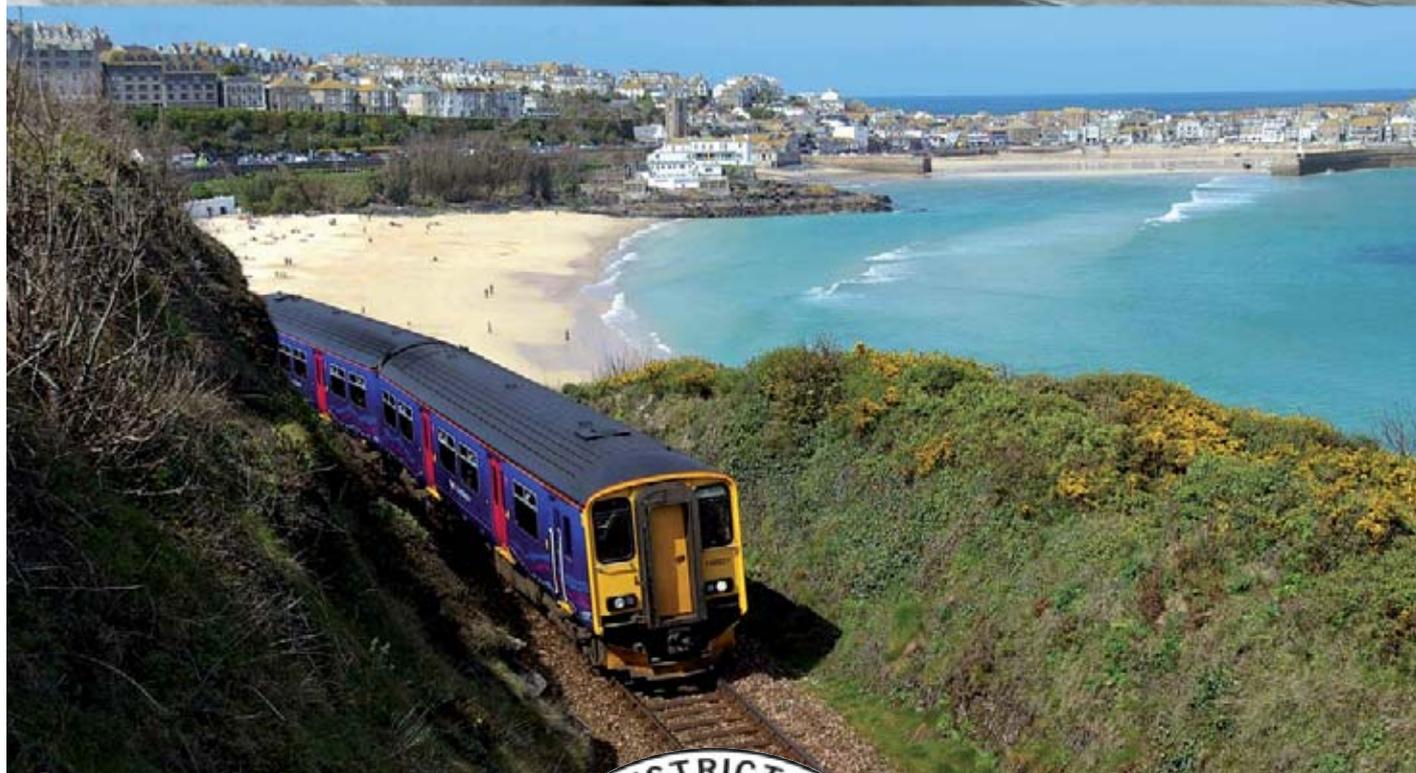


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

126

September 2009



Contents:

- How Did it all Begin? Part 3
- A Damp Day in the Chalk Pit
- A Trip to the Duchy

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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The contents of the *Marlow Donkey* represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: Pannier 1367 with chimney and funnel stands at Custom House Quay, Weymouth 4 July 1960.

Photo: Alan Morris (Article page 5).

Bottom: 150221 departing St. Ives climbs to Carbis Bay 14 April 2009. Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 12).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Red Cross Centre, Victoria Road, Marlow, at 7.45 for 8.00pm.

