the design work was carried out at Doncaster: to be fair, there was a great deal of overlap between the Standard Class 5 and Stanier's LMS classic 'Black Five.' Probably the most noticeable difference between the two was the very-high running plate of the Standard 5, adopted to make servicing and maintenance easier and quicker.

Boiler pressure was 225lb sq in and the cylinders were 19in x 28in, the tractive effort was 26,120lbs. and they weighed in at 76 tons 4cwt. There were two slightly different grate areas of 27.75 or 28.5 sq ft, giving firebox heating surfaces of 156 or 171 sq ft respectively, which led to slightly differing areas of a superheating too.

The Standard 5 had 6ft 2in driving wheels (as opposed to the 6ft of the 'Black Five') and for the fireman there was a rocking grate, which made fire cleaning and disposal much easier than having to paddle out the dirty fire with a long metal shovel – 'a paddle.' On the down side, filling the sand boxes was a bit trickier!

Another glaring omission was the lack of electric lighting through the provision of a steam generator. Trying to see the water levels in the boiler on a dark night in the middle of nowhere with a paraffin fuelled gauge lamp could hardly be described as 'modern' – more biblical!

Despite being a nominally Standard class, there were, in addition to minor variations in grate size and heating areas, changes to the motion; Nos. 73125 to 73154 were all built with Caprotti valve gear as opposed to the Walschaerts motion used on the majority of the class. There were also a surprising number of different tender combinations: the BR1, holding 4250 gallons and weighing 49 tons 3cwt, were fitted to Nos. 73000-73049; the BR1B tenders carried 4725 gallons, weighed 50 tons 5cwt, and were fitted to Nos. 73080-73089, 73100-73109, 73120-73134 and 73145–73171; BR1C tenders, which carried 4725 gallons and weighed 53 tons 5cwt, were fitted to Nos. 73065-73079, 73090-73099 and 73135-73144. The BR1Fs held 5625 gallons, weighed 55tons 5cwt, and were fitted to Nos. 73110-73119, while the BR1G tenders held 5000 gallons, weighed 52 tons 10cwt, and were fitted to Nos. 73050-73052 (this was apparently because they were originally allocated to Bath Green Park for working over the Somerset & Dorset route). BR1H tenders carried 4250 gallons, weighed 49 tons 3 cwt, and were coupled to Nos. 73053-73064. Finally, the BR1C tenders carried nine tons of coal; the rest were of seven tons capacity.

Why there were so many variations on what was meant to be a Standard type remains unclear. However, the fitting of the BR1F tenders with their 5625-gallon water capacity to Nos. 73110-73119 was primarily because they were all allocated to the Southern Region, which did not have any troughs. Nos. 73080-73089 were also allocated to the Southern, but these engines were fitted with the 4725-gallon BR1B tenders. Initially, Nos. 73080-73089 were employed on the Central and Eastern sections of the Southern Region, transferring to Nine Elms after the completion of the Kent coast electrification.

The class was constructed in 1951-57, the majority at Derby, with 42 being built at Doncaster between August 1955 and May 1957. The Doncaster-built engines were Nos. 73100-73124 and 73155-73171. However, there was something of a break in production in 1952, with only one engine being built, No. 73029 – and, quite by chance, this was one of the class I worked on myself.

I remember this because No. 73029 was one of a small number of the class painted in BR passenger green and lined out with orange and black.

I also worked on Nos. 73080-73089, 73110-73119 and Nos. 73043, 73096 (another of the green-liveried engines) and 73050; the latter is now based at the Nene Valley Railway, while

North Yorkshire Moors Railway-based No. 75029 *Green Knight* is seen at Darnholme with a Grosmont-Goathland goods working during the line's 2012 autumn gala. It is currently awaiting overhaul at Grosmont.

No. 73156, disguised as No. 73084 *Tintagel,* is seen pulling out of Quorn & Woodhouse station on the Great Central Railway with a train for Leicester North during one of the line's gala events in 2017. No. 73084 *Tintagel* is one of the Class 5MTs I worked on during my time at Nine Elms in the 1960s.

No. 73096 is preserved at the Mid-Hants Railway. I probably worked on No. 73022 and on a few others too, but I have no records.

Nos. 73080-73089 and 73110-73119 were all given names previously applied to the Southern Railway N15 'King Arthur' class and were often referred to as 'Standard Arthurs' as a result.

One interesting transfer occurred in 1951 when No. 73008, initially allocated to Perth, was reallocated to the Rugby Testing Plant during August, before returning to Perth in March 1952. As far as I can tell, this was for conducting general performance and efficiency tests. No. 73030 in 1953 and No. 73031 in 1958 also made visits to the Rugby Test Plant, with the latter possibly involved in an electrically augmented superheating system being tested.

The class saw work across all regions but only a handful ever went to the Eastern Region (two at Stratford in 1952 and five at Neasden in 1958), while the Midland, Scottish, Southern and Western regions all had sizeable allocations, and some of the last steam-hauled passenger workings in these regions were handled by the Class 5s.

In my own time on the footplate, I worked with them on Waterloo-Basingstoke, Waterloo-Bournemouth and Waterloo-Salisbury passenger services and on van trains from Southampton Docks to Nine Elms goods carrying fruit, mainly bananas, brought in to Southampton by the Union Castle line boats.

Despite the prodigious numbers of 'Black Fives,' the largest allocation of Standard 5s was to Midland Region depots. The numbers rose steadily from 1952 onwards and by 1965, a total of 58 were allocated to Midland Region depots, after which, in common with all other classes, numbers began to decline. The largest allocation was at Patricroft in Manchester, and for a few years Shrewsbury had quite a number on the books for its size.

The Scottish depots had an allocation which eventually numbered 48 by 1964, the bulk of them at Polmadie and Corkerhill, although Perth and Eastfield had goodly numbers.

In a scene reminiscent of the van trains I worked on between Southampton Docks and Nine Elms Goods, on which the Class 5s were regular performers, we see No. 73156 rounding the curve at Kinchley Lane on the Great Central Railway.

No. 73156 is seen just south of Woodthorpe on the Great Central Railway, piloting visiting West Country Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells,* a scene which might well have occurred on the Somerset & Dorset during the late 1950 /1960s.

Double Caprotti: Taken in October 2010, we see the Caprotti valve-geared No. 73129 piloting the unique Caprotti-geared BR Class 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* across Brooksbottom Viaduct on the East Lancashire Railway during that year's autumn steam gala.

Waiting to depart from Oakworth, No. 73129 is unusually facing Keighley. It was the visiting engine for a Keighley & Worth Valley gala in 2010.

The Scottish-based engines, apart from one or two exceptions, spent their working lives in Scotland. On the Southern, the final allocation was 44, with the bulk at Nine Elms and Eastleigh and a few at Weymouth and latterly Guildford.

All 172 members of the class remained in service until 1964, when the first withdrawals began. The first to go was No. 73027, which was originally a Blackpool engine before moving to Bristol St Philips Marsh and then on to Swindon, from where it was withdrawn in February. From then on, numbers steadily declined, with 156 still at work in 1965 down to 115 in 1966, 76 in 1967, and by the end in 1968, just 23 were left – all allocated to Patricroft. How many of these engines where in active service there and how many were simply stored is unknown.

Despite them being considered 'modern' engines, most had, by steam locomotive standards, short working lives. Nos. 73161 and 73164 lasted just seven years from entering service in 1957 to being withdrawn in 1964.

My experience of working with the Standard 5s was that they were capable of a good turn of speed, with the mid to high 80s attained with ease. I have seen mention of them reaching 100mph but despite some serious efforts at times, the closest I ever got to this was the low 90s with my regular driver Eric 'Sooty' Saunders on an Up boat train between Hook and Farnborough.

They were, in general, good steamers, but if you got too much fire under the brick arch or if the ashpans were full and the engine was due a washout, they could be quite indifferent.

Turning to the Class 4 75000s, they, like the 73000s, were introduced in May 1951, with the design work being carried out at Brighton Works with some input from Derby, Doncaster and Swindon, where they were constructed. These fine little engines were, in essence, a modified version of the Class 4MT 2-6-4s of the 80000 series. The minor differences were a longer boiler and the use of the front bogie from the Class 5s; boiler pressure was the same 225lb sq in and they were fitted with 5ft 8in driving wheels, Walschaerts motion and two outside 18in x 28in cylinders.

Their allocations were not as widespread as those of the Class 5, with 45 going to the Midland Region, 20 to the Western, and the final 15 to the Southern. Like the Class 5s, these Southern-allocated engines had tenders with a higher water capacity – in this case, the BR1B, which carried 4725 gallons, while the rest of the class members were attached to either the BR2 or BR2A tenders with a 3500-gallon capacity.

The engines weighed 69 tons and the tenders between 42 tons 3cwt for the BR2/2A and 50 tons 5cwt for the BR1B. Originally built with single chimneys, for some reason between 1957-61, all the Southern-allocated engines, Nos. 75065-75079, received double chimneys, along with Nos. 75003/5/6/8/20/23/26/29.

As with the Class 5s, withdrawals began in 1964, with No. 75001 and 75067 being retired. The last 10 engines remaining in service were three (Nos. 75019/27/39) at Tebay for use as banking engines on Shap and the other seven based at Carnforth.

Five of the Southern-based engines were allocated to Dover in 1958 and worked commuter services to Charing Cross and London Victoria, while three were at Bath Green Park, where their duties included piloting the BR Standard 9Fs and Southern Railway West Country/Battle of Britain Class Pacifics over the Somerset & Dorset route. Other notable allocations included Bank Hall, Eastleigh, Bletchley, Oxford, Chester and Croes Newydd and, in later years, Skipton, Shrewsbury and Stoke.

None of the class went to the Eastern or North Eastern Regions, nor did they go to Scotland. However, one engine, No. 75028, did lead a rather nomadic existence. Based at Plymouth Laira in 1954, it steadily worked its way up north through spells at Oswestry, Rhyl and Chester, to finally end up in Workington in Cumbria, where it was based between April and June 1960. Quite why it was sent to Workington for just three months is unclear.

Following this allocation, No.75028 returned south via allocations to Mold Junction, Rhyl again, followed by Bletchley, before going back into Wales and a spell at Machynlleth, from where it was withdrawn at the end of 1965. Given their wide route availability, it is likely that those engines based at former GWR depots like Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Machynlleth covered very similar duties to those performed by the GWR Manor 4-6-0s over the former Cambrian Railway routes.

I had a great deal of fun working on these engines on a variety of turns including passenger and goods trains. Of all the different classes I worked on, it was the Class

No. 75069 passes Moorgates during a visit to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway from its base on the Severn Valley Railway on September 19, 2023.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway gala guest 4MT No. 75069 on the long climb from Esk Valley up to Goathland summit with a Grosmont-Pickering service on September 19, 2023.

No. 75078 crosses Mytholmes Viaduct between Oakworth and Haworth with a service train to Oxenhope on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. Like No. 75069, No. 75078 is one of the Class 4MTs which I enjoyed working on during my footplate days.

4 Standards which provided me with the most opportunities to do a spot of driving. There were two turns in particular which, if I was working them with my regular three link driver Eric, he would give me a spell on the regulator.

The turns were the 4.40am Waterloo-Salisbury, usually referred to as the 'Salisbury Papers,' and a freight turn from Nine Elms Goods to Basingstoke.

On the 4.40am Down, my turn on the regulator would often commence at Woking and continue as far as Basingstoke, or after leaving Basingstoke and then down to Andover. Quite by chance, it was on this turn that I had my one and only gauge glass blow – there was no spare glass in the locker and so we had to run from Overton, where the glass went, down to Salisbury with only one gauge glass.

I hasten to add that the lack of spare gauge glass was not my fault, but that of the crew who had prepared our engine and brought it up to Waterloo.

There was no 'official' training for footplate crews and being given a chance on the regulator and learning how and where to brake for station stops or at signals was an essential part of the learning process for a fireman on the road to becoming a driver.

Having a turn on the regulator was even more important on freight trains, especially on those which were not fully fitted. Setting off too quickly or braking too sharply can have serious consequences for the guard; the couplings and the potential to buffer lock the wagons under sharp braking. You had to learn how to gently ease out the couplings so as not to 'snatch' the train and how to slow down or negotiate situations where some wagons were on an up gradient while others were on a down or, of course, vice versa. Driving loose-coupled freight trains is a more skilful art than working a vacuum-fitted passenger train where what really counts is learning braking points – particularly stopping right for taking water where the margin for error is not much more than a few feet in either direction.

To my mind, the Standard Class 4s seemed to be very quick on the get-away after leaving intermediate station stops and in no time at all they could be whipping along at 60mph or even 70mph. I always found them to be good steamers too; even when drafted in to cover the Class 5 usually booked for the 7.54pm Waterloo-Basingstoke, which I worked frequently when I was in link four during my early months at Nine Elms. I only ever worked on those engines fitted with a double chimney, so I cannot comment as to whether this particular alteration made any appreciable difference to their steaming capabilities.

There are six surviving members of the class: Nos. 75014/ 27/ 29/69 /78/79. Nos. 75014 and 75027 have single chimneys and the rest have the double chimney modification. No. 75014 is at the Dartmouth Steam Railway, No. 75027 at the Bluebell, No. 75029 at the North Yorkshire Moors, No. 75069 at the Severn Valley, No. 75078 at Keighley & Worth Valley, and No. 75079 at the Mid-Hants.

Despite the Class 5s out numbering the Class 4s by more than two to one, only five of them made it into the heritage sector and, bizarrely, I worked on three – Nos. 73050/82/96.

No. 73129 is one of those fitted with Caprotti valve gear and the other is No. 73156, and both were from the batch of 42 built at Doncaster. No. 73050 is at the Nene Valley, 73082 *Camelot* the Bluebell, 73096 the Mid-Hants, 73129 the East Lancashire Railway, and 73129 and 73156 the Great Central. I also worked on three of the surviving Standard 4s, Nos. 75069/78 /79, all former Southern Region locomotives. HR

Class 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75019 (actually No. 75014) is seen piloting No. 75078 with a Keighley-Oxenhope service on August 8, 2019, during one of the Keighley & Worth Valley's gala events. No. 75014 was disguised as No. 75019, which had for several years been a Skipton-based engine. No. 75014, now named *Braveheart*, spent several years hauling 'The Jacobite' steam service between Fort William and Mallaig. It was sold to the Dartmouth Steam Railway & River Boat Company in 2002.

Premier League result at GWRA

GW Railwayana's November 15/16 auction provided a Premier League result when Class B17 'Footballer' nameplate *Manchester City* sold for £17,000, although a second B17 plate, from classmate 61662 *Manchester United*, did not sell.

The *Manchester City* plate was originally allocated by the LNER to May 1937-built No. 2870 but for unknown reasons was transferred within days to the next new-build member of the class, No. 2871. However, in April 1946 that locomotive, which became No. 61671 on Nationalisation, was renamed *Royal Sovereign,* and the *Manchester City* name never used again.

In contrast, the *Manchester United* name was given to No. 2862 on its entry into service in January 1937, and remained with the 4-6-0 throughout its operational life, which ended on withdrawal from Stratford (30A) as No. 61662 in December 1959.

Another steam nameplate to achieve five figures was *Princess Arthur of Connaught* from LMS Princess Royal No. 46207, which fetched exactly £10,000, a landmark so nearly equalled by *Sir Murrough Wilson* from LNER A4 Pacific No. 60002 that went for £9900, while GWR combined Bulldog nameplate and numberplate 3336 *Titan* sold for £8200, *British Columbia* from LMS Jubilee No. 45559 for £7500, and closely-matched pair *Meg Merrilies* (LNER Peppercorn A1 No. 60115) and *County of Hereford* (GWR No. 1017), for £6500 and £6000 respectively.

The smokebox numberplate from the LNER Pacific sold immediately after its nameplate for £4300 to top this category, and its 1948 Doncaster worksplate (works No. 2032) completed the set by achieving a category-winning £4250.

Returning to nameplates, a jostling group around the £5000 mark that was determined to get a slice of the action was led by The *Red Knight* from SR King Arthur No. 30755 (£5500), supported by a trio at £5000 comprising a second King Arthur, *Sir Pelleas* from No. 30778, *Rhuddlan Castle* (GWR No. 5039) and *Duke of Cornwall* from GWR 1895-built veteran Duke 4-4-0 No. 3252.

Old-timer

Within the £5000-£3000 sector came no fewer than eight nameplates, topped by *Jamaica* from a second LMS Jubilee, No. 45612 (£4900). Close behind was yet another GWR old-timer, *Dog Star* from Star No. 4001, which was built at Swindon in 1907 (£4700), followed by *John Bunyan* from 'Brit' No. 70003 (£4200),*Earl Waldegrave* (GWR Castle No. 5057) at £4000, *Alfred Fletcher* from LNWR Claughton class No. 1327/LMS No. 5908 (£3600), *Serlby Hall* (LNER B17 No. 61631 – £3500), and GWR pair *Aldenham Hall* from No. 4902 which went for £3200, and *Oakley Hall* (No. 5936) at £3000. That line-up emphasised how active the main line nameplate lower levels have become, and so did the £2000-£3000 category, which saw a further four GWR and LNER plates join to the party. These were *Princess Maud* from Star class No. 4049 (£2400), B17 pair *Hinchingbrooke* (No. 61634) and *Framlingham* (No. 61603), each at £2300, and finally *Saint Dunstan* from No. 2921, which brought pre and post-Grouping and post-Nationalisation main line steam nameplate proceedings to a close with a price of £2100.

In addition to *Manchester United*, unsold nameplates comprised *Hirola* from LNER B1 No. 61023 and *King George I* from GWR No. 6006, although this 4-6-0's smokebox numberplate did sell post-sale for £3000.

Heritage modern traction had a quiet day when compared with steam, but within its ranks was one distinct highlight that was close to relegating the 'Footballer' nameplate into second place, and another that also made it into five figures. Heading the charge with a realisation of £15,000 was *Western Patriarch* with cabside numberplate from Class 52 diesel-hydraulic D1053, which was shadowed by *Honourable Artillery Company* with integral crest from Class 45 D89/45006 (£11,000), and a little further back *Zebra* (Class 42 'Warship' D866) at £8700.

Cabside numberplates are usually the domain of the GWR, and that from No. 5020 *Trematon Castle* flew the flag by selling for £3100. However, that wasn't enough for the victor's spoils, due to a heritage modern traction contender coming up trumps when E3303 from a 1961-built WCML Class 83 electric locomotive sold for £3200.

Diverging from traction, be it pre or post-Grouping, post-Nationalisation, or heritage modern, we find ourselves at the door of platform totem signs, a perennial favourite which has an enduring appeal. Topping a comprehensive selection was BR(NE) Heckmondwike that realised £6100, comfortably above BR(W) Barry Island (£4400), BR(S) St Budeaux Victoria Road making only its second auction appearance (£4300), and BR(E) Long Melford (£4000). The first Scottish Region totem was North Berwick (£3500), and that from the Midland Region Jacksdale, which sold for £2700.

Top target

THE top SR target sign was Bournemouth West (£3600), from the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway terminus that opened in 1874 and closed in 1965, and the leading London Underground platform sign was Bond Street (£1400).

Within the signalling sector, the crown – with a realisation of £2800 – went to a Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway/GCR permissive block instrument plated Oxspring Huddersfield Jcn that was presented to William Boddy, a former chairman of the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers and divisional signalling and telecommunications engineer (Sheffield 1972-82).

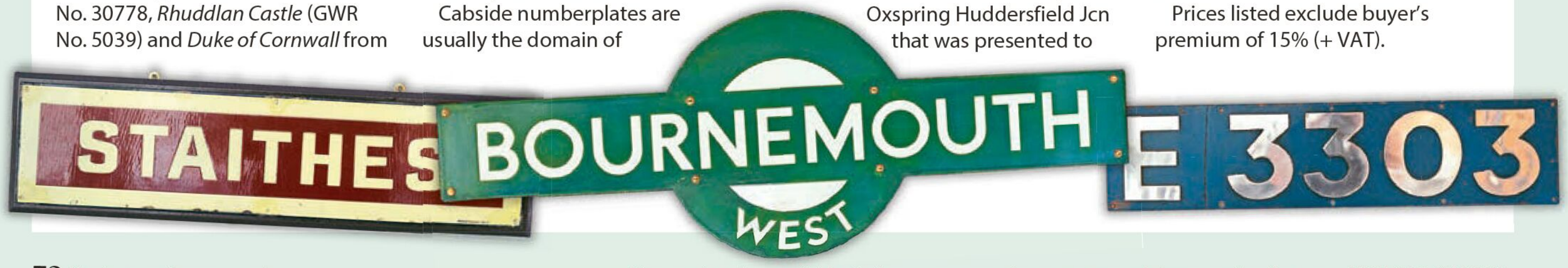
At the head of the signalbox nameboard selection was Staithes from the Whitby-Saltburn line (£2700), from the same part of the country came an LNER Whitley Bay poster by Frank Newbould (£2500), and the highest-priced clock was a circa 1842 London & Brighton Railway 14in dial example that is believed to be one of the oldest surviving railway clocks (£3100).

Finally, two left-field items to end to my report of a busy two days that embraced exactly 1000 lots: a GER Victorian era fireman's decorative brass helmet that went for £4600 and a GWR Swindon Work's wood with cast letters notice that sold for £6800. It was dated September 1905, and under the heading 'Workmen's lavatories' it epitomised the working rules and regulations of that time that would be incomprehensible today.

It instructed that on entry, employees must hand their brass check to an attendant, and if they spent more than 10 minutes in the lavatory, the whole time would be stopped.

Of the two-day sale, auctioneer Simon Turner said: "Difficult to analyse. Steam nameplates were okay, shedplates went well, totems on the whole very good, and how about that toilet notice? Wow!"

Prices listed exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).



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Glen and headboard are joint winners

Locomotive nameplate *Glenshesk,* from a Ballycastle Railway of Northern Ireland locomotive, and a 'Northern Irishman' headboard were in a dead-heat at the top of the sale of the Lord O'Neill of Shane's Castle railwayana collection held by Mullens of Bray, County Wicklow, on November 10, each selling for 3000 Euros (one Euro = 88p).

The Ballycastle Railway was a 16-mile 3ft gauge line in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, that opened in October 1880, was taken over by the Northern Counties Committee, a division of the LMS, in 1924, and was closed in July 1950. The glen after which the locomotive was named is one of the nine glens of Antrim.

Shadowing this pair at 2600 Euros were an Arthur Guinness Son & Co locomotive No. 2 numberplate, a Great Southern Railways (Ireland) Connemara poster that fetched 2000 Euros, and an LMS 'Ireland for holidays' poster (1800 Euros).

Other headboards to go under the hammer included 'The Irish Mail' (1600 Euros), 'The Ulster Express' at 1300 Euros, 'The Shamrock' (1100 Euros), and at 950 Euros, 'The Irishman.' All the headboards were for trains on the English or Scottish main lines for ports handling ferries across the Irish Sea.

The prices quoted exclude buyer's premium of 26.31% (inc VAT) for room bids and 30% (inc VAT) for online bids.

Underdogs? Industrial steam is the top dog

INDUSTRIAL steam, so often railwayana auction underdogs, defied convention in the JustaClickAgo online sale of photographs, negatives, slides and paperwork that ran on November 17-23 by claiming the top realisation.

This was £700 for 175 colour slides of mainly colliery steam taken in the 1960s at such National Coal Board locations as Kingsbury, Ashington, Bolsover and Celynen North, although steel and ironstones industries were also represented.

At £520 came a collection of non-commercial cine films also from the 1960s, including Great Central farewell, specials on the former Stratford-upon-Avon & Midland Junction Railway route, London Midland Region miscellany, and a focus on steam, and overseas traction followed with a £360 realisation for a collection of colour slides of German steam taken in November 1973 and £330 for slides of Italian steam in 1974. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 18%.

Clocks tick the right boxes

TWO 12in drop dial clocks were the leading railwayana successes in a collectors' auction held by Chilcotts of Honiton, Devon, on November 15. The first, an LSWR example, sold for £820, while a GWR clock with an ivorine plate numbered 1429 went for £700. Among model trains that went under the hammer was a Hornby OO-gauge live steam No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* set that also achieved £700.

The auction featured the collection of Nigel Mann, a lifelong railway enthusiast and a West Somerset Railway volunteer guard and signalman who died in 2023. Prior to the sale, auctioneer Duncan Chilcott paid tribute to Nigel, a long-time organiser of Bristol model railway exhibition, describing him as someone who helped others build layouts as well as developing his own, which was featured in a model railway magazine.

"His enthusiasm continued through the years, and when we received his collection there were two containers worth," he said. The prices exclude buyer's premium of 25% (+ VAT).

A1 No. 60115 *Meg Merrilies* approaches York with the Up 'Flying Scotsman' in the early 1950s with a mixed collection of rolling stock that was characteristic of the era. As reported on page 72, a complete set of nameplate, worksplate, and smokebox numberplate from the Pacific sold for a total of £15,050 at GW Railwayana's November 15 auction.
TRANSPORT TREASURY/NEVILLE STEAD COLLECTION

Live steam leads from the front

BASSETT-LOWKE gauge three (2½in) live steam led from the front in a Vectis model train sale on October 29/30, thanks to two four-figure realisations comprising £1600 for a Great Eastern Railway 4-4-0 and £1400 for Caledonian Railway 4-6-0 No. 903 *Cardean*, the locomotive on which the model was based, having been named after a Scottish Roman fort that was abandoned in AD86.

A Sancheng of China O-gauge Royal Scot 4-6-0 No. 46113 *Cameronian* sold for £950, and an £850 bid secured another O-gauge model, of SNCF 2-8-2 No. 141.P.1. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

2026: a busy year ahead

The year 2026 is shaping up to be busiest ever for railwayana auctions, so as the new year approaches, *Heritage Railway* presents the full and exclusive calendar. Happy collecting!

Ends January 4
GW Railwayana
January 14-24
Great Northern Railwayana
January 17
Thirsk Railwayana
February 2 -27
Paddington Ticket Auctions
February 16-22
JustaClickAgo
February 28
Main Line Railwayana
Transport Auctions of London
March 7-9
Great Central Railwayana
March 14/15
GW Railwayana
March 21
Talisman Railwayana
March 25-April 4
Great Northern Railwayana
April 18
Thirsk Railwayana
April 25
Main Line Railwayana
May 4-29
Paddington Ticket Auctions
May 16
Talisman Railwayana
May 18-25
JustaClickAgo
May 2 5-31
Main Line Railwayana
June 6-8
Great Central Railwayana
June 20
Thirsk Railwayana
June 27
Transport Auctions of London
July 18-19
GW Railwayana
July 25
Main Line Railwayana
August 3-28
Paddington Ticket Auctions
August 24-30
JustaClickAgo
September 5-7
Great Central Railwayana
September 19
Thirsk Railwayana
September 26
Main Line Railwayana
October 24
Talisman Railwayana
October 31
Transport Auctions of London
November 2-27
Paddington Ticket Auctions
November 14/15
GW Railwayana
November 16-22
Just aClickAgo
November 28
Main Line Railwayana
December 5-7
Great Central Railwayana

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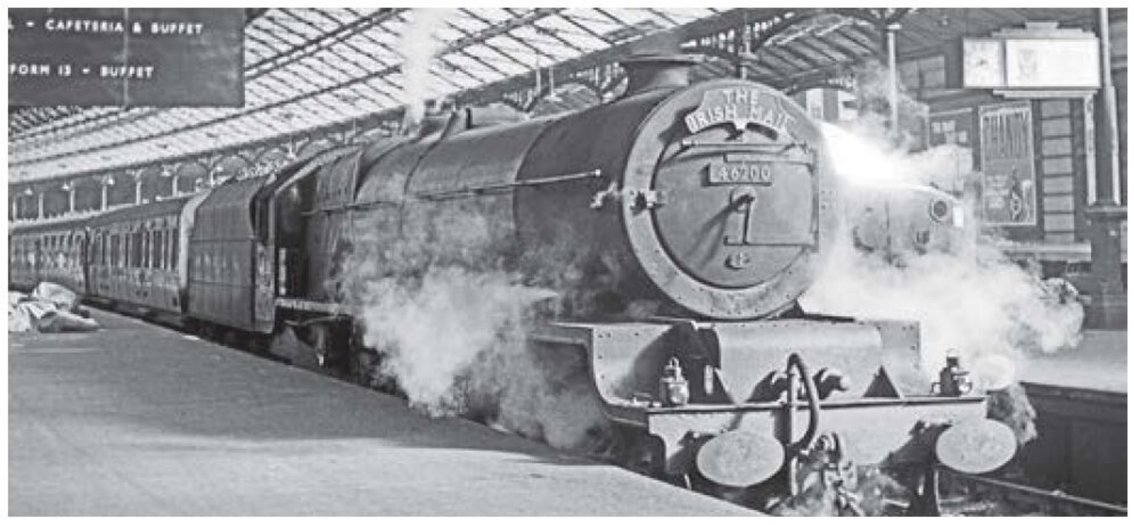

Princess Royal No. 46200 *The Princess Royal* awaits departure from Euston with 'The Irish Mail.' A headboard from the London-Holyhead boat train, which first ran in 1848, sold for 1600 Euros at an auction in Bray, County Wicklow, on November 10, as reported on page 73. TRANSPORT TREASURY/DEREK POTTON

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A SHUNTER'S ISLAND HOMECOMING

The debut of a former local resident locomotive topped the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's end of season gala, which also celebrated an anniversary of one of the island's early railway companies, as **Owen Hayward** reports.

Restoration of No. 03179 has been ongoing for nine years and saw the locomotive completely stripped back. On June 11, 2017, reassembly was underway, with the cab metalwork in primer but engine bonnet covers still removed. ANDY WEST

The Railway 200 year has heralded a healthy number of historic moments, ranging from the first time two Castles have worked in succession through Dawlish since the final days of BR steam right through to the return to service of several locomotives that have been operationally absent for many – or, in some cases, even all – of their years in the heritage era. While the latter has predominantly been of the steam variety, one unassuming diesel locomotive making a return is, to many, just another run-of-the-mill shunter.

The humble Class 03 was once the backbone of many a station yard, often employed on pilot duties where they would be tasked with the role of moving empty coaching stock in and out of platforms across mainland Britain. So, what makes the return of this particular example, No. 03179, so important?

The answer is simple: as a former resident to the Isle of Wight, its return to service has seen it head back to the island after an absence of more than 30 years.

Heavy restoration

No. 03179 was built in 1952 at Swindon Works and initially led a life out of the spotlight. That was, at least, until 1987, when it was initially withdrawn by BR. At that time, work was underway to electrify the remaining rail network on the Isle of Wight, but motive power was needed to assist with this. Along with classmate No. 03079, the recently-withdrawn shunter was dispatched there the following year, taking up residence at the Island Line depot at Ryde St Johns Road. While its classmate retained the BR blue colours, No. 03179 was repainted into Network SouthEast's iconic 'toothpaste' livery (the only example of the class to carry this); both also received cab modifications to enable them to pass through the low tunnels on the approach to Ryde Esplanade.

No. 03079 would be withdrawn in 1996, but No. 03179 remained in use until 1998, when it left the island after being sold. It returned to use serving the main line depot at Hornsey, where it was named *Clive* after an employee.

It continued in use there until 2016 and was thus the last example of the class to be in use anywhere on the national network. Before then, it had visited the Nene Valley Railway's diesel gala in March 2008, where it unfortunately failed with a seized engine on the first day and would not run again until returning to Hornsey afterwards.

That particular failure is likely to have been what resulted in *Clive* becoming sidelined thereafter, with the last known date of it being used recorded as August 2, 2010. Following this, it stood idle until it was made available for sale by Govia Thameslink in 2016, with it swiftly being purchased by the Rushden Transport Museum on June 24 and moving there a month later. Sadly, further mechanical issues led to it almost immediately being stopped and so began a restoration that would take nine years to complete.

On September 23, 2017, it was sold to father-and-son team Andy and Dale West, who continued the work that had been started. "The restoration itself was not without its

Back on the Isle of Wight for the first time since 1998, No. 03179 *Clive* arrives at Havenstreet with a service from Wootton on November 29. OWEN HAYWARD

At *Clive's* launch event on November 28, guests were amused to find the locomotive ready to greet them in cake form, which had been produced by a local supplier. ANDY WEST

The launch event also saw several Network SouthEast signs, which would have been seen on the Island Line when *Clive* was based at Ryde, on display in the IOWSR's new barn café. ANDY WEST

W8 *Freshwater* catches the evening sun at Ashey Common on November 30. OWEN HAYWARD

D2554 *Nuclear Fred* climbs towards Wootton with a trio of brake vans in tow. NICK GILLIAM

challenges," said Andy. "When we started, we had very little experience in restoring anything, let alone a locomotive. We would be working in the open and had very little in the way of facilities.

"Eventually, we erected a shelter over part of the locomotive which was only supposed to last a few years, but it is still there nine years later. Parts were often taken home in the family car and in many cases prepared and painted in our kitchen on the promise I would have it fully decorated afterwards, which eventually it was.

"With Dale, we did 90% of the work ourselves, learning as we went along, and asking others for advice and help when needed. We're both so grateful to everyone who gave us encouragement and support along the way."

Back to the Wight

The idea of taking *Clive* back to the Isle of Wight was not a sudden one – it had been mooted right back when the pair bought the locomotive, but it wasn't until the restoration neared completion that moves were made to facilitate that suggestion. A 10-year deal has been signed that now sees the locomotive based on the IOW steam railway, a short distance away from its past home at Ryde.

On October 21, *Clive* was loaded up and began its journey south, crossing the Solent aboard a Wightlink ferry (gaining much interest from other motorists in the process), before finally being unloaded at the heritage line's Havenstreet locomotive yard.

Following this, several final fettling jobs began to complete the locomotive ahead of its launch event, which took place on November 28. Then, *Clive* starred in the railway's end of season winter gala and ales festival on November 29/30 – pulling its first passenger trains since its fateful visit to the NVR some 17 years beforehand.

"To be here today is just an amazing feeling for us, being able to drive and see *Clive* working in these beautiful surroundings," said Andy. "We have been made so welcome by everyone at the railway. It was incredible to see so many people enjoying the gala and to have so many kind comments about the restoration.

"*Clive* has such unique history, especially for a shunting locomotive, and now being based here, it helps tell the story of the Island Line railways in the network Southeast period."

The two-day event saw the railway's newest resident join Class 05 D2554 *Nuclear Fred*, LBSCR A1 'Terrier' W8 *Freshwater* and LSWR O2 W24 *Calbourne* working passenger services, with an interesting timetable devised for the occasion. Each day, one of the steam locomotives would work full line trips, while the other would work a second passenger set between Smallbrook Junction and Havenstreet, whereupon it would swap with the 03, which would finish the journey to Wootton and back.

In between these trains, D2554 worked a small number of return journeys to Wootton hauling a rake of three brake vans. Built by Hunslet in 1956, it is vacuum braked only and tends to be found on display in the Train Story museum building.

One of the first batch of its class, it was built with a lower cab height that made it well-suited to the restricted loading gauges of the island's railways.

Having spent time allocated to BR's Eastern and Southern regions, it arrived at Ryde in 1966 and was also employed on the electrification of the Island Line, after which it was retained for use on maintenance trains thereafter. It was christened *Nuclear Fred* by railway staff, and the name stuck. It arrived on the IOWSR on August 23, 1984.

Visitors to the gala were able to make full use of the island's rail offerings, with a joint ticket costing just £20 for adults, not

only allowing for entry and travel aboard the heritage line's services, but also unlimited travel over the Island Line between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin – a fare that proved immensely good value when considering a normal adult fare is £25 when booked in advance.

Long history

As well as concluding the IOWSR's Railway 200 celebrations, the gala also marked the end of the 150th anniversary year for the Ryde & Newport Railway, which originally built and operated the route over which the heritage line operates a part of today.

The R&NR opened on December 20, 1987, and had come about as a result of the port of Ryde overtaking that at Cowes as the main entry point to the island from the South of England.

More than 300,000 visitors travelled annually between Ryde and Newport and the necessity of connecting the two by rail was revived in 1872, following an abandoned proposal by other earlier companies. When built, the lines ran parallel to the Isle of Wight Railway's line to Smallbrook Junction, where it then branched away from rival firm's track to head towards Newport.

The station at Newport was also the result of a joint agreement between the R&NR and the Cowes & Newport Railway, and while collaborative working was intended, with a joint committee established in 1876 to oversee operational matters, financial difficulties of each inevitably led to disputes. One area of contention was the division of contributions towards the viaduct required to access the site of the station at Newport. Eventually, these two lines along with the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway amalgamated to become the Isle of Wight Central Railway, which was authorised on July 19, 1887.