Thursday 17 September **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GREAT WESTERN** Matthew Golton

Matthew is Projects Director at FGW and will be outlining the major works over the coming few years including, Crossrail, Reading, resignalling in the Thames Valley and South Wales, redoubling the Cotswold line, the IEP and electrification.

Thursday 15 October **A RAILWAY RETIREMENT - THE JOURNEY CONTINUES** Phil Marsh

Now 'retired' from Network Rail, Phil is not letting the grass grow under his feet. He will tell us something about his life as a professional journalist with *The Railway Magazine* and as a footplateman on the main line and at Chinnor.

Thursday 19 November **PADDINGTON TO MAIDENHEAD** David Wadley

Having talked to us about the London Underground on his previous visit two years ago, David now turns his expertise to the London end of the GWR main line with an architectural and engineering review.

Thursday 17 December **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

Our traditional festive gathering for members and their families. Details to be announced.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

Wednesday 25 November **AN EVENING AT PENDON MUSEUM** by car

A special evening opening of the famous model model museum at Long Wittenham, near Didcot. Let Mike Hyde know if you are interested in coming along. See page 3 for full details.

Please note: The above programme is correct at press time but subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Please check the Society's website www.mdrs.org.uk for the latest details.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Our "barbecue summer", promised by the Met Office, seems not to have come to fruition. One wonders how they can get it so wrong, not only long term but also just the day before, with all that sophisticated equipment to hand. One event to suffer was our Society trip to Amberley on 11th July, when, rather unexpectedly, it rained virtually the whole day, spoiling what would have been a very interesting visit on the occasion of their operating a record number of steam locomotives. It was very galling that the Sunday turned out to be gloriously sunny and some muttering was heard as to why we chose to go on a Saturday when traditionally it was Sunday. To be honest, I'm not sure, but even if we had chosen the Sunday when the date was decided, it would probably have rained then anyway. Come on chaps - this is the UK!

Fortunately, I was able to enjoy one of the sunniest weeks of the year when I visited Wales in early June. I even persuaded my wife to have a trip on the Welsh Highland and was surprised to bump into Ron North on the same train. Unfortunately the pleasure of being hauled by the prototype Tasmanian Garrett was rather short lived when it struggled to make steam and was taken off at Dinas with a collapsed brick arch, to be replaced by a diesel. It's a fabulous line but I fear the only similarity between it and the original will be that neither will ever make any money. Currently trains are running through the Aberglaslyn Pass but stopping at a run-round loop just to the south. For this reason it has been decided to postpone the proposed Society visit until next year, when it is hoped through running to Porthmadog will have started.

In July Malcolm Margetts and I had an informal meeting with the Chairman and Secretary of the RCTS Maidenhead Branch, who wanted to discuss co-operation between our two societies. My initial reaction had been to question their reasoning for wanting to set up a branch in an area already well served by local www.mdrs.org.uk

groups. Fortunately it was simply that, as a national organisation, they perceived a gap in their network and there had never been any intention to poach our members. By mutual consent we have agreed to advertise each other's meetings and to liaise regarding outings, to avoid duplication and any clashes of dates. MDRS members will also be able to attend RCTS meetings at the same cost as their members.

When I wrote in the last edition of the *Donkey* I was encouraging people to get out there and visit places. I hope you have been. I have tried my best this year, so far getting to the Bucks Railway Museum at Quainton, albeit as an adjunct to a road run for historic commercial vehicles; the Mid-Hants with very old friends, enjoying haulage by both *Wadebridge* and *Bittern*; the Foxfield Railway Gala, with a certain ex-Chairman, as well as the vast Transport Rally at Kemble Airfield and a gathering at the GM Heritage Centre of over 30 Bedford OB coaches and buses to celebrate 70 years since their introduction.

As you can tell I am quite interested in other forms of transport that don't run on rails and, at the risk of being branded a heretic, I wonder if we could perhaps broaden our Society's outlook to embrace some non railway subjects occasionally. I am sure I'm not alone, so could I have your comments please, for and against.