The IOWSR is home to a variety of assets from many of the island's past railway companies, including a former Ryde pier tramcar. This has been notably absent during 2025 as construction of an accompanying replica of the trailer car is nearing completion in the carriage and wagon workshops at Havenstreet, with the external bodywork having recently seen the application of the SR livery started. Once complete, the two-car unit will tell the story of the pier tramway, which ran from the esplanade to the pier head. A railway there has existed since 1864, having first worked with horse-drawn vehicles. The Drewry-built tramcars were introduced in 1927 and lasted until 1969, when the tramway (which ran adjacent to the steam railway) was closed. HR

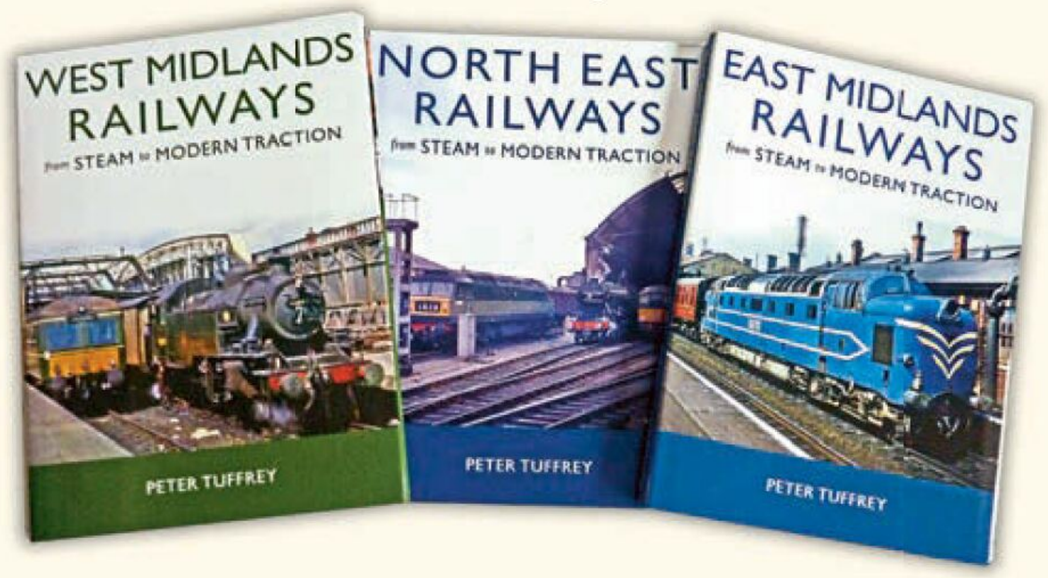
Above: W8 *Freshwater* evokes memories of days past on the island as it heads away from Havenstreet with a three-coach rake of pre-Grouping bogie carriages.

Right: Resplendent in Network SouthEast's 'toothpaste' scheme, No. 03179 races towards Wootton with one of its November 30 passenger workings.
BOTH: OWEN HAYWARD

W24 *Calbourne* departs from Ashey halt on November 30. The station building has recently passed into the IOWSR's ownership, and a vast amount of trees have recently been felled, enabling it to be seen once again. Plans are afoot to see it return to railway use, with a holiday let in the upper floors also being considered.
OWEN HAYWARD

East Midlands Railways, West Midlands Railways, and North East Railways

By Peter Tuffrey (hardback, Great Northern Books, 144pp, each priced at £22.50. ISBN 978-1-914227-86-8, 978-1-914227-87-5, and 978-1-914227-84-4)



THIS trilogy of railway publications comes from the pen, or rather computer, of prolific author Peter Tuffrey, and marks his 32nd, 33rd, and 34th titles for Bradford-based Great Northern Books, writes **Geoff Courtney**. Each treads a familiar path listing the region's stations and other locations in alphabetical order, and if any reader fancies themself as a geographical whizzkid wishing to show off their knowledge of such matters, they should avert their eyes now, as I am about to identify first and last in each book.

The East Midlands title starts its photographic journey at Alfreton and terminates at Worksop, the West Midlands runs from Alveley Colliery to Worcester Shrub Hill, and the North East volume from Alnmouth to Widdrington.

It is, as I have said, a well-trodden path that serves the reader well. Many railway memories are based on stations, or shed 'bunking,' and Peter's latest works make tracking down specific locations easy. Each book has about 200 colour and black-and-white images from the 1950s and 1960s, taken by a variety of photographers who were, as the author writes, "thankfully on hand to capture this fascinating time in railway history."

In addition to BR examples, the East Midlands title gives us ex-LMS and LNER, the West Midlands volume LMS and GWR, and the North East LNER and WDs, and selecting a favourite is a subjective rather than objective exercise. But I'll give it a go.

From the East Midlands title I was enamoured of a June 1964 image of partially built Type four (Class 47) diesels outside the Brush Works at Loughborough that caught my eye mainly because it was taken from across the staff car park and provides a fascinating snapshot of (mainly British) vehicles that dominated our highways at that time.

From the West Midlands title I'll go for another diesel, a delightful ex-GWR railcar seen approaching Bewdley station in a fine panoramic view in circa 1960, and from the North East book I've opted for a moment in time at Hexham in 1964 of the driver of A1 No. 60131 *Osprey* leaning out of his cab chatting to his guard while awaiting the right away.

It is an image of an everyday steam era railway scene that is now history, but so well remembered by many enthusiasts today.

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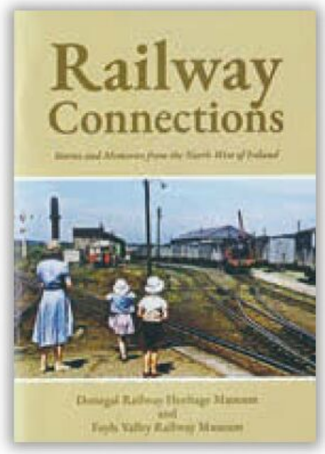
INSPIRATION FOR EVERY MONTH

Railway Connections

(Donegal Railway Heritage Museum and Foyle Valley Railway Museum, 32pp, free of charge but postage donation welcome, email info@donegalrailway.com)

A FREE booklet produced jointly has broken new ground for both organisations by concentrating on the human stories behind the narrow and standard gauge lines which served Donegal and which both museums commemorate.



Railway Connections is packed full of memories rather than technical details of locomotives, stations, railcars and bridges, and includes gems such as an essay on family connections by Sir Anthony McFarland, whose grandfather John McFarland virtually ran the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway as chairman from 1896 until he resigned in 1917 over the running of the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway. Also on the Swilly is the hitherto unknown story of Taggart Aston, the engineer in charge of the construction of the Burtonport line from 1901 to 1903, when it opened. Thanks to his grandson, Terence, the story has come to light, including pictures of Taggart overseeing the construction of an embankment and a culvert.

The County Donegal Railway is not forgotten. The cover of the publication shows a family viewing Strabane station sidings in June 1959, with CDR steam and diesel traction in evidence. There are memories of both the Great Northern and LMS NCC operating out of their separate stations in Derry so that within the 32 pages, there is a balanced view of railway operations in the North West of Ireland by those who operated and travelled on the long-lost lines.

Financed by the Irish Government's Department of Foreign Affairs Shared Island Civic Society Fund, the booklet is the result of a two-day event involving the two museums in cross-border railway exhibitions in February.

Both museums are now looking for further stories, and anyone, enthusiasts, included, who travelled on the lines, or whose parents travelled or worked on them, is invited to email them.

Donegal Railway Heritage Museum manager Marty Gilroy said: "The stories in the booklet have touched on many topics but throughout there is an undeniable sense of nostalgia and profound loss, not only of a means of transport or employment, but of a fondly remembered aspect of community life and a source of social interaction."

INTERESTING INSIGHT INTO DONEGAL'SRAIL PAST THANKS TO JOINT EFFORT

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‘LOST’ VICTORIAN CARRIAGE RECOVERED FROM DONCASTER FIELD

EXCLUSIVE In the year of Railway 200, a major discovery of an original Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway carriage body has been made in a field at Belton, near Doncaster, and moved 130 miles by road for safekeeping and restoration, as **John Titlow** reveals.

The Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway is one of those comparatively obscure railways where little of its rolling stock has been preserved, apart from two compartment carriages stored under cover at Swanwick on the Midland Railway – Butterley dating back to 1931, soon after the line was electrified.

The main line was between Ordsall Lane and London Road, but there was an 8½-mile-long branch running from Manchester London Road, now Piccadilly, to Altringham. Eventually, it was connected to the Cheshire Lines Committee rails at Altrincham and became a through route.

Opened in 1849, the railway never owned any locomotives but hired them in from the LNWR and the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway. However, it owned its own carriages.

Initially, four-wheeled carriages were used on the railway mostly built by the MS&LR at it works at Gorton, Manchester, and they were followed by six-wheelers in 1876.

The rediscovered carriage is a brake vehicle and would have had compartments. One end is original, and it appears the other has been shortened, perhaps for transportation to the site.

According to records, in 1905 there were two eight-car sets of bogie coaches.

A colourised postcard of the period showing Altrincham station with a guard’s brake carriage visible at the platform with a similar built-on side tail light. It is suspected that the coach is one of the 1905 bogie carriages built at Dukinfield, Manchester, making it more than 120 years old.

Apparently, the carriage arrived at Belton minus its underframe sometime in the 1930s, where it has since sat for the best part of a century. Over the years it had been vandalised, nearly set on fire several times, and was almost completely forgotten.

The forgotten Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway carriage safe in its new Worcestershire home on December 3.

The timber-framed carriage had been part of an extension to a farm building, initially becoming an egg packaging plant. For the last 20-plus years it was used as a carpenter’s workshop by a Mr Harold Sidaway. In 2006, the carriage was a contender in the *Daily Telegraph*’s Shed of the Year contest.

It was discovered by Nick Dodson, founder in 1984 of Railfilms Ltd, when he was looking on the internet for a carriage he could turn into a summerhouse, but little did he know what he was to discover. A telephone call from a friend alerted him to an old coach body about to be chopped up for firewood to make way for land clearance at a then-secret location.

With his hopes low, Nick drove three hours from home to find it isolated in a muddy field. He met the landowner, who insisted it needed to be removed or it was for the literal chop. The family had moved there in 1941, and the carriage was already there when they arrived.

Upon inspection, in particular the hinges, Nick discovered it belonged to the MJS&AR. Being an Altringham lad and involved with the local group since 1971 helping to preserve the two existing 1931 MSJ&AR carriages, the decision was made to salvage it.

One side had been inside a building since the 1930s, which is sound, but the exposed side is extremely rotten and will need new flooring, framework, and side timbers.

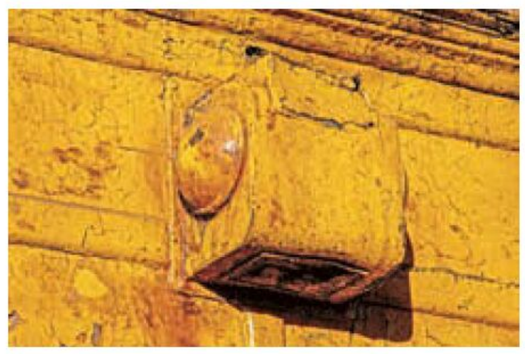
With the demolition of the adjacent buildings, the carriage was exposed to the elements so it became time-critical to save it. There was a great deal of uncertainty as to whether the frame could be lifted or if it would just fall apart and become scrap.

A colourised postcard of Altrincham station showing what is believed to be the coach on a service train. NICK DODSON/RAILFILMS LTD COLLECTION

Nick Dodson with the rescued carriage on arrival.

The coach at its former home of nearly a century near Doncaster.
NICK DODSON/RAILFILMS LTD

Hinges clearly stamped M.S.J.& A.



Carriage tail lamp.

Double doors clearly for a guard's compartment.

Above: An internal section of the carriage looking towards the original end with windows. Bracing timbers have been fitted for transportation.

Left: The coach when used as a workshop at Belton.
NICK DODSON/RAILFILMS LTD COLLECTION

A roadway had to be built across the field to enable lifting and haulage plant onto the site, plus insurance taken out to cover eventualities. A 10-ton flatbed lorry with lifting facilities was used to crane it out from where it had standing since the 1930s.

Before the move, braces were fitted internally across the guard's bulging double doors, further timbers were added to strengthen the exposed end, and a large tarpaulin was placed over the top.

Several loose fittings were removed, including broken brass door gear, a spare lens for the tail light found on the floor and a guard's oil lamp.

On December 2, the most dangerous part of the operation took place when the body was carefully lifted onto the back of a lorry and transported to Worcestershire for safekeeping. All went well.

Harold Sidaway's widow, Gwen, looked on and commented that while it was a sad day to say goodbye to the workshop, she was pleased something was happening with it.

Meanwhile, in Nick's garden, preparations had been made to support it when it arrived. The journey south went well, as did the offloading – apart from the tractor unit getting bogged down in his garden, which required a local farmer to tow it out by tractor.

From its discovery, it has taken three years to get it into his garden. Much of the timber frame appears to be built of hardwood and could be salvageable, as does the hardwood panelling.

The floor has suffered much worse and its future is uncertain.

Much research still needs to be done to ascertain its exact build date because there are no builder's plates or anything else to identify it. Internet searches drew a blank apart from the colourised postcard. As the carriage is stripped down, perhaps it will reveal its full identity, and it is uncertain what gems might lay underneath the paint.

The door hinges have M.S.J.& A stamped on both sides of them, clearly showing it belonged to the railway.

The door locks are stamped Wilke's Patent Improved safety door lock No.4 GCR; these could have been added at a later date and are clearly not slam-shut.

There is a plate with the number K4533 on one side, but this could belong to something completely different. It is suspicious because it is nailed on rather than screwed as it would have been originally.

Nick said: "The coach has been rescued – that was my aim, having seen what it was and how vulnerable it was. In this, the 200 years of railways year, it is, in my mind, as significant as the raising of the Mary Rose! Being an Altrincham lad, I just had to do it!

"I suspect the lift has exposed the problems that need urgent attention. In general, I consider that saving it was my first task and as we move on I hope ideas flourish as to its rebuild and restoration."

For it to run, a suitable underframe is needed, plus all to do with its workings. Nick has done an amazing job to get it to where it is today – now the difficult job of restoration and identification can begin.

The carriage is in safe hands and has a future. It provides a legacy of a railway that disappeared more than a century ago.

We must thank the Sidaway family for looking after this important relic, their family heirloom, over the years and for allowing it to be removed, lifted from their land, and relocated. HR

➜ **Railfilms Limited** is a specialist video production company which for four decades has produced documentary programmes on all things railways, from modern overseas train journeys to historical archive film. For more details, visit **https:// railfilms.com**

Railfilms is not unused to carriage operations and restorations. It owned and operated GWR Nos. 9004 and 9005, rolling stock allocated to Regency Rail Cruises, and the many Mk. 2s in the Statesman Rail fleet, and also rebuilt and returned Pullman bar car *Pegasus* to the main line.

Rapido is going Great Northern – again!

IT may still be a relative newcomer when compared to the likes of Hornby or Bachmann, but Rapido Trains has certainly made its mark on the model world and continues to do so with its choices of prototypes to focus on. With an already extensive catalogue of pre-Grouping era designs under its belt, the manufacturer shows no sign of stopping with this latest addition – the Great Northern Railway C2 4-4-2T.

Introduced in 1898 by Henry Ivatt for local passenger workings in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the wheel arrangement had already proven successful for the company and so was incorporated into the design of these new locomotives. Sixty were built up until 1907, with 50 introduced with condensing gear to work the Metropolitan Railway's tunnel routes around London. When displaced from there by the N2 0-6-2Ts, the versatility of the C2s saw them redeployed around the network.

Reclassified C12 under LNER ownership, 49 survived into BR ownership before mass withdrawals started, the last being retired in 1958.

Numerous differences were present across the class, and Rapido has committed to including as many as possible into the tooling for its OO scale models, including chimneys, domes, safety valves, round and flared or square bunkers, round or square tank corners, condensing pipes, three designs of coal rails, and many more. Construction will comprise highly-detailed diecast metal and injection-moulded components, firebox flicker effect, and models will be fitted with MoPower stay-alive to ensure to smooth, continuous running.

For models representing the pre-Grouping variants fitted with the condensing apparatus, included will be brass destination plates in the detailing bag that will fit into brackets on the locomotives.

An impressive 12 choices will be available in the first wave planned, including GNR green and grey liveries, five different LNER era black options, and four BR era ones. RRP is set at £189.95 for DCC-ready and £294.95 for sound-fitted. Models are currently in the design stage; estimated delivery dates will be confirmed later on in development.

Get yourself winter-ready with new NER snowploughs

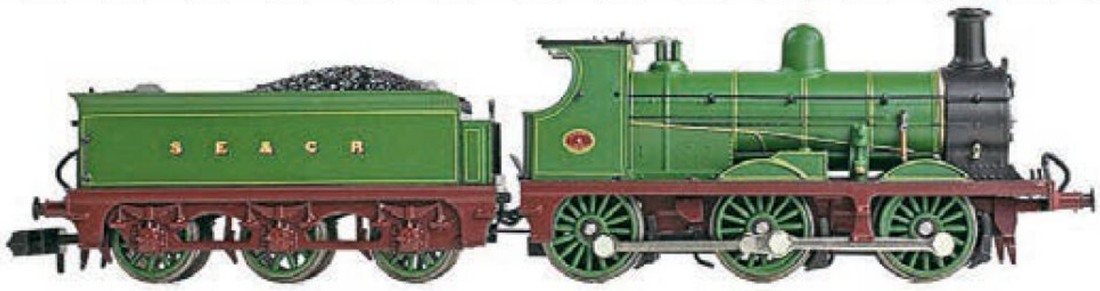
RAILS of Sheffield and Locomotion Models have revealed their latest OO-scale collaboration to join the Railway Icons range: the mighty North Eastern Railway independent snowplough.

The NER had some of the most varied terrain of any pre-Grouping railway in the British Isles. While some areas of the network were relatively flat, the hills of the North Yorkshire moors and Northern Pennines resulted in several demanding routes with high altitudes and stiff gradients, many of which could be blocked by drifting snow and winter blizzards.

These lines remaining open was essential to keeping the wheels of industry in northern England turning, and to ensure this, the NER invested in a fleet of distinctive six-wheel snowploughs, with the first being constructed in 1887. In total, 24 snowploughs were built for the NER between 1887 and 1907, with initial body designs made from wood and later from steel. It is testament to the quality of construction that many of these snowploughs survived through the decades and remained in service with both the LNER and British Rail, with the last example surviving until 1975 in BR ownership.

The release of these distinctive vehicles, most often used in pairs, will be the first ready-to-run models produced for this design. Research and assessment has been carried out on one surviving example – No. 12 at Locomotion in Shildon – in order to ensure these models will be as accurate as possible, with a wealth of separately fitted parts and a detailed interior complete with handbrake, stove, and seats.

Engineering samples have been received and are under review, with delivery anticipated some time in 2026. Three different liveries are on offer, with No. 11 in NER Indian red available as a single model (£69.95), while twin packs cover LNER blue and BR departmental black (129.99 per pack). Advanced orders can be made through either Rails of Sheffield or Locomotion Models' webstores.



Bachmann Europe's latest announcements revealed that the SECR C class would be returning to the Graham Farish N scale range with two options to choose from, including this lined SECR green livery example of the company's No. 4. A BR black with late crest. RRP is £154.95 and £144.95 respectively.

Progress with a further Rails of Sheffield partnership has seen the retailer's exclusive Dapol Black Label range of SR Bulleid Battle of Britain and West Country class light Pacifics reach the decorated sample stage. Supplied with DCC sound and smoke generators, the seven previously announced models will now be joined by an eighth – No. 34051 *Winston Churchill,* which will be offered in BR green with late crest as it is preserved. Delivery is anticipated to take place in the third quarter of 2026.