I'll finish with my favourite recent railway experience. It was just the other day, when I was out for a stroll during my lunch hour from work in Slough. Approaching a bridge over the GW main line I heard a down HST coming and quickened my step to get there to see it but on arrival what was on the up relief? None other than *Tornado* with its support coach. If I had been 10 seconds later I would have missed it. It was a lovely coincidence and put a smile on my face for the rest of the day.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The June meeting was a tour de force on the subject of mechanical railway signalling by Mike Walker who followed the development of "traditional" signalling from time interval working to modern times and explained what the various signals mean and how they work. Part two covering modern power signalling is scheduled for July 2010.

In July David Berguer gave us an overview of the development of tramways in London from their inception up to the end in 1952. Unfortunately his presentation was very short and many of us were left feeling the subject could have been covered in greater depth. Some of us were in the pub by 9.30!

We braved a day of near constant drizzle when we visited Amberley on July 11th which was a pity as it contains many fascinating displays. A selection of members' photographs from the visit appears on pages 9 and 10.

PENDON MUSEUM VISIT

The Society has arranged an exclusive visit to the incredible Pendon Museum at Long Wittenham (between Wallingford and Didcot) on the evening of Wednesday 25th November commencing at 19.30. We propose to share cars from Marlow and the admission charge is

£5.00. Members, family and friends are welcome. If you are interested in taking part please let Mike Hyde know (01628 485474 - michaelahyde@uwclub.net) by 25th September including if you need a lift or can offer a lift to other members.

Modellers will need no introduction to Pendon but for those of you who do not know a brief introduction. Pendon is the home of some of the most intricate and detailed finescale modelling anywhere. The main exhibits are on two floors; on the ground floor is a recreation of the GWR main line across the southern slopes of Dartmoor with a branch across one of Brunel's timber viaducts. Upstairs is a vast model of the Vale of the White Horse in the 1930's with the GWR main Line down in the valley and the village of Pendon, consisting of buildings culled from various Vale villages overlooking it from the hillside. Both are built to 4mm = 1 foot scale and the standard of modelling has to be seen to be believed – even individual flowers in gardens and detailed interiors to the cottages and trains. Try and spot the missing knob on a chest of drawers!

Also housed in the museum is the Madder Valley Light Railway. Built by John Ahern in the 1930's, this is generally accepted to be one of the first fully scenic model railways. Fascinating in its own right it provides a vivid contrast with the modern Pendon modelling.

The guides on hand will give more details of how the layouts have been built and the techniques used. This is an excellent evening whether or not you are interested in model railways, don't miss out!

Please note that access to the upper floor is restricted for some less mobile visitors as Pendon does not have a lift.

To find out more about Pendon go to <http://www.pendonmuseum.com/index.jsp>

LEN ALDRIDGE

Sadly we must record the passing of another member. Len Aldridge passed away on June 6th whilst waiting lineside to photograph 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*.

RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

As Tim Speechley mentions on page 2, our two groups have agreed to co-operate in a number of ways. Here are brief details of their programme for the next few months.

Monday 28th September
Reading Station Rebuilding, Paul Newman Network Rail

Monday 26th October
Rebirth of the Welsh Highland, Robin Higgs

Monday 23rd November
History & Redevelopment of St Pancras, Doug Irvine

Monday 21st December
American Railroads in the Sixties, Roger Greatrex

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Lesiure Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead at 19.30 and all MDRS members are welcome to attend.



Two examples of the superb modelling at Pendon, cottages from the Vale of the White Horse and a Brunelian viaduct on the Dartmoor scene.

photos: The Pendon Trust

BOURNE END CROSSINGS

The new barriers were brought into use at Brooksby and Marina Crossings on the Marlow branch in early June. However the following clear up didn't go quite to plan.

The contractor sent a truck with a hydraulic crane to lift a steel container from the trackside onto the lorry which was in the marina car park. As the meerkat would say, seemples! However, during the lift, something went wrong and they dropped the container on the roof of a parked Jaguar!

The unfortunate owners were enjoying a quiet day on the river and could not be contacted but the contractors did arrange for a chauffeur driven limo to await their return and made arrangements to repair or replace the car.



The new barriers in place at Marina Level Crossing on 25th June 2009. Although "locally monitored" note the CCTV cameras so that Slough can keep watch.

photo: Mike Walker

BACK TO THE FUTURE AT WYCOMBE

Chiltern have submitted an application to rebuild the approach to High Wycombe station. Basically the plan is to demolish much of the old goods station, now a tyre dealer and taxi office, and restore the core of the building which is the original Wycombe Railway terminus to its 1854 appearance. It will then become a cafe and small retail units. Traffic flow will also be revised.