Send your model news to staff writer **Owen Hayward** on **owen.hayward@kelsey.co.uk**

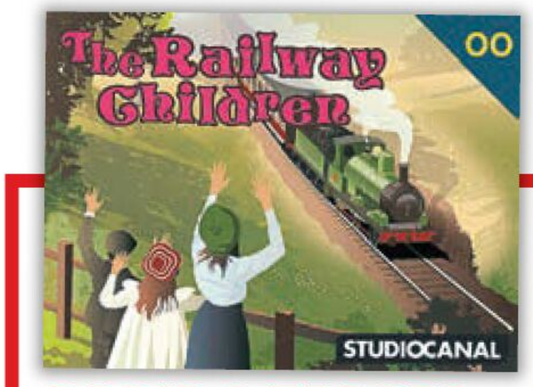
Accurascale welcomes the extended 'Gronk' family

THE announcement of another newly tooled example of the BR Class 08 shunter in OO scale may have raised a few eyebrows, but what Accurascale will bring to the table is almost a much broader story of these 0-6-0 locomotives, covering variants not previously released in the scale. In addition to the standard Class 08, the manufacturer will be covering the cut-down versions and the Class 10 variant, bringing these to life as accurately as possible and incorporating many of the variants between members of the same class.

Members of the Class 08 were reduced in height to work the Bury Port & Gwendraeth Valley line that connected Llanelli and Cwm Maur. This line had previously made use of Class 03 locomotives with a reduced cab height, but as they began to need replacement, the conversion of more powerful Class 08s seemed a logical choice. Conversion was carried out at Landore Depot in January 1986 on three locomotives; when two of those were eventually withdrawn, another pair was also converted to replace them.

Meanwhile, an oft-forgotten chapter in the BR shunter story is the Class 10, featuring a Blackstone power unit and GEC electrical gear. A total of 146 were built before being deemed non-standard in BR's traction programme, so they were withdrawn earlier in their careers. Many went on to find use in industry and four survive in preservation today.

Models will benefit from a die-cast metal chassis and underframe for weight and tractive effort, brass bearings on axles, a high-quality, large diameter coreless motor paired with a helical gearbox to allow for authentic scale slow-speed running and much more. Prices start at £159.95 for DCC-ready models, with nine different models currently available to order, including the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's cut-down example, No. 08993, in EWS livery. Delivery is scheduled for the first quarter of 2027.



RAPIDO TEASES PRE-GROUPING

Rapido Trains has teased a future project when it announced it was planning a Railway Children-themed train pack in the lead-up to the November 22/23 National Festival of Railway Modelling at the National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham. At present, none of the locomotives from this iconic 1970 EMI film are part of manufacturer's range; however, the reveal of a piece of artwork (shown) related to this planned release has many wondering if the L&YR Class 25 'Ironclad' that starred as the 'Green Dragon' will finally join the ready-to-run OO scale range. No further details had been confirmed as this issue went to press.

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Don't pass the Buck(jumper): A Great Eastern icon

Seldom does a humble tank engine achieve icon status the way of their express counterparts, but one particular 0-6-0 from the GER ranks gained that by becoming synonymous with one of London's many termini. **Paul Lawrence** brings us the story of the J67, J68 and J69s, more commonly known as the 'Buckjumpers.'

DESPITE being the second largest constituent company created by the Railways Act of 1921 (otherwise known as the Grouping Act), the LNER is perhaps the least represented in the heritage sector. A total of seven subsidiaries were amalgamated to form it, including the Great Central, Great Northern, Great North of Scotland and Hull & Barnsley railways to name a few. Sadly, few locomotives from these made it into preservation.

One other company that was absorbed was the Great Eastern Railway, which fared slightly better. A total of nine locomotives built for that company remain, among which are two new-builds at various stages of construction at the time of this article being written.

With the biggest surviving GER locomotive being James Holden's B12 4-6-0 No. 8572 and the smallest being the Neilson & Co. 0-4-0ST No. 2119, there is at least a bit of a variety among this small selection of locomotives hailing from the railways of East Anglia. Another series of locomotives, and ones that became synonymous with the suburban passenger trains out of Liverpool Street, were the J67, J68 and J69 – or, as they are more commonly known, the 'Buckjumpers.'

With Holden having been making a number of 0-6-0Ts, originally proposed for shunting that would go on to be good on passenger services, he took a look at his latest design in the form of the T18s, introduced in 1886, and improved them further. By taking their design and lengthening the wheelbase by 6in (but also shortening the frames by the same amount) and giving them slightly larger water tanks, the first of the 'Buckjumpers' (known as class R24 in GER days, later the LNER J67) was created. A total of 140 were built between 1890 and 1901, with 100 of them allocated to passenger duties, while the remaining 40 became shunting locomotives.

As well as a Westinghouse brake, the passenger locomotives were fitted with screw reverse gear, balanced 10-spoke cast-steel wheels, and screw couplings. Most were also fitted with condensing gear to work some of the sub-surface routes in and out of the capital. The shunting locomotives, meanwhile, were fitted with a hand brake (later supplemented by steam brakes), lever reverse, unbalanced 15-spoke cast-iron wheels and three-link couplings.

From 1938, several J69s had 160psi boilers fitted. They were classified as J67/2, distinguishing them from the original R24 locomotives with the small side tanks (class J67/1). At various other times, different boilers were fitted, and locomotives would be reclassified accordingly. From 1946, class J69 was given a similar division. J69/1 referred to large side tank locomotives, while J69/2 referred to locomotives with small side tanks.

Bucking broncos

With the R24s going on to be very well used as shunters, they also helped to take the helm of one of the well-known services out of Liverpool Street – the 'Jazz Trains.'

With these locomotives being based at Stratford and sub-shedded at areas like Enfield Town, Palace Gates and Chingford, they would handle services in and out of the capital at a fast rate. In GER days alone, there would be 24 'Jazz Train' arrivals in an hour, coming in from Enfield, Palace Gates, Chingford, Wood Street, Walthamstow and Edmonton. With such fast turn-rounds and sometimes running at high speeds for these suburban workings, their ride quality could be very rough. Because of this, many crew members and enthusiasts would go on to refer to the engines as 'Buckjumpers' since this ride quality reminded them of bucking horses.

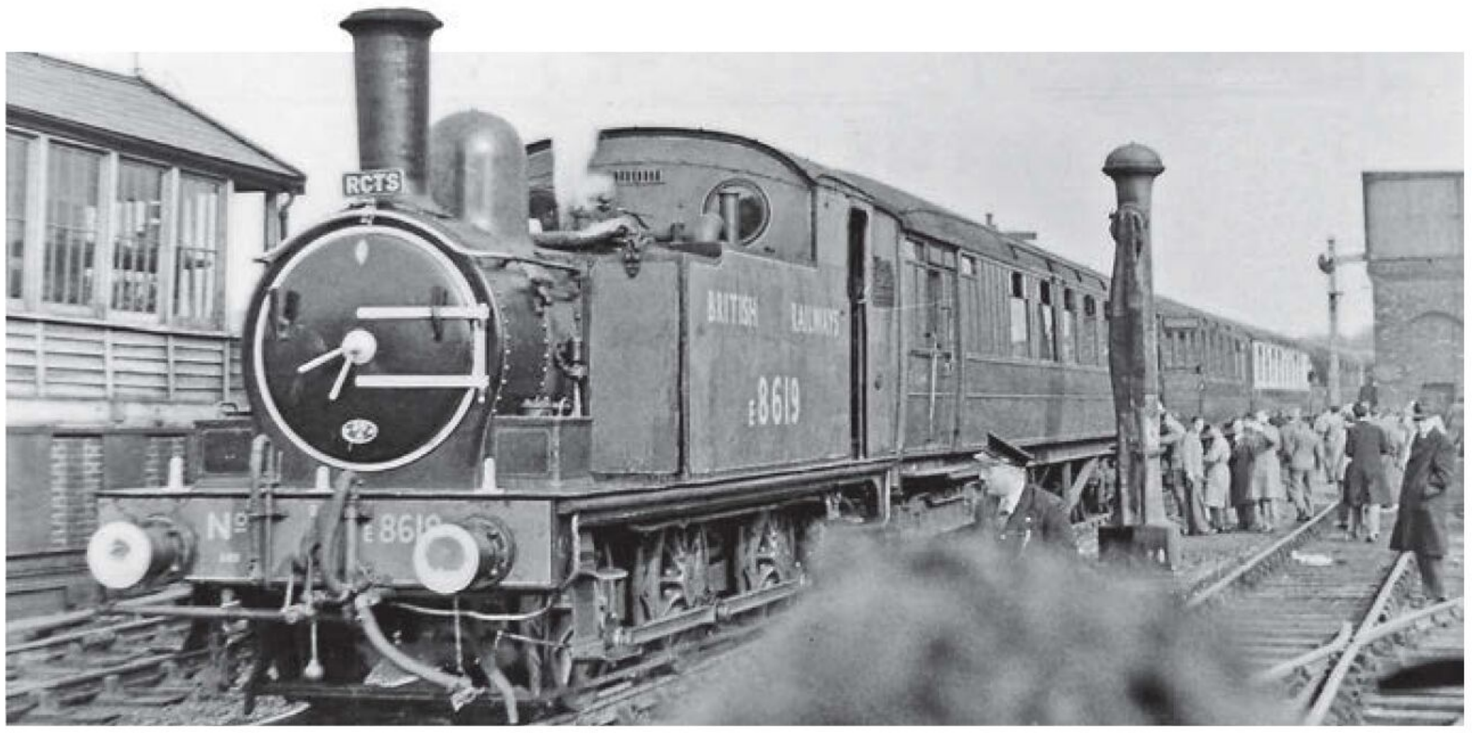
As time went by and rolling stock became heavier, Holden modified the R24s slightly by upping the boiler pressure of some from 160psi to 180psi to cope. Referred to as R24 Rebuilt, these locomotives had longer fireboxes with larger grates and greater-capacity side tanks, later being identified as the J69 class, along with 20 class S56 examples built new with these modifications incorporated.

By this time, Holden's successor, Alfred Hill, was the CME of the GER. An order had been put in for 10 more of the shunting engines, but Hill took a different approach, and, with some cosmetic modifications, he converted

One allocation for the J67s was to the Kelvedon and Tollesbury Light Railway, a locally promoted railway company, intended to open up an agricultural district that suffered from poor transport links and thus predominantly served the local agricultural areas and jam factory at Tiptree in Essex. No. 68616 sits at Tollesbury station in June 1950 with a mixed working. G W POWELL/COLOUR RAIL

Pre-order Issue 341: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Although it may have been synonymous with Liverpool Street station, where it largely spent its final years as station pilot, J69 No. 68619 did also venture out to other stations. On November 12, 1960, the immaculate locomotive was seen at Enfield out in Essex. P MOFFAT/COLOUR RAIL



The RCTS 'East London Rail Tour' of April 14, 1951, employed the Liverpool Street Station Pilot J69 No. e8619. This was ex-GE Holden class S56 No. 53, which was refurbished early in 1948, and acquired the 'e' prefix. It would later be repainted into a representation of GER blue and carry the BR number 68619 until withdrawal. BEN BROOKSBANK/CREATIVE COMMONS

the 10 oldest R24s into shunters. The subtle differences included side windows for the cab, rectangular windows with the rear set having bars covering the lower half (most likely to prevent damage if coal were to hit them), and a slightly taller arched roof. These modified R24s became known as the C72 (J68), and a further 10 were delivered in the early days of the LNER.

In pre-Grouping days, 'Buckjumpers' were seen across much of the GER, but with them being used heavily with the 'Jazz Trains,' Stratford had the biggest allocation of both the passenger and shunter locomotives; 121 in total were recorded as being stationed there in 1923. They could be seen as far north on the network as Peterborough East and Kings Lynn and as far east as Norwich and Lowestoft. Once the GER was absorbed into the LNER, they began to spread all across the Eastern network. While Stratford still kept a good majority of the class, they could be now found as far north as Doncaster and Perth. The era of British Railways would eventually see some venture beyond the Eastern Region, with there being at least one example being based at Wrexham, Liverpool, Carlisle and Dumfries.

Stratford once boasted the largest allocations of the 'Buckjumpers.' On January 18, 1947, LNER J67 No. 8590 struggles across a turntable with a string of dead locomotives. On this particular day, the depot's fitters were on strike, so an immense clutter of immobile engines had accumulated in the yard and the locomotive was tasked with moving some of them. BENN BROOKSBANK/CREATIVE COMMONS

The sole-surviving 'Buckjumper' is J69 No. 87 (LNER No. 7087, BR No. 68633) which is part of the National Collection. Turned out in its as-built GER condition, it currently resides at Bressingham Steam Gardens & Museum in Norfolk. ACCURASCALE

Although they were well-liked on home turf in East Anglia, those that ventured towards the Highlands had a fairly rough time of it.

The J69s sent there were referred to as 'cast-offs' from the start, and with enginemen being used to their North British locomotives, they found the J69's injectors to be quite troublesome by comparison, along with the reversing gear being "not as easy to work with." When based at St Margarets, they were known as 'Coffee Pots' – a nickname usually shared with ex-NER J24s. A Westinghouse-fitted J69 was trialled on a passenger service for North Leith, but with there being clearance issues at the station there for the fish loading platform, another design was chosen. The Fife-based 'Buckjumpers' became known as 'Tar Tanks,' being given dock shunting duties, and those at Burntisland and Thornton could be seen helping out with goods trains to Dalgetty and Lochmuir. The most notable of the Scottish-based members of the class was No. 7089 at Perth, which would go on to be the station pilot there for nearly 14 years.

Alongside work on the main network, the 'Buckjumpers' also saw use in both the War Department and the industrial sector. Fifteen of them (one J68 and 14 J69s) went to work on various military railways in 1939, including the Longmoor Military Railway, along with depots for the War Department scattered across the British Isles.

After their time playing their part in serving the country during the Second World War, all but one of the J69s made their way into industrial use.

London's unassuming icon

Back on home turf, another 'Buckjumper' was to get the spotlight. No. e8619 was painted in apple green in early BR days, working the RCTS 'East London No. Rail Tour' on April 14, 1951. This particular locomotive, built in 1904 as GER No. 53, would go on to become the station pilot at Liverpool Street as BR No. 68619, earning the nickname of the 'Liverpool Street Pet.' Picked out in GER blue with red lining, the sight of this little locomotive scuttling about Liverpool Street would stand out quite prominently among the BR black that largely dominated the scene. As time would go on, the 'Buckjumpers' were replaced by other designs, and the last were withdrawn by September 1962.

With the 'Pet' becoming something of a celebrity, you would have thought this would therefore be ideal for selection for preservation, but this was not so.

Withdrawn on October 30,

1961, this locomotive would sadly succumb to the cutter's torch. Instead, another member of the class was chosen: No. 68633. Having been based at Stratford since new in 1904, it had spent the last four months of its working career allocated to Parkeston Quay, being withdrawn in November 1960. Once it was chosen for preservation, it was sent back to Stratford and returned to its original S56 condition with its GER number, 87, and a close interpretation of the GER blue was applied. After that, it went on display at the Museum of British Transport in Clapham, followed by the National Railway Museum in York. It is now currently on long-term loan to Bressingham Steam Museum at Diss.

Fittingly, it is on display alongside another GER survivor, the T26 2-4-0 No. 490. Of interest might be the fact that during its many years spent at Stratford, it is known to have been accompanied by the sole-surviving GER L77/LNER N7 0-6-2T No. 9621 (currently undergoing overhaul at the East Anglian Railway Museum) and even was visited briefly by J70 0-4-0 No. 7127, the basis for Toby the Tram Engine in the Rev Wilbert Awdry's Railway Series books.

The models

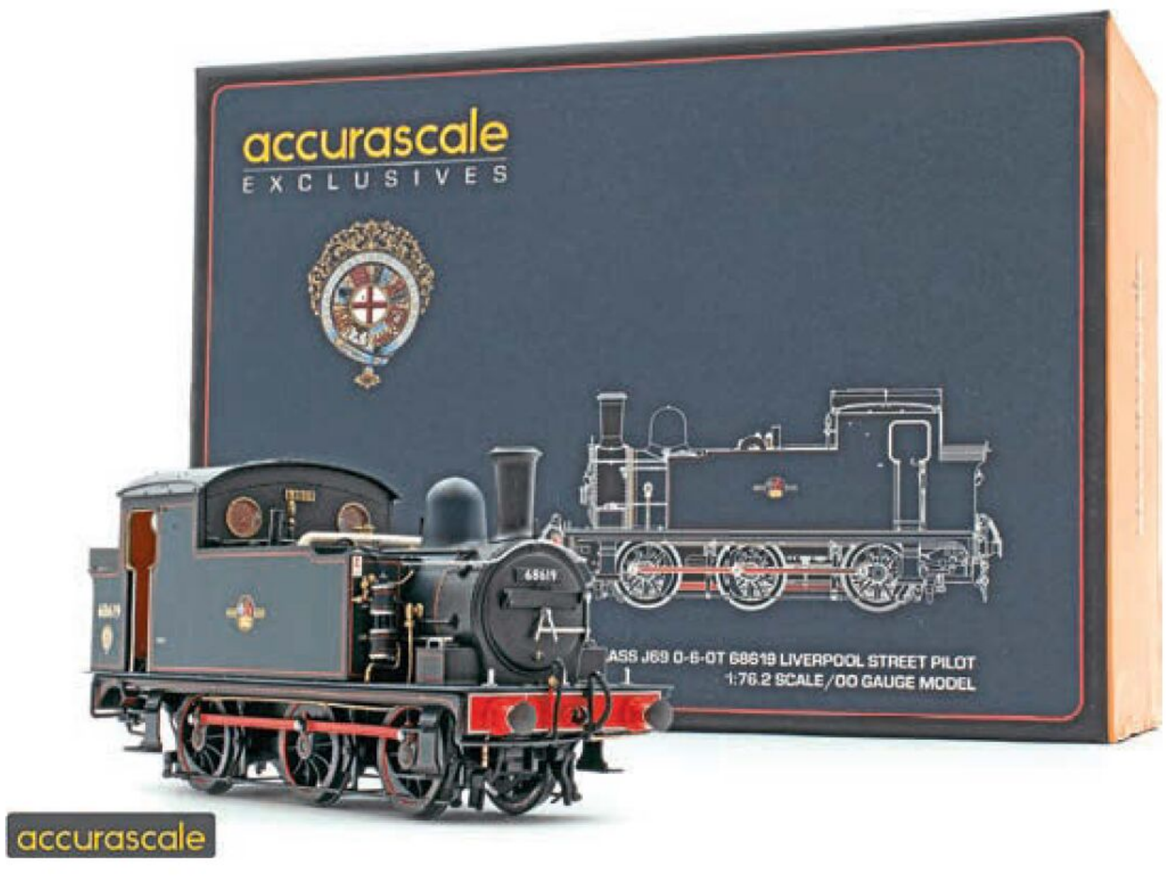
Accurascale first announced its plan for making the 'Buckjumper' models at the London Festival of Railway Modelling back in March 2023, originally displaying a 3D print made using the scans it had made of No. 87. As time went by, more progress was made, with engineering and decorated samples gradually being revealed. Fast-forward to July 2025 and the models were finally released, with seven variants available: four for general release, two exclusives to Accurascale (including the 'Liverpool Street Pet'), and one exclusive to Locomotion Models – a model of No. 87 as it has been preserved. With the general release and manufacturer's exclusives having a plethora of destination boards included, this gives modellers the opportunity to present their models working a variety of trains that the 'Buckjumpers' once worked. The only exception is the preserved example, which is only supplied with one set of boards, namely those it currently carries for Palace Gates. Being such minute and thus fiddly pieces, each model comes with a tool tucked in the top of the packaging which can to help place or remove these boards, as well as serving the purpose of extracting the DCC socket hidden behind a removable smokebox door.

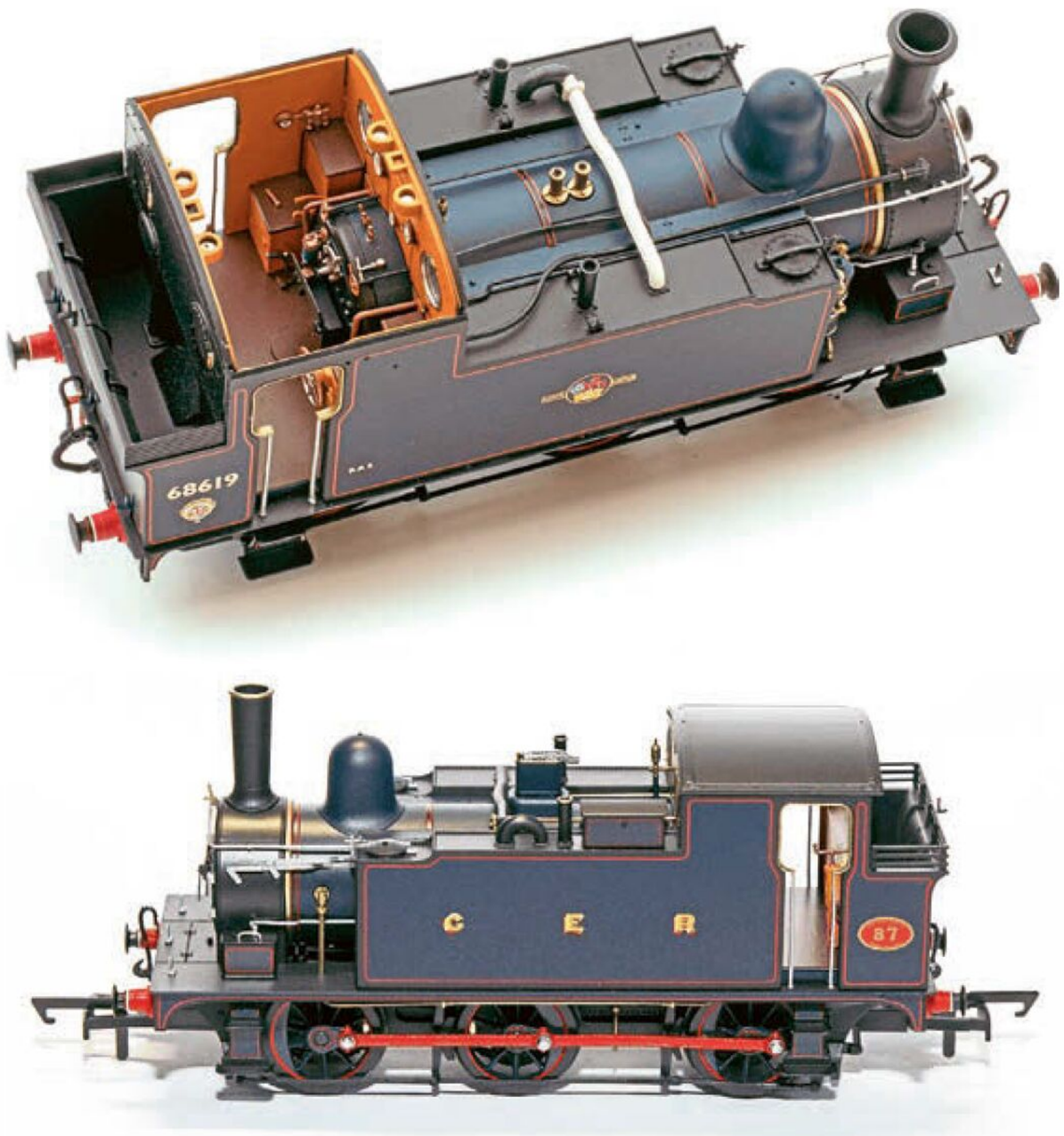
With the model featuring a metal chassis, running plate, smokebox, dome and boiler, this small Edwardian 0-6-0T packs a punch with how much it can handle.

External testing with a rake of Bachmann Mk. 1 coaches, which are known for having quite a bit of weight to them, these new models handle plenty with ease – far more than would be prototypical in the scale. Accurascale itself has tested them with a heavy goods rake which, while inaccurate, still proves how capable these models are.

A wealth of separately-fitted detailing parts raises seemingly simple locomotive into a top-tier model too. The 'Liverpool Street Pet' has a number of features (such as lamp irons and sander linkage) picked out as per the original, which was well-kept by its crews who were especially proud of their locomotive. Livery application is crisp across the range, including company crests and lining.

While the Eastern Region may not have fared well in reality, OO scale modellers are enjoying quite the opposite; the 'Buckjumpers' have come high on many wish lists in recent years, so their long-awaited release has not disappointed. HR





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STAR LETTER

Memories of Europe's largest steam depot

The article by Geoff Courtney in issue 338 about the ex-Stratford drivers' reunion I organised at Mangapps Railway Museum brought to mind a photograph in my collection of the depot in June 1961, a year before it closed to steam. There are just two steam locomotives in view, although more would have lurked inside the old Jubilee shed. That was a stark contrast to even just the year before, when on January 3, no fewer than 174 locomotives were noted on shed, the vast majority of them steam.

I feel very envious of Geoff's steam trainspotting exploits. We both lived in the Ilford area, but are of slightly different generations. By the time I started trainspotting at Ilford, steam was a distant memory, having been banished from East Anglia in 1962. At the age of nine, I was hauled out of Waterloo by a Bulleid Pacific on our way to the Isle of Wight for a family holiday. Ventnor was our destination, and I remember the ancient 02 class 0-4-4T that hauled us the full length of the line from Ryde.

My love of trains had begun, and years of trainspotting at Ilford on the GE line or Barking on the LTS dominated every spare minute outside school hours – and sometimes during them!

Not being the brightest student left me with a dilemma at the age of 16, and my saviour was the school careers officer who, upon learning of my passion for railways, told me BR was looking for traction trainees (secondmen) at Stratford depot. One letter to the depot manager and a simple test saw me starting a 40-year career in 1973 as a driver, the first 20 years of which were at Stratford.

Cross-London freight was my favourite work. Hither Green, Clapham Junction, Bricklayers Arms, Acton, Cricklewood and Willesden stir memories of a huge freight network that sadly went into decline in the mid-1980s.

The passenger work at Stratford was almost as interesting, with main line diesel-hauled expresses to Norwich, Harwich, Cambridge and Kings Lynn. Our traction and route cards were often overflowing.

Farewell to steam: The photograph of Stratford depot on June 6, 1961, with just two steam engines in view. DAVE BRENNAND COLLECTION

This was a fantastic depot to have worked at, but nothing remains of this once sprawling site apart from memories, photos, occasional films, and a plaque in Stratford International station commemorating what was the "largest steam locomotive depot in Europe." I would like to record my thanks to Geoff for the thousands of articles he has written over many years, and I have never forgotten that he was kind enough to write reviews for the first two of my London's East End railway books.

Our passion for railways, locomotives, engine sheds, preservation and railwayana, is the same.

Dave Brennand, Essex

Setting the pace on the ECML

A GOOD number of years ago, when we, as a family of six, had recently moved to the delights of the North East, we had the real pleasure of enjoying a panoramic non-stop trot up and down the East Coast Main Line from Newcastle-upon-Tyneto York and back.

I seem to remember this was in a special charter of six or maybe eight 'Pacer' units, all in a yellow livery. The ride was bouncy, to say the least – especially at line speed of possibly 70mph as I think they might have been of the early design, Class 141.

But the view was fantastic, the noise was drowned out by the children, and we all enjoyed a good day out.

Maybe I am gold-plating my memory? Maybe another reader can remember this or similar?

Roy Lemberger, Cullercoats, North Shields

More about New Zealand's unique Avonside Fell locomotive survivor

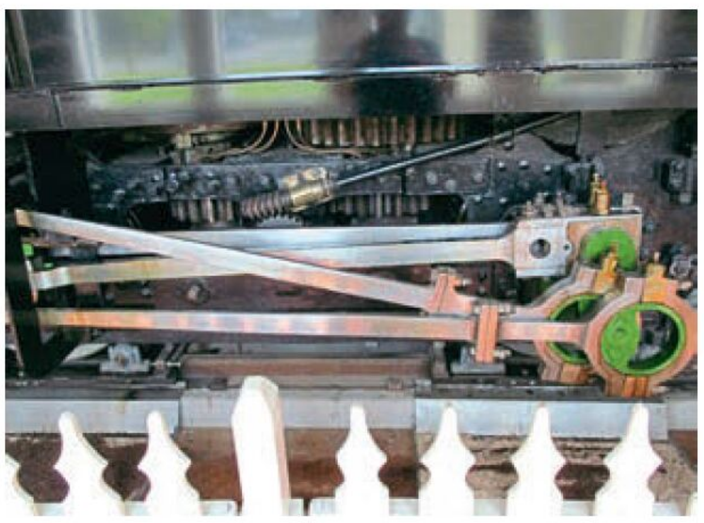
I WAS very interested to read the article on the 150th birthday of the Rimutaka Railway Fell locomotive in *Heritage Railway* 339.

The image you published was taken when the New Zealand railway was still active, with the 0-4-2T in steam, and judging by the look of some of the people in the picture, one possibly taken on the occasion of an enthusiast group visit.

Here is an image of the locomotive, No. H199, in the museum at Featherston, North Island, together with a close-up of the motion, which as you mention in the article moves by virtue of electric motors, and one of the Fell brake van which you also mention, all of which I took when I visited in 2015.

Lionel Price, Oswestry, Shropshire

Built in 1875 by the Avonside Engine Company of Bristol, No. H199 *Mont Cenis* was one of the original four Fell locomotives shipped to New Zealand for the Rimutaka (now Remutaka) Incline Railway. LIONEL PRICE



Right: Designed by British engineer John Barraclough Fell, the railway was one of only three in the world to use his system. In the museum, the world's sole-surviving Fell system locomotive, No. H199, is mounted on rollers powered by electric motors so visitors can see how its moving parts work. LIONEL PRICE

The museum's Fell brake van. LIONEL PRICE

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Let the train take the strain

FREIGHT belongs on rail… unless… it is a railway locomotive… (really?).

As long ago as 1991, the *Economist* newspaper printed an item, including the statement: "When trains travel by road, there is something dreadfully wrong with Railfreight."

More than a generation later, that is still the case, and hauliers can earn a living by carrying all sorts of railway equipment on roads. It has been deemed newsworthy enough to spawn the TV programme Train Truckers.

One programme showed the transport of a Class 47 diesel from Crewe to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

The North Staffordshire Railway built most of the permanent way linking Crewe and Derby, via Stoke & Uttoxeter, 51 miles, and another five-and-a-half takes one to Duffield, the southern terminus of the EVR.

However, the TV programme showed us the huge articulated lorry and support car went a longer way round, as far south as the A5, then the A38, and 80 or so miles later, the narrow and serpentine B5023 for the final eight miles or so into Wirksworth town, and to the northern terminus of the EVR.

Driving the locomotive off the rails on to the trailer involved building an inclined ramp with considerable precision which took time, so a later start for the journey prevented it being completed before darkness, requiring the drivers to camp out for the night.

The last bit of the journey through the town was fraught with parked cars, resulting in millimetres (literally) of clearance between cars and bits of the trailer, and a speed measured in inches per minute. Eventual arrival at the station, more manoeuvres in the yard, and the ramp reconstructed to return the locomotive to rails.

Even if it was not 'main line certified' to run under its own power, if it can travel at 25mph on a heritage railway, one has to ask why it could not be towed at 25mph on Network Rail track. A road journey about half as long again as the direct rail route and any load on steel rails on average uses 75% less fuel than the same load at the same speed as rubber tyres on a road.

Add the cost of the escort car, the time and cost of the ramps at both ends, and the time and cost of the crawl through Wirksworth town centre, rather than at Duffield. If all this was cheaper than an on-rail journey, the *Economist* comment from 1991 is still valid, and all the above requires justification. Whether we will get it is another question.

Wesley Paxton BA (Econ), Annan, Dumfries & Galloway

Repainted BR Class 98 2-6-2T No. 9 *Princes of Wales* on October 22. VOR

The real reason why a Vale of Rheidol loco turned blue

MUCH has been made of painting Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2T No.9 in BR electric blue, its recent return in this livery featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 339.

The original reason was to save the Aberystwyth train crew depot as closure of the VoR would have meant redundancy for a number of staff.

George Dow, BR Stoke Division divisional manager, did not want to close the VoR so on July 1, 1967, he invited Transport Minister Barbara Castle to travel from Devil's Bridge to Aberystwyth on the line in the hope she would prevent closure – which she did.

To reinforce BR's determination to keep hold of the VoR, the decision was taken in the Stoke Division offices in 1968 to repaint the VoR stock in BR electric blue livery.

Ron Owen, the division's public relations officer told the Welsh press: "Shock horror in West Wales – VoR stock painted electric blue!"

Chris Magner, email

Outside the Nene Valley Railway's Wansford shed on the evening on November 14, A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* is ready to haul the Peterborough to York leg of Saphos Trains' 'The Christmas White Rose' charter from Potters Bar the following morning. PAUL ROE/NVR

Why two simultaneous 'Christmas White Roses'?

HOW many passengers and linesiders were confused by there being two 'The Christmas White Rose' charters up the East Coast Main Line to York within minutes of each other on Saturday, November 15?

The propensity for confusion is obvious, but this took a more worrying turn at Huntingdon, where a passenger for the Railway Touring Company service mistakenly attempted to board the late-running Saphos Train as it started to move. He shouted: "I need to get on" – and having only been restrained by shouted warnings by RTC stewards awaiting the arrival of their own charter, a dangerous situation was averted.

The man had just arrived on the platform, seen the 'Charter Service' sign displayed, and thought incorrectly but understandably that this was his service.

Surely, it is possible to have different names for these trips. Our hobby doesn't need self-inflicted safety incidents like this.

David Caffall, email

William Dean's descendant built this model miniature locomotive!

GEOFF Courtney's report of the previously hidden archive of railway photographs in *Heritage Railway* issue 339 features a picture of GWR No. 1, a 2-4-0T, one of William Dean's experimental designs.

The locomotive can still be appreciated as there is a magnificent 5in gauge model of the locomotive on display in the Museum and Archive at Didcot Railway Centre.

It was made entirely by the late Mr MC Dean and was built from scratch. It took him no less than 17 years to complete, beginning when he was aged 64!

Under the closest scrutiny, the detailing is breathtaking, no doubt because Mr Dean was never going to hurry a work of sublime craftsmanship. Even the scaled padlocks on the locomotive toolboxes have scale keys to open them.

Mr Dean most generously donated this fine model to the Great Western Trust in 2014 so it could be enjoyed by visitors of all ages. It has pride of place within the museum, as Mr Dean wished, and has drawn high praise and admiration.

There is more than coincidence in the shared surname Dean; his forebears included William Dean's brother!

Frank Dumbleton, Didcot Railway Centre

Right: The working model of GWR No. 1 at Didcot Railway Centre. FRANK DUMBLETON

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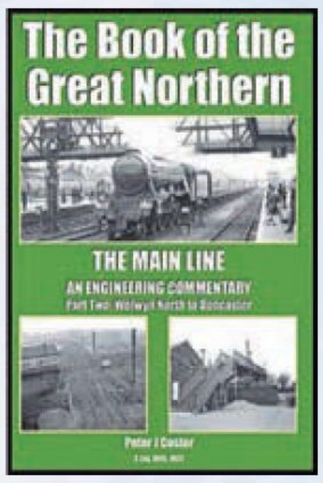
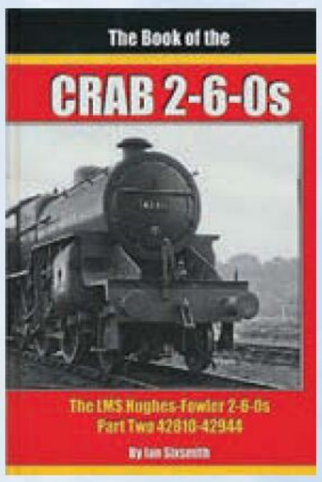
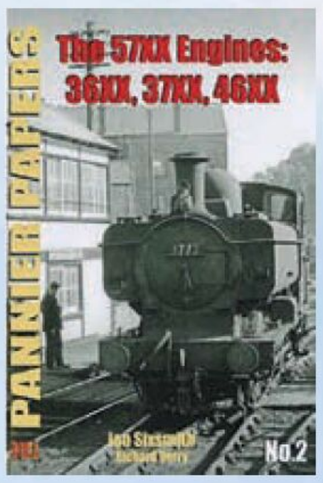
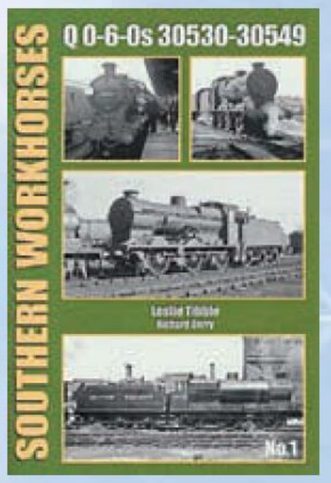
UNTIL THE END OF JA