In addition a three level multi-storey car park will be erected giving an additional 144 spaces

The detailed plans can be viewed at the WDC website www.wycombe.gov.uk and quoting planning application reference 09/06028/LBC.

FGW IMPROVEMENT CONTINUES

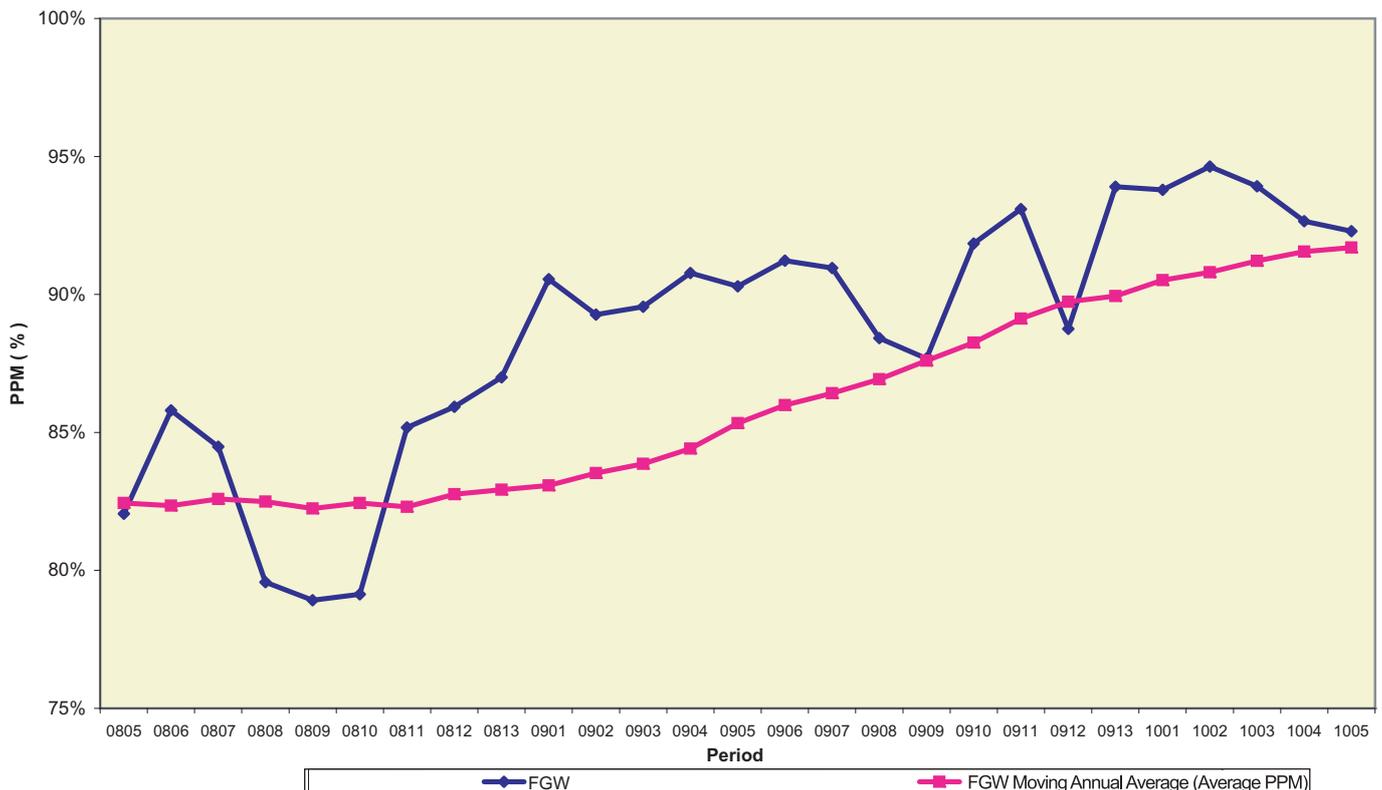
"The Hopwood Effect" continues to work its magic on FGW performance as the graph below indicates. This shows the steady improvement over the last two years apart from blips caused by leaf-fall and February's snow.