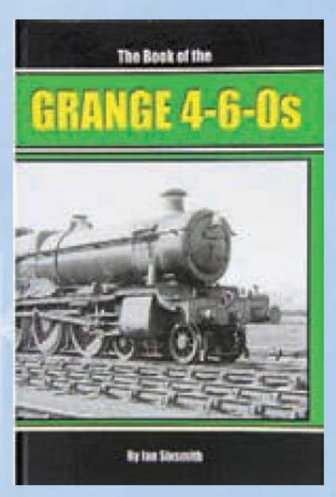
Hundreds of items are already discount

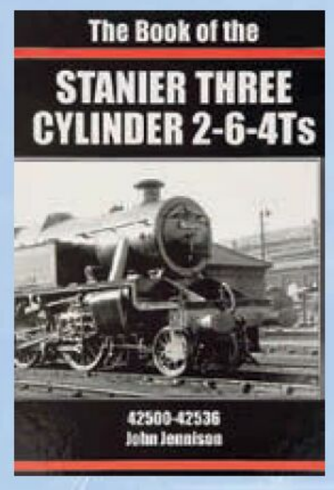


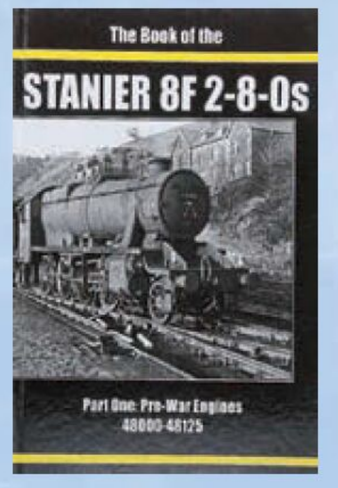


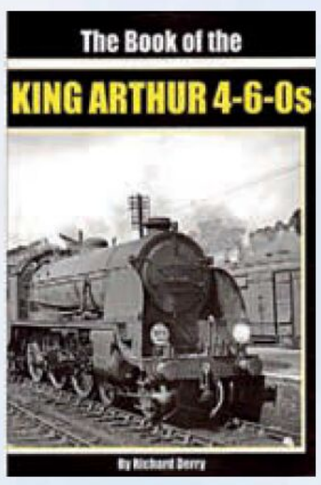


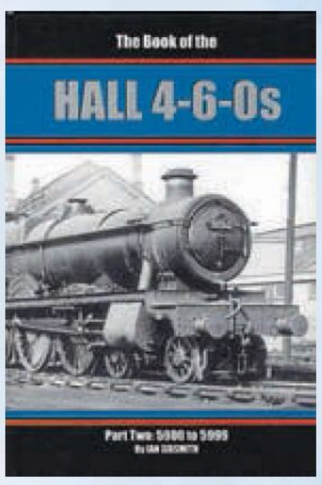


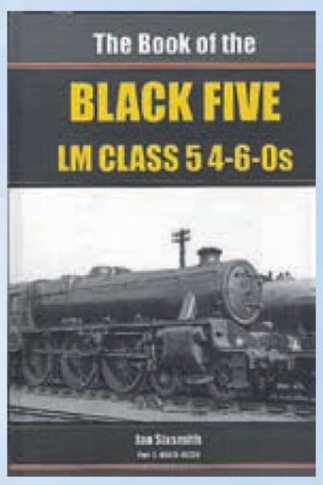


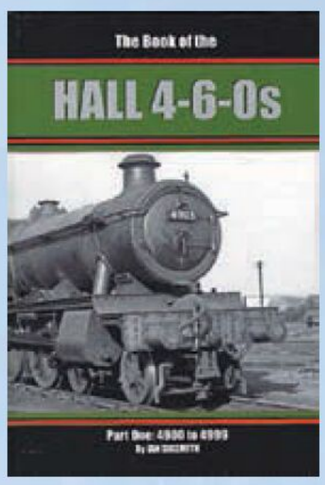


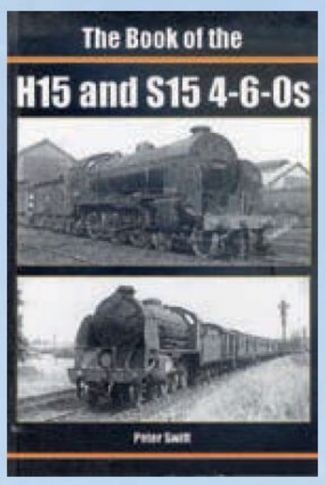


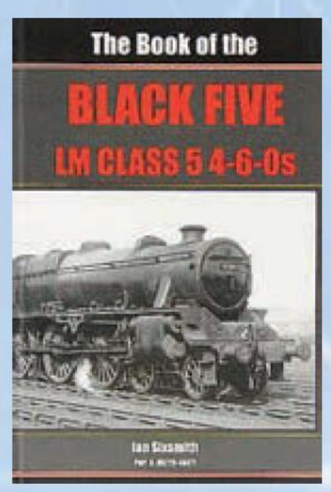


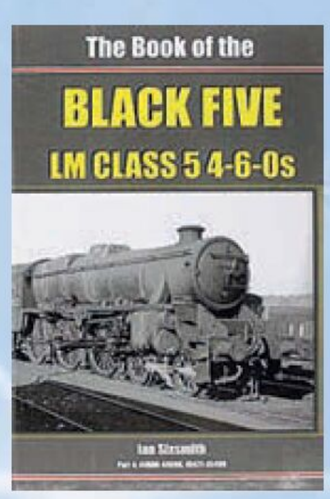


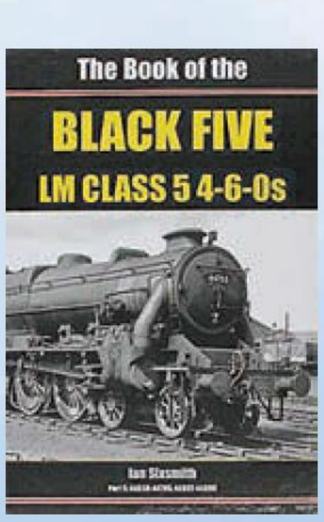


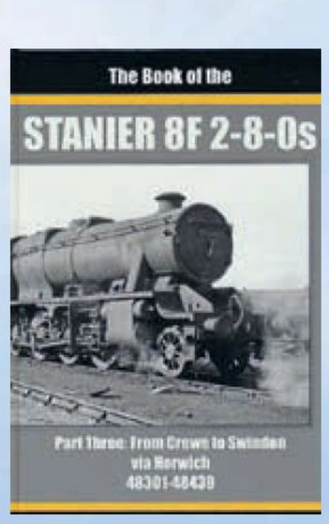


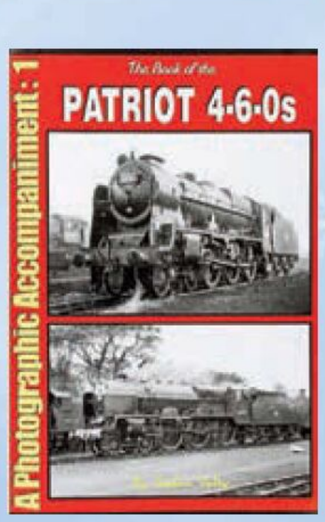


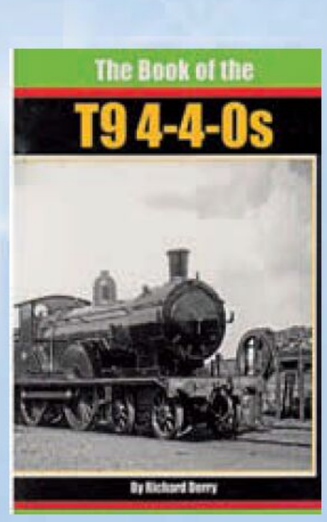


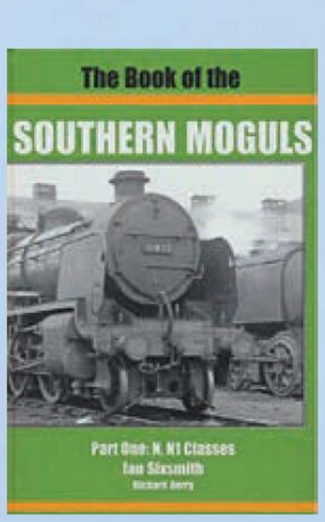


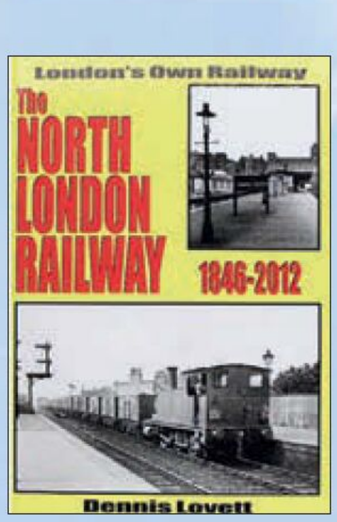


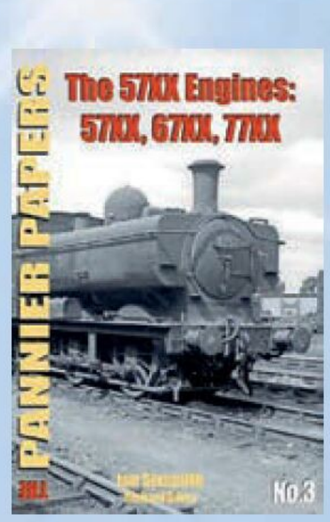


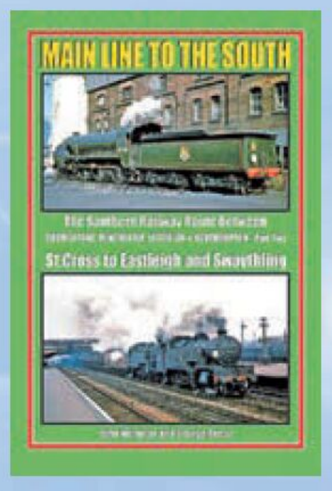


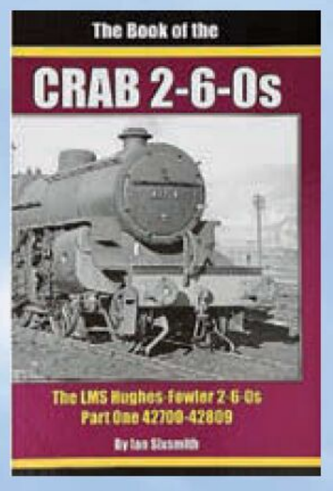


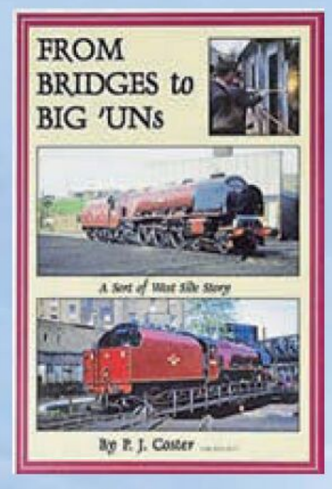


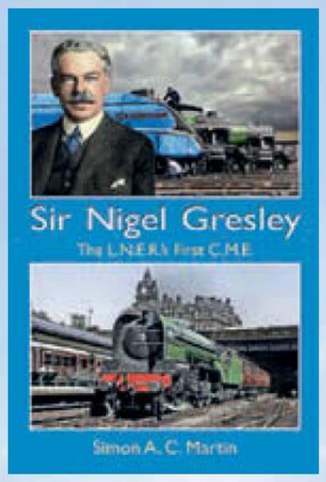


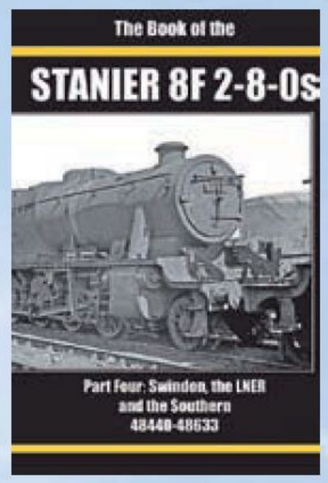


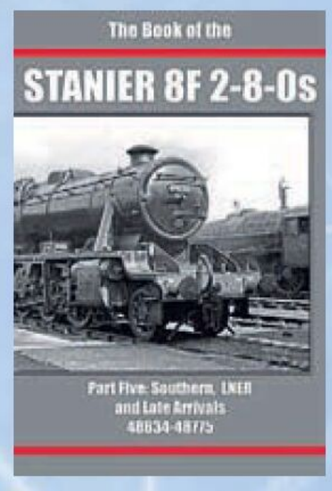


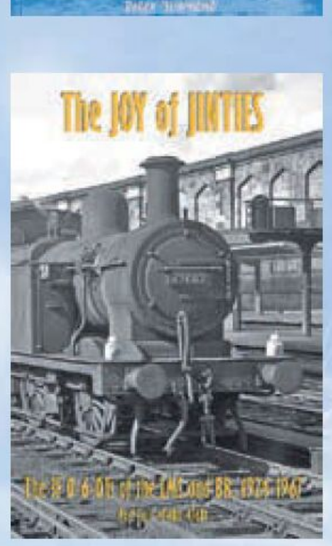


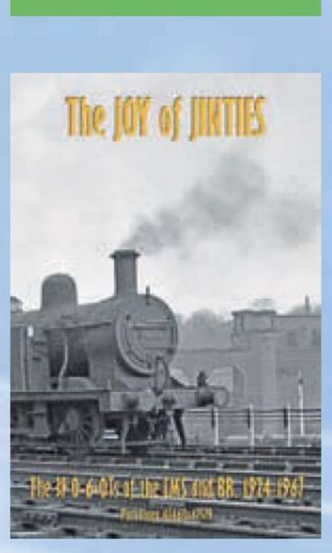


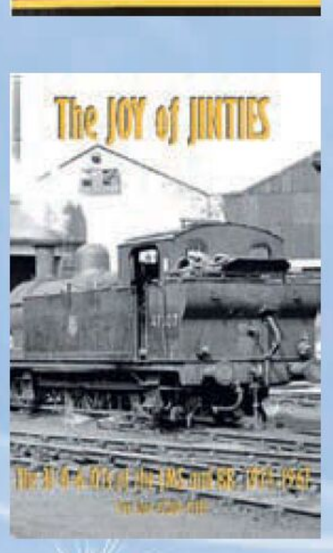


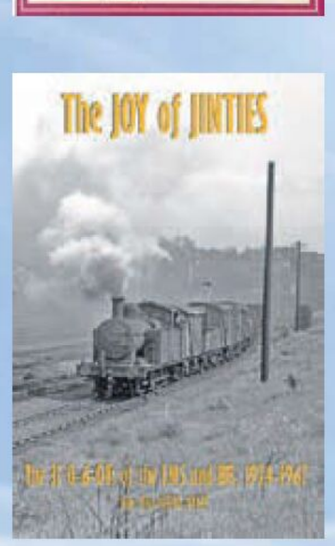


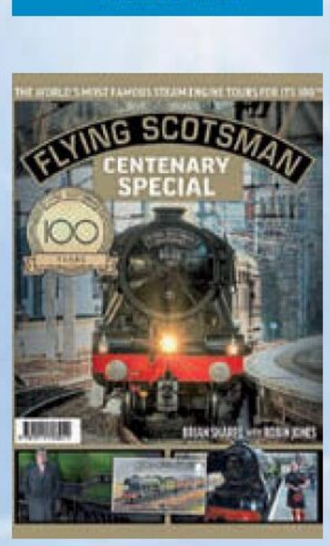


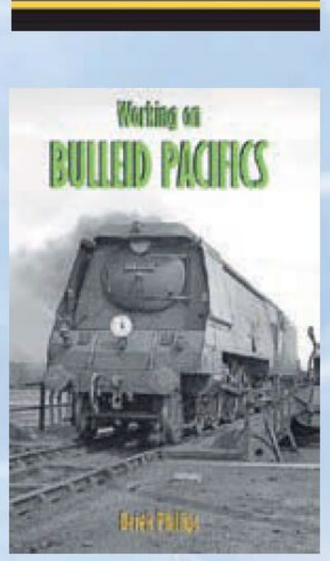


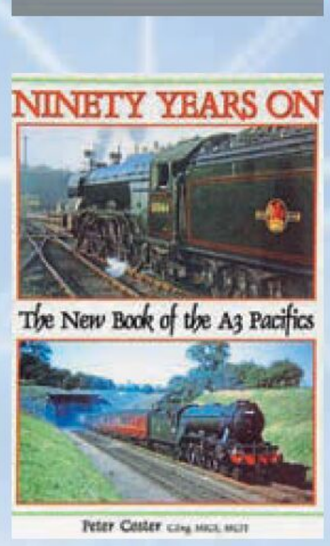












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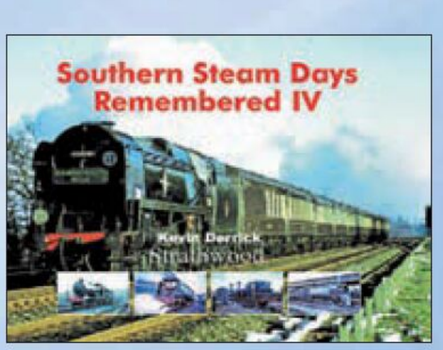

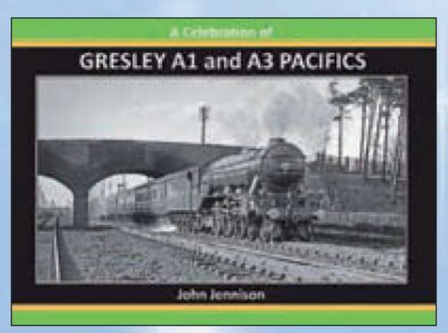

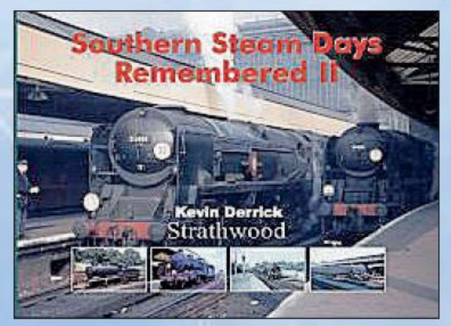

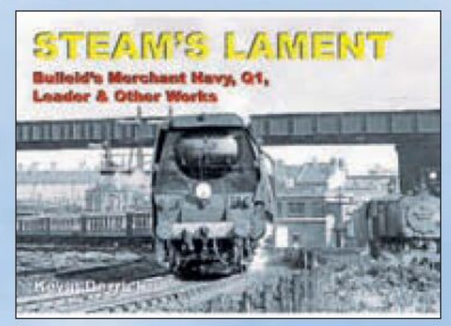

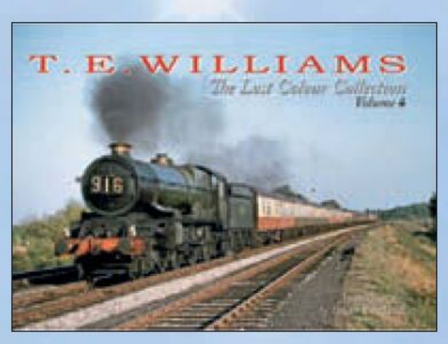

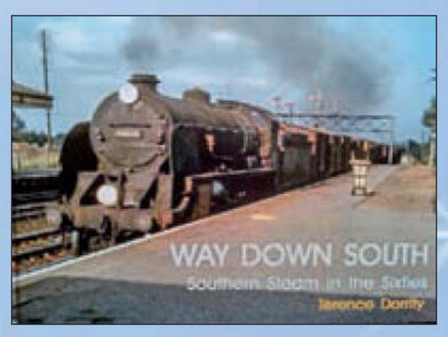

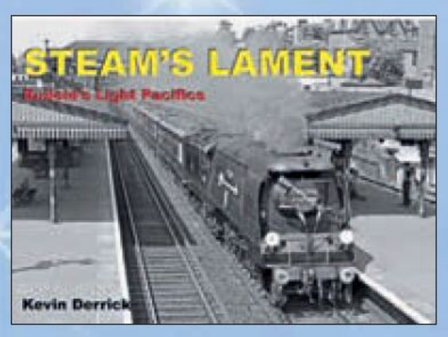

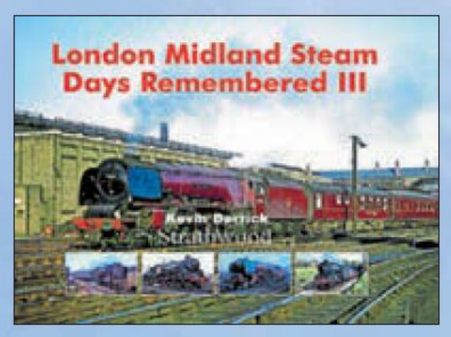

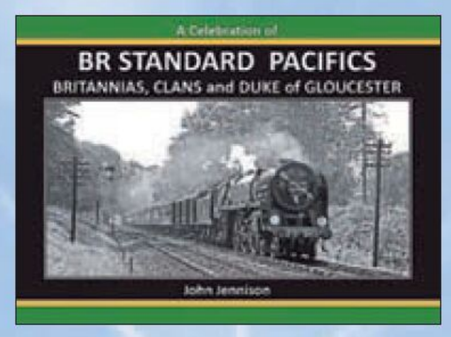

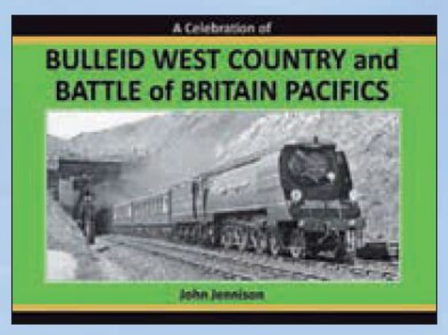

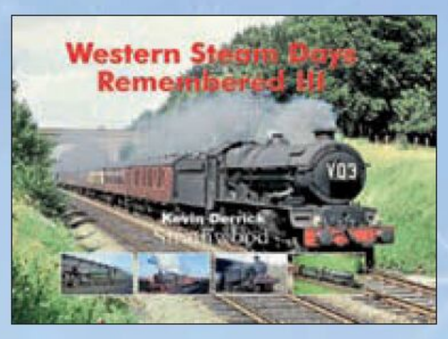

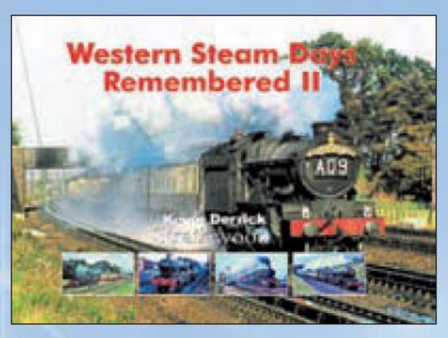

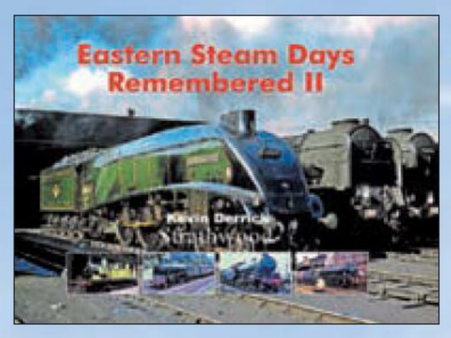

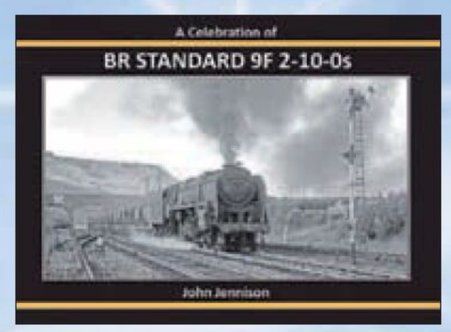

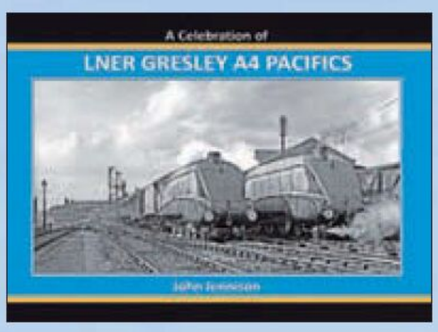

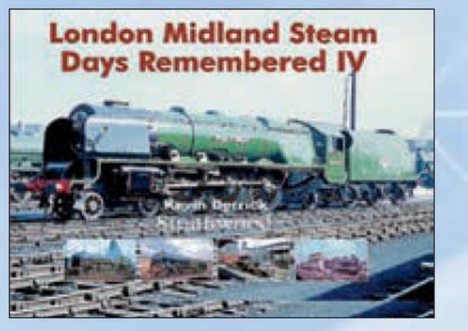

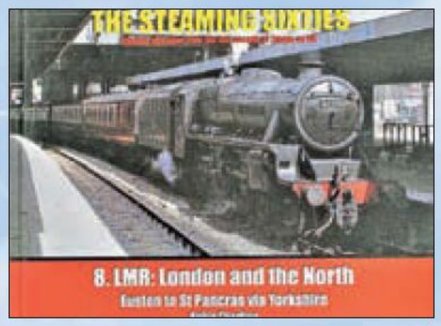

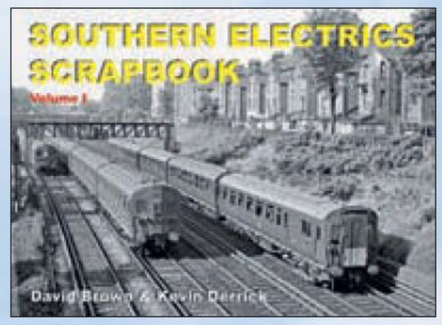

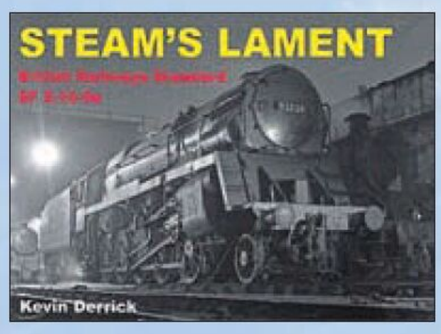

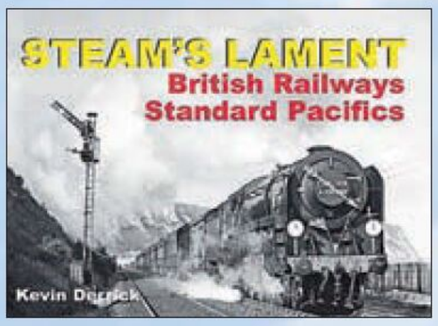

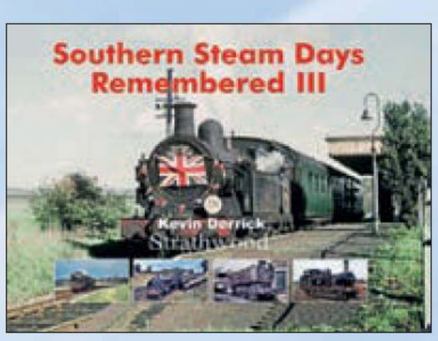

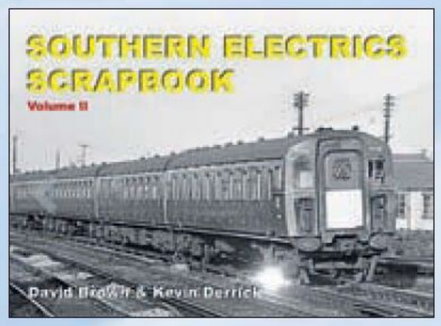

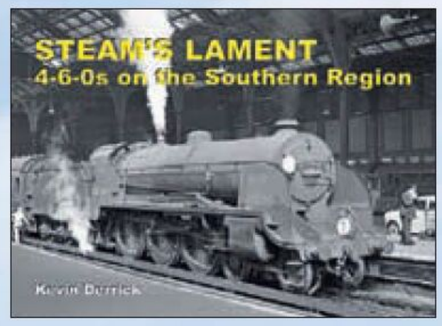

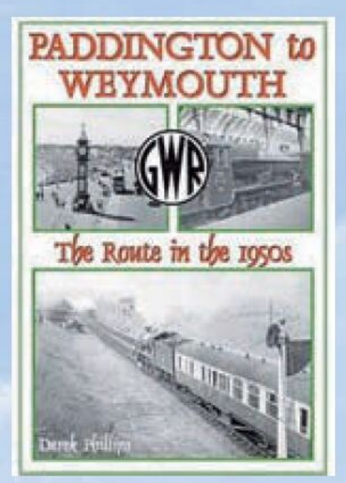

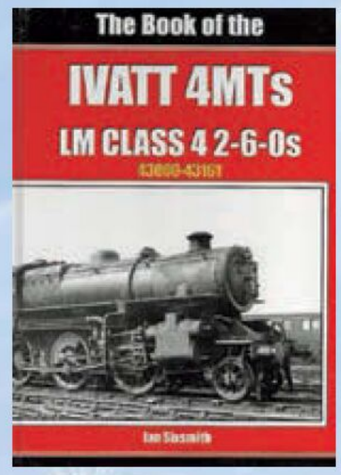

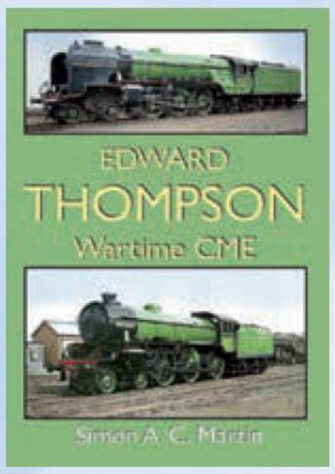

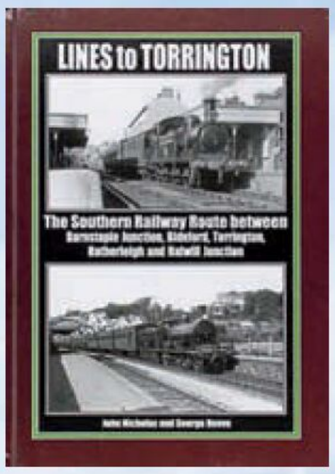

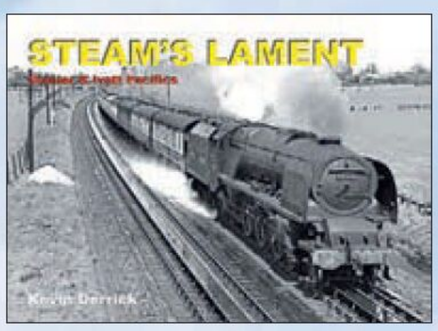

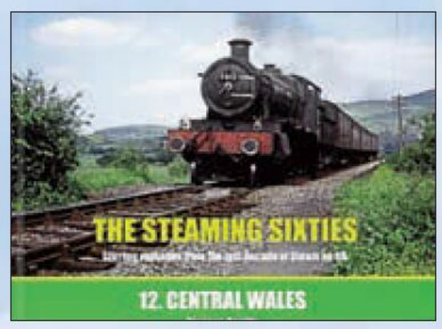

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SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex.
Tel: 01798 831370.
Reopens: Jan 22.

Bluebell Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL.
Tel: 01825 720800.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 1.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.
Running: Jan 24.

Chatham Historic Dockyard
Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent.
Tel: 01634 820800.
Reopens Feb 12, 2026

East Kent Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

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.
Reopens March 7, 2026.

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.
Reopens spring 2026.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Havenstreet, Isle of Wight.
Tel: 01983 882204.
Running: Dec 26, Jan 1.

Kent & East Sussex Railway
Standard gauge, 10½ miles.
Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.
Running: Dec 29-Jan 1.

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.
Reopens: Feb 22, 2026.

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles.
Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG.
Tel: 01962 733810.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 4.

Mizens Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey.
Tel: 07962 400922.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Old Kiln Light Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.
Reopens spring 2026.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
15in gauge, 13½ miles.
New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353.
Running: Dec 30-Jan 1.

Royal Victoria Railway
10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton.
Tel: 02380 456246.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles.
Sittingbourne, Kent.
Tel: 01795 424899.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Spa Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
Tel: 01892 300141.
Running: W/Es from Jan 17.

Volk's Electric Railway
2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton.
Reopens spring 2026.

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway
Standard gauge, three miles.
Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Bodmin Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.
Running: Dec 29.

Bristol Harbour Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.
M Shed Museum open Tues-Suns.
Running resumes 2026.

Dartmouth Steam Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles.
Paignton, Devon.
Tel: 01803 555872.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Devon Railway Centre
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon.
Tel: 01884 855671.
Reopens spring 2026.

East Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Cranmore, Somerset.
Tel: 01749 880417.
Running: Dec 30.

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset.
Tel: 01963 370752.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Helston Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Lappa Valley Railway
7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile.
Newquay, Cornwall.
Tel: 01872 510317.
Open: Dec 28-31.

Launceston Steam Railway
1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles.
Launceston, Cornwall.
Tel: 01566 775665
Reopens spring 2026.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.
Running: Dec 28-31.

Moors Valley Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants.
Tel: 01425 471415.
Running: W/Es + Dec 29-Jan 2.

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: Dec 27/28.

Seaton Tramway
2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 4.

Somerset & Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221
Running: Jan 1.

South Devon Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles.
Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.
Running: Dec 26-Jan 4.

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.
Running: Dec 26-Jan 4.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles.
Blunsdon, Wiltshire.
Tel: 01793 771615.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

West Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, 20 miles.
Minehead, Somerset.
Tel: 01643 704996.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Yeovil Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¾ mile.
Yeovil Junction station, Somerset.
Tel: 01935 410420.
Open: Suns.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum
Narrow and standard gauge, one mile.
Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.
Reopens spring 2026.

Bure Valley Railway
15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk.
Tel: 01263 733858.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 4.

Colne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.
Running: Dec 28.

East Anglian Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.
Open: Weds, W/Es.
Running: Jan 1.

Ferry Meadows Railway
10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cambs.
Tel: 01733 398 889.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Mangapps Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¾ mile.
Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex.
Tel: 01621 784898.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Mid-Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 11½ miles. Dereham, Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.
Regular: Jan 1.

Nene Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs.
Tel: 01780 784444.
Running: Jan 3/4.

Polish 0-8-0T Tkp-5485 *Slask*, which has been out of traffic on the Nene Valley Railway since Christmas 2023, undertook its first loaded test run on November 13, hauling eight Mk. 1 coaches, after passing its boiler inspection following lengthy repairs at Wansford shed and was scheduled to run in service during the festive season. Built by Fabryka Lokomotyw, Chrzanow for the Polish State Railways, it worked in the Silesian (Slask) coalfields in Bytom for all its working life until its withdrawal in 1995 and subsequent purchase for preservation in the UK. PAULROE/NVR

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North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA. Tel: 01263 820800.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 4.

Wells & Walsingham Railway
10¼in gauge, four miles. Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk. Tel: 01328 711630.
Reopens spring 2026.

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.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366
Running: Dec 28/29, Jan 1, 4.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: W/Es from Jan 3. Running: Jan 1.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Great Whipsnade Railway
2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.
Tel: 0344 225 1826.
Reopens spring 2026.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway
2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.
Tel: 01932 212235.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Dec 27-29

London Museum of Water & Steam
2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.
Tel: 0208 568 4757.
Open: Thurs-Suns.

Autocar No. 3170 and trailer have returned to the NYMR where they will work services through the National Park after Christmas and into the new year. NYMR

NER autocar returns to the Moors

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway has welcomed NER electric autocar to the line in readiness for use on post-Christmas services, when it will run between Pickering, Levisham, Goathland and Grosmont stations every day from Saturday, December 27, 2025, to Sunday, January 4, 2026. These journeys are hop-on, hop-off with no seat reservations, and journeys can begin at any of the four stations. On the same dates passengers will also be able to choose to travel aboard the steam-hauled Whitby Winter Excursions, which offer a unique 36-mile round trip through breathtaking scenery, including the snow-dusted moorland from the comfort of heritage carriages. Visitors also have the opportunity to explore so much of what Whitby has to offer.

Laura Strangeway, CEO at the NYMR, said: "The Whitby Winter Excursions are perfect for post-Christmas adventures to create cherished memories. They have become a highlight during the winter season and are an ideal way for passengers to experience the charm of steam travel at that time of year."

To find out more and to book, visit www.nymr.co.uk/whitby-winter-excursions and https://www.nymr.co.uk/autocar

MIDLANDS

Abbey Pumping Station
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX.
Tel: 0116 299 5111.
Reopens spring 2026.

Amerton Railway
2ft gauge, one mile.
Stowe-by-Chartley, Staffs.
Tel: 01889 271337.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Apedale Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. Tel: 0845 094 1953.
Running: Dec 27.

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: Dec 30-Jan 1.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys).
Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire.
Tel: 01691 728131.
Running: Dec 27/28.

Chasewater Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Walsall, West Midlands.
Tel: 01543 452623.
Open: Daily.
Running: Jan 1.

Railway museums

Beamish
County Durham. The Living Museum of the North. Open: Dec 31-31, Jan 2-4, then Fris-Suns from Jan 5.
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.

Colonel Stephens Railway Museum
Tenterden, Kent.
Open when KESR trains are running.
Tel: 01732 809143

Crewe Heritage Centre
Vernon Way, Crewe. Reopens Spring 2026.
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: TBA.

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.

Churnet Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Cheddleton, Staffs.
Tel: 01538 360522.
Reopens: Feb 7, 2026.

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile.
Crich, Derbyshire.Tel: 01773 854 321
Reopens spring 2026.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles.
Norchard, Lydney, Glos.
Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: Dec 27/28, 31.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles.
Wirksworth, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 823076.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Echills Wood Railway
7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.
Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.
Reopens spring 2026.

Foxfield Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles.
Blythe Bridge, Staffs. Tel: 01782 396210.
Reopens spring 2026.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Standard gauge, 15 miles.
Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 1.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323.
www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: Daily until Jan 1.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)
Standard gauge, 10 miles.
Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.
Open: W/Es.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Midland Railway – Butterley
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley,
Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.
Reopens spring 2026.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Pitsford, Northants.
Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: Dec 28, Jan 1.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Hunsbury Hill, Northampton.
Tel: 01604 702031.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Peak Rail
Standard gauge, four miles.
Matlock, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 580381.
Running: Dec 26, Jan 1.

Perrygrove Railway
15in gauge. B4228, Coleford,
Gloucestershire. Tel: 01594 834991.
Open: Tues, W/Es.