The most recent four week period saw 92.29% of all FGW services arrive at their destinations on time as defined by the Public Performance Measure (PPM), which is within 10 mins for long-distance services and 5 mins for the rest. Locally the London & Thames Valley routes turned in 94.07%, High Speed 88.22% and the West 91.17%.

In mid-summer the average PPM peaked at 94.63% which put FGW second nationally (it had been bottom before Mark arrived) and for four consecutive periods the LTV services out-performed Chiltern!

This is a truly remarkable performance, and given the complexity and mixed nature of FGW's operations along with the congested areas it serves such as Reading and Bristol anything over 90% must be regarded as impressive.

FGW PPM



HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN? 1943 to 1968

Alan Morris looks back on a quarter-century of memories.



In 1952, I had another visit to Swindon on 2nd March and saw ex Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T, GWR No. 5. I had already 'spotted' its compatriot No. 6 at Swindon in 1948 waiting to be scrapped. A totally different experience was seeing and photographing gas turbine electric 18100 leaving Paddington on 3rd April on a test run. I had previously seen the earlier gas turbine 18000 passing through Southall on a number of occasions and was very aware of its distinct smell of burnt jet fuel.

I made a first ever visit to the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on 1st of August and travelled the whole line from Hythe to Dungeness hauled by 4-6-2 *Typhoon*. On a more recent visit I realised how little it had changed in about 50 years, the length of the line, the locomotives and the stations all seemed similar, though the coaching stock has been renewed, and in this motoring age level crossing barriers installed following at least two fatal accidents.

On 25th August 1956 I went to Kings Cross to see some friends off to the North East and photographed A4 60003 *Sir Andrew K Mckosh* leaving on the 'Northumbrian' to Newcastle. I had a spare afternoon so I decided go to

Ivatt 2-6-2T 41222 arrives at Buckingham with a train from Banbury on 13th June 1958 [Top]. Note the porter ready with the steps because of the low platform.

On 3rd April 1952, the WR's second gas-turbine, 18100, [Bottom] waited to leave Paddington with a 14 coach test train.

Earlier, Alan had photographed the Swiss-built 18000 [Middle] heading an up express through Southall circa 1949.





During a visit to Brighton on 16th March 1957, Alan found the last ex-SECR D Class 4-4-0 31574 [Above] in the yard and the last operational LBSC H2 Atlantic 32424 Beachy Head [Left] inside the shed.

Cambridge, and on to Ipswich and was hauled by D16 4-4-0 62566. I shall always remember, sitting in a compartment on this train opposite three demure East Anglian ladies who had obviously been to a market day in Cambridge when just before the train was due to depart two American men boarded. One was large, one small, a bit like Laurel and Hardy I thought. The large guy tried to chat up the ladies with virtually no response. When we arrived at Six Mile Bottom station, the ladies left the train, the big guy making a remark to the three ladies 'That's a mighty big bottom to have!'

The following week I had trip to Carlisle and took a picture of 'Princess Royal' 4-6-2 46209 leaving with the 'Mid Day Scot', then journeyed on the coast line to Workington and back to Penrith via Keswick. The next day I travelled to Newcastle via Hexham and on to South Shields and then to Whitby via Sunderland and Middlesbrough.

Later that year the Liverpool Street to Southend electrification was about to be switched on, so I had one last steam trip on another thoroughly miserable foggy December day behind B12 4-6-0 61576 to Southend, and also rode the Southminster branch on a nearly new DMU.

My interest in railways continued into 1957 with a visit to Feltham on 9th March when, apart from the usual S15, H15 and BR standard 4-6-0's, H16 4-6-2T's and G16 4-8-0T's which were used for hump shunting in the huge goods yard, there were two O2 0-4-4T's, 30177 and 30179, the latter in very smart condition. O2's were usually found in the West Country (and the IoW of course) working on branch lines, but not normally at Feltham.

One week later I went to Brighton and St. Leonards, visited both sheds and saw at Brighton the last of the elegant ex-SECR D Class 4-4-0's, No. 31574, and King Arthur N15 4-6-0 30747 *Elaine*, both awaiting scrapping. In use, and in very clean condition were two ex-LBSCR K 2-6-0's 2340 and 2341, ex-SECR P 0-6-0T 31556 and ex-LBSCR E3 0-6-2T 32166. Best of all on this visit was the last operational ex-LBSCR H2 4-4-2 32424 *Beachy Head*. At St. Leonards there were ex-LBSCR A1X 32678, Class V (Schools) 30937 *Epsom*, still in use on Charing Cross to Hastings trains and ex-SECR R1 0-4-4T 31010 with height reduced for working the Whitstable branch, which may have been closed by then.

April 13th we visited Stewarts Lane, Nine Elms and Stratford all in a day. These were officially authorised visits (if I

remember rightly) organised by the RCTS which I had now joined. On the way to Stratford we saw the two Liverpool St. Station pilots, J69/1 0-6-0T 68619 and N7 0-6-2T 69614, both looking immaculate as usual. Diesels were now appearing on the scene, as well as electrification, so there were lines of redundant steam locos awaiting the cutter's torch, including ex-GE B12 4-6-0 61537, Y4 0-4-0T 68128, F5 & F6 2-4-2T's 67199 & 67230 and a number of D16 4-4-0's. One plus was that D16/3 4-4-0 62572 looked superb ex-works in BR lined black livery. Ex-GCR L3 2-6-4T 69060 was in use in stationary boiler mode.

Later in 1957 I joined the RAF for the two years of National Service. I travelled to Bedford, then to Cardington for kitting out, and a few days later, on to Bridgnorth by train from Cardington on the now closed Hitchin to Bedford line, and via Birmingham by a circuitous route. We made slow progress pulled by a 4F 0-6-0. In January 1958 I moved on to RAF Locking, Weston Super Mare, for trade training (to become a wireless mechanic). This took about 16 weeks. We were free to leave the camp at midday on Saturday and had to return by Monday morning. Sometimes I travelled home but other times I created a railway trip for myself, such as Weston Super Mare-Bristol Temple Meads - Bath Spa (by ex-GWR diesel railcar via Keynsham) - Bath Green Park - Evercreech Junction (BR standard 4-6-0) Evercreech Junction - Highbridge (S&D) (2P 4-4-0 40698) - Highbridge(WR) - Weston Super Mare.



Former MR 2P 4-4-0 40698 stands at Highbridge ready to work a Somerset & Dorset service to Evercreech Junction on 1st February 1958.



8750 Class pannier 4673 comes off the Brentford branch at Southall with a local freight on 14th July 1960. The view is from the footbridge (part of which is visible) which was the viewing place for Southall shed.

On one Monday morning I travelled from home at Southall via Paddington and on to Bristol on my favourite train the 'Bristolian', schedule 105 minutes, actual time 101 minutes (non-stop) with a 'Castle' in charge. This is a faster time than a FGW HST, though they do stop about four times on the way. Don't ask me why I was travelling late to RAF Locking, I can't remember!

After trade training I was transferred to RAF Stanbridge near Leighton Buzzard, but was actually billeted at Bletchley and employed at Stoke Hammond working shifts at the RAF radio receiver station. Shift working had the advantage of time off during the day, when I could do some train watching. My camp was only a short distance from the West Coast Main Line and Bletchley loco shed. There was a nice grassy bank near the entrance to the shed from which I could observe the trains without trespassing. The loco shed was, in those days, on the west side of the main line, whereas now the depot, which MDRS visited in May 2007 is on the East side. I was at this posting from May to October 1958 during which time I managed to take some train rides to Cambridge via Bedford St. Johns and Sandy. This line was closed East of Bedford during Beeching's time. I also managed a visit to Oxford via Winslow (now closed between Bletchley and Calvert) and from Verney Junction to Buckingham and Banbury Merton Street in a very new DMU Bubble car. This line was closed shortly afterwards.

On 8th July 1958, when I was sitting on the grassy bank, the Royal Train passed by with 46242 'City of Glasgow' on the front. Apparently the Queen was returning to London from Scotland as she was expecting Prince Edward at the time. Bletchley was a very busy shed with frequent loco movements including 4F 0-6-0's, 'Black 5' 4-6-0's, 'Jubilee' 4-6-0's, 8F 2-8-0's, ex-LNWR G2 0-8-0's, BR Standard Class 4 4-6-0's etc.

In October 1958 I was posted to Cyprus and went via Southend airport and flew in an 'Air Charter' DC4, (a sort of 4 engined Dakota). This was both my first flight and my first excursion overseas. Cyprus used to have a railway between Famagusta and Nicosia but unfortunately it was closed before my arrival. The only relic of this railway that I saw was a small tank loco. on a plinth outside a police station near Famagusta. Because of EOKA terrorism on the island when I first arrived we couldn't leave camp at Ayios Nicolias very often but the problems were resolved by summer 1959 so we were able to explore some of the island by hire car. I was surprised to find an open railway crossing, which was obviously still in use, when travelling toward the West side of the island. It was narrow gauge of about 3 feet. I later found that it was used for transporting copper ore from a mine in the mountains to a quay on the Northern coast. That was almost 50 years ago and I have no idea whether it is still in existence.

When I returned to the UK in 1959 to be demobbed I flew into a RAF airfield near Swindon and was taken to the station. There had been a long dry spell in England that summer and everything looked dry and brown. I went to Gloucester by train and on to RAF Innsworth. It was a Friday and when I arrived and it was too late to go through the demobilisation procedure which meant I had to wait until Monday, so on Saturday I went to Birmingham on the train. For the first time for ages it poured with rain all day. I have no memories of my rail trip on that miserable day. On Monday I managed to escape from the RAF and travelled to Paddington, pulled by a 'Castle' and back to



It's hard to believe but this photograph was taken at Bletchley. 41122, one of the famed Midland Compounds waits with a local on the up slow line on 27th August 1958.

Southall by a 61xx 2-6-2T. My last confrontation with the RAF was at Paddington when walking to the suburban platform 16, still wearing my uniform (my civilian clothes were being shipped back from Cyprus) and I was stopped by two RAF policemen, who threatened to arrest me, why? Because I was carrying, not wearing my RAF cap!

After the RAF I returned work in a drawing office at EMI, this time at Feltham. In 1960 there wasn't much time for railways, as I was married in June and moved to a house at Shepperton-

A wonderful image of V1 2-6-2 60852 approaching Sandy in Bedfordshire with an up express on 27th August 1958.

The tracks on the extreme right are the LNWR's Oxford - Bletchley - Bedford - Cambridge line which crossed over the ECML just north of Sandy where both companies had separate stations next door to each other.



Carrying express passenger lamps, Pannier 1367 stands Custom House Quay on the Weymouth Tranway on 4th July 1960. Today the line lies abandoned whilst various options for its future are argued over.

on-Thames soon afterwards. However, I did manage to go to Weymouth and photograph ex-GWR 0-6-0PT 1367 running down to the quay, and at Bournemouth ex-LSWR T9 4-4-0 30707 about to depart for the now closed route to Salisbury via Wimborne. At Bournemouth West station I saw ex-S&D 2-8-0 53807 arrive with the 7.35am train from Nottingham. The Swanage branch was being worked by two ex-LSWR M7 0-4-4T's 30058 and 30060.

To be concluded in December.

A DAMP DAY IN THE CHALK PIT

On Saturday 11th July twenty members, partners and friends braved almost constant drizzle to visit the Chalk Pits Museum at Amberley in West Sussex which was holding its Bagnall Bonanza Gala. Despite the weather, a good time was had by all at this fascinating rural museum and here is a selection of members' photographs.



photo: Tim Speechley



photo: Murray Tremellen



photo: Tim Edmonds

One of several Hunslet IC locos at the museum is ex MoD HE8969 [Top Left]. It is seen hauling a train of hoppers into Brockham station, watched by a group of MDRS members.

Ex Dinorwic Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Cloister* owned by The Hampshire Narrow Gauge Railway Trust has recently come to Amberley (having been previously based at Kew Bridge Steam Museum) and her forthcoming overhaul is due to be carried out on site. She is seen coming off shed towards Brockham [Top Right]. Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Wendy* also owned by the Hampshire Narrow Gauge Railway Trust, stands in Amberley station, [Bottom Right] the terminus of the museum's 2 ft gauge passenger line, with a train of workman's coaches.

Formerly of the Groudle Glen Railway, Isle of Man, the museum's resident Bagnall 2-4-0T 1905 built *Polar Bear* is seen departing Brockham with a rake of ex GGR toastrack