Rocks by Rail
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore,
Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.
Reopens spring 2026

Rudyard Lake Railway
10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs.
Tel: 01538 269948.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden,
Northants.
Tel 0300 3023 150.
Reopens spring 2026.

Severn Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster,
Worcs DY10 1QR.
Tel: 01562 757900.
Running: Dec 26-Jan 4.

Statfold Country Park
Multiple gauges, one mile. Tamworth,
Staffs B79 0BU. Tel: 01827 830389.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

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: Dec 28.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway,
Toddington.
Reopens spring 2026.

Valley Railway Adventure
15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of
Evesham, Worcs.
Tel: 01386 422282.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Blackpool, Lancs.
Tel: 01253 209521.
www.blackpoolheritage.com
Depot: TBA.
Heritage tram tours: Jan 2/3.

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.
Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: Dec 26/27, 31, Jan 1, then W/Es from Jan 24.

Eden Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.
Reopens spring 2026.

Great Laxey Mine Railway
19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 862007/670386.
Reopens spring 2026.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 670453.
Reopens spring 2026.

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.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

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.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway
3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER), 5½ miles (SMR).
Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 697473.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass,
Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.
Running: Dec 28-Jan 3.

Ribble Steam Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Preston, Lancs.
Tel: 01772 728800.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

South Tynedale Railway
2ft gauge, 4¾ miles.
Alston, Cumbria.
Tel: 01434 338212.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria.
Tel: 01768 779747.
Reopens March 28, 2026.

West Lancashire Light Railway
2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs.
Tel: 01772 815881.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick,
Northumberland. Tel: 0300 030 3311.
Running: Dec 27-29.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe
Standard gauge, 15 miles.
British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.
Tel: 07889 297271.
Reopens spring 2026.

Bowes Railway
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles.
Springwell, Tyne & Wear.
Tel: 07850 916484.
Open: Tues & Thurs to pre-booked groups only.

Having been working Christmas services on the Swindon & Cricklade Railway during November and December, Hunslet 'Fitzwilliam' 0-6-0ST No. 1589 *Newstead* will head to Buckfastleigh to appear at the South Devon Railway's Winter Steam Gala on January 2-4, 2026. There it will appear alongside resident locomotives GWR 1366 class 0-6-0PT No. 1369 and small prairie No. 5526, as well as 2800 heavy goods 2-8-0 No. 2807, which has been visiting from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway to work the SDR's Polar Express services in the lead-up to Christmas. Visit www.southdevonrailway.co.uk/event/winter-steam-gala-2for full details. NEWSTEAD LOCO GROUP

Pre-order Issue 341: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles.
Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire.
Tel: 01472 604657.
Running: Dec 31, Jan 1.

Derwent Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Embsay, North Yorks.
Tel: 01756 710614.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles. Ford Forge, Northumberland.
Tel: 01890 820244.
Reopens March 30, 2026.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ.
Tel: 01535 645214.
Running: Dec 26-Jan 4.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway
2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.
Tel: 07407 500884.
Reopens May 23, 2026.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Ludborough, Lincolnshire.
Tel: 01507 363881.
Running: Jan 1.

Middleton Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Hunslet, Leeds.
Tel: 0845 680 1758.
Running: Jan 1.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 4.

Scarborough North Bay Railway
20in gauge, ⅞ mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Stephenson Steam Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
North Shields.
Tel: 0191 277 7135.
Open: Dec 27/28.

Tanfield Railway
Standard gauge, three miles.
Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.
Tel: 07508 092365.
Running: Dec 27/28, 31.

Weardale Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles.
Stanhope, Co. Durham.
Reopens spring 2026.

Wensleydale Railway
Standard gauge, 22 miles.
Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.
Tel: 01677 425805.
Running: Dec 28-30.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)
15in gauge, four miles.
Huddersfield, West Yorks.
Tel: 01484 865727.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1,000ft.
Fimber, East Yorkshire.
Tel: 01377 338053.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway
2ft gauge, 4½ miles.
Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01678 540666.
Reopens spring 2026.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Blaenavon, Torfaen.
Tel: 01495 792263.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.
Pant, Mid-Glamorgan.
Tel: 01685 722988.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile.
Corris, near Machynlleth.
Tel: 01654 761701.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles.
Fairbourne, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01341 250362.
Reopens spring 2026.

Ffestiniog Railway
2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Dec 28-31, Jan 1, 3.

Gwili Railway
Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 01267 238213.
Running: Dec 31.

Llanberis Lake Railway
2ft gauge, three miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01286 870549.
Reopens spring 2026.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 07956 082305.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Llangollen Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen, Denbighshire.
Tel: 01978 860979.
Running: Dec 27-30.

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.
Reopens spring 2026.

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...

Throughout November and December, many heritage railways will also be running festively themed special events, including 'The Polar Express', Santa specials and Train of Lights. For full details of these services, you are advised to check the websites of the railway or museum thay you are intending to visit.

DECEMBER
- 26 Groudle Glen Railway Mince Pie Trains
- 26 Peak Rail Mince Pie Trains
- 27-30 Great Central Railway Betwixmas Steam
- 29-31 Kent & East Sussex Railway Steam into the New Year
- 30/31 Battlefield Line Mince Pie Trains
- 30/31 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway Black Bun Specials
- 31 Great Central Railway The Nightrider

JANUARY 2026
- 1 Mid Suffolk Light Railway Steam and Light Festival
- 2/3 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway Black Bun Specials
- 3/4 Severn Valley Railway Winter Gala
- 3/4 South Devon Railway Winter Steam Gala
- 3/4 Swanage Railway Winter Warm Up
- 22-25 Great Central Railway Winter Steam Gala
- 24/25 East Lancashire Railway Open House Weekend

FEBRUARY 2026
- 7 East Lancashire Railway Diesel Running Day
- 14-22 Mid Hants Railway Magic of Locomotion
- 21 Peak Rail The Night Shift
- 21/22 East Lancashire Railway Small Engines Gala

Organising a gala or other big event? Email the details to Owen Hayward at owen.hayward@kelsey.co.uk

Talyllyn Railway
2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.
Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.
Running: Dec 26-Jan 3.

Teifi Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Henllan, Ceredigion, SA44 5TD. Tel: 01559 371077.
Running: TBA.

Vale of Rheidol Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Welsh Highland Railway
2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Dec 27-Jan 1.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.
Running: Dec 28-30.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Bo'ness, West Lothian.
Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: Dec 28-30.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles.
Brechin, Angus.
Tel: 01356 622992.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge.
Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Dufftown, Banffshire.
Tel: 01340 821181.
Running: Dec 31.

Lathalmond Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond, near Dunfermline.
Tel: 07379 914801.
Reopens spring 2026.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South Lanarkshire.
Reopens spring 2026.

Royal Deeside Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles.
Banchory, Kincardineshire.
Tel: 01330 844416.
Reopens spring 2026.

Strathspey Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.
Running: Dec 27-30, Jan 1-4.

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway
3ft gauge. Drumod, Co. Leitrim.
Tel: +353 71 963 8599.
Reopens spring 2026.

Downpatrick & County Down Railway
5ft 3in gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down. Tel: 028 4461 5779.
Regular running resumes spring 2026.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim.
Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.
Museum open: Thurs-Sats.
Running: TBA.

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Contact Andy on 01507 529455 • andy.bruce@kelsey.co.uk
or Connor on 01507 529411 • connor.crowley@kelsey.co.uk

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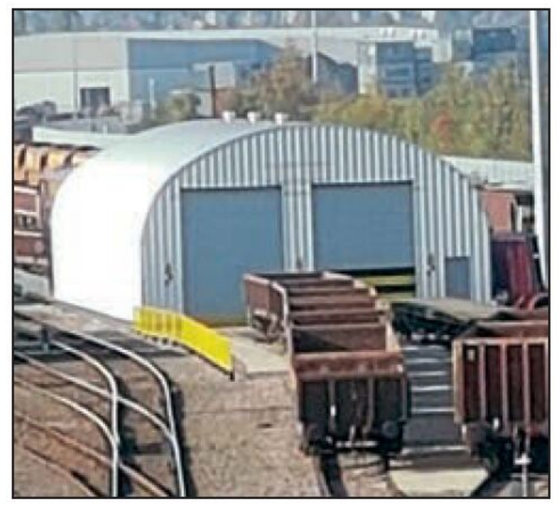

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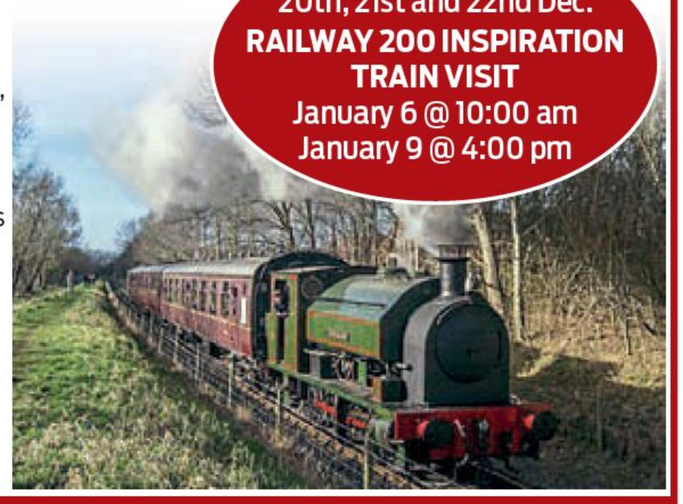

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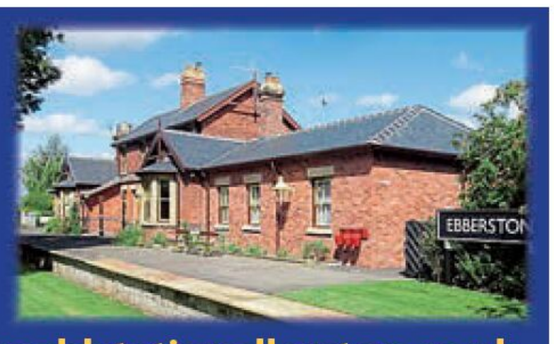

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'Magnificent' *Flying Scotsman* makes Mark's day

By Geoff Courtney

YORKSHIRE farmer Mark Wilson has never been a trainspotter, but he had no doubts about what he wanted for a 60th birthday present – a ride behind *Flying Scotsman*. And that dream became reality on the actual date he reached the landmark, November 1, when the world-renowned locomotive was drawing the crowds to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

His enthusiasm epitomises the allure of the Pacific, which has continued unabated since its withdrawal 63 years ago. It is an allure that many find difficult to explain, but Mark, who farms in the village of Hovingham, between Malton and Helmsley, was in no doubts about the reasons after his journey with his wife Clare.

"*Flying Scotsman* just looks magnificent, so long and sleek and powerful, while the noise it makes, and the smoke and steam, just add to the experience," he said.

"The place was packed, with loads of folk taking pictures along the route between Pickering and Grosmont.

Happy birthday: Mark and Clare Wilson during their journey on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway behind *Flying Scotsman* on the occasion of Mark's 60th birthday on November 1. CLARE WILSON

Ready for the off: No. 60103 begins to run round its train at Pickering on November 1. MARK WILSON

"I have never been a trainspotter as such but have always found trains fascinating. There is something about watching them go past and wondering where they are going and who is on them. I used to like watching the high-speed trains on the main line near Easingwold, which is a fast stretch. I remember watching them with my mum and dad and saying it would be great if a steam train came along, and a man who was also there said there would be one in a minute. It was *Sir Nigel Gresley* being taken to York Railway Museum. That was a fantastic moment.

"There is something about steam engines that's quite magical. Maybe it's the thought of a bygone age, even though I don't remember them in service, the engineering skills involved, or that they seem individual rather than just another mass-produced engine."

Short but sweet! Could this be Britain's most unusual railway?

By Stuart Chapman

THE UK has a long history of cable and rope-worked railways developing from gravity systems with counterbalanced weights to those using stationary engines to pull loads up steep inclines. While the Bowes Railway, Middleton Top or the Great Orme Tramway may spring to many people's minds, not far from Eastbourne an enthusiast has built what must be one of the most unusual standard gauge railways in the country.

Owner Adrian Backshall built most of the line during the Covid-19 pandemic using a cable system to move the train. The railway is only 50ft long and runs along the side of a suburban back garden using a Wickham lookalike train named *Old Bill*, in memory of a friend.

With an estimated top speed of about a third of a mile an hour, the railway has to rank as one of the shortest and slowest standard gauge lines of them all.

Originally, the railway used a manual rope pulley, but this required two people to operate, so three years ago it was upgraded to a motorised system with the addition of a 12-volt car battery to allow single man operation without the need for manual effort.

The Wickham lookalike uses an old platelayers' trolley recovered from a Southern Region network rail yard where it was no longer required. It can accommodate four people in comfortable chairs and a stove heater, with a single switch to operate the motor and portable solar panels to charge the battery.

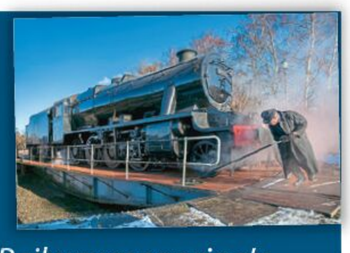
The track is surrounded by memorabilia including signalling equipment and railway signs, and it is clear to see the time and effort that's gone into building the line.

While the railway is strictly private, an open day was held for the local St Wilfred's Hospice in June, raising more than £2000, and it is hoped that similar events can be held in the future.

The railway stretches a short distance along the side of the garden. The cable can be seen in the foreground as the train, which includes comfortable seating, makes its way along the short line at a sedate pace. The photograph was taken with the permission of the owner during a recent Branch Line Society visit. STUART CHAPMAN

NEXT ISSUE
Issue 341 out Jan 16
Diesel renaissance: Chris Gee gives an insight into the rising popularity of photographic charters featuring diesel traction.

PLUS
PEOPLE IN THE PICTURE
As volunteer-led railway preservation turns 75, *Heritage Railway* magazine's photographers share some of their favourite shots featuring the people who keep the trains running.



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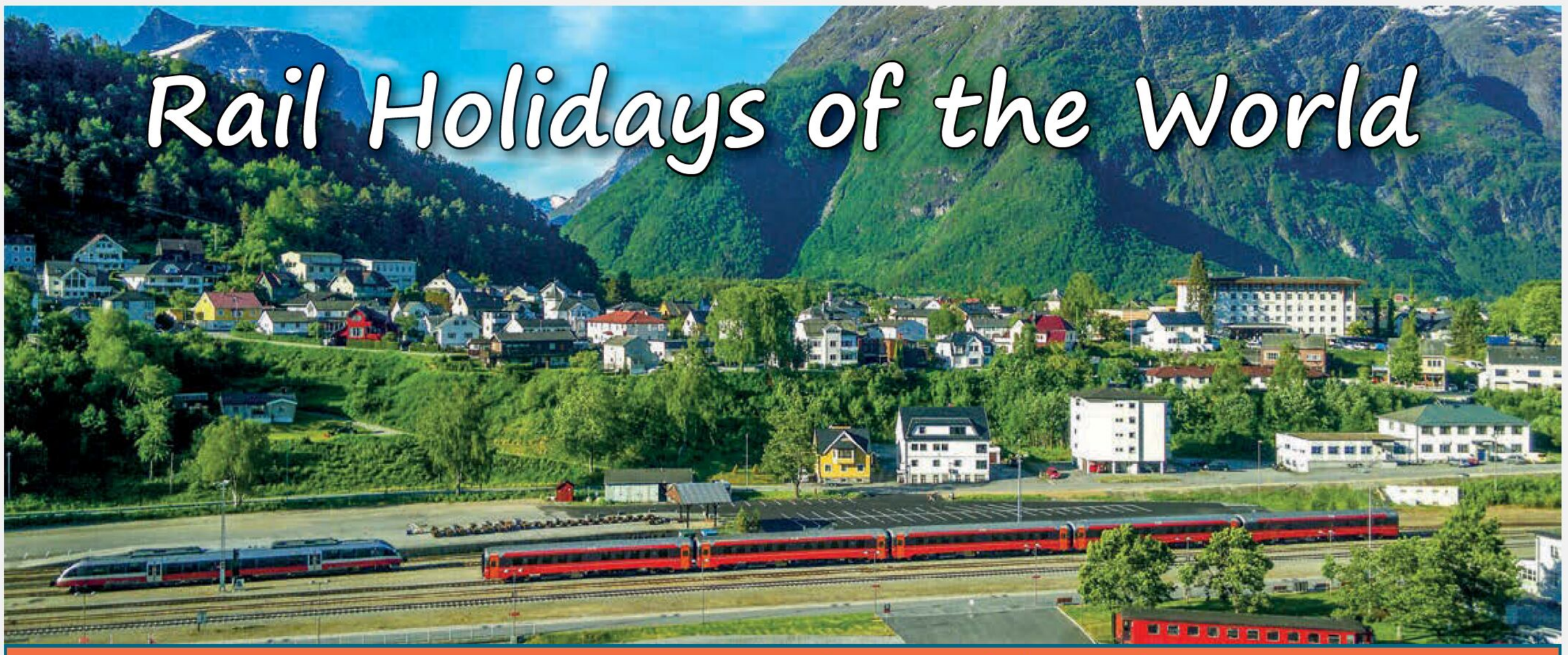

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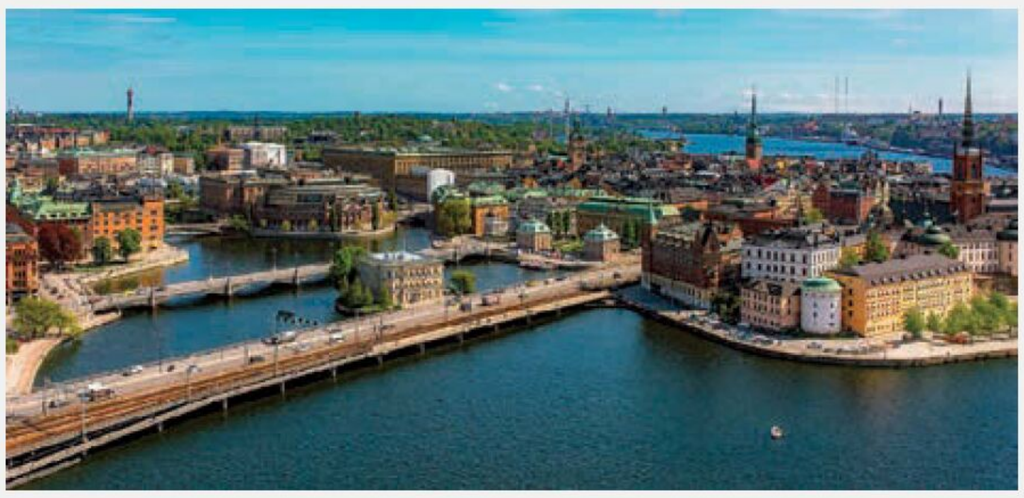

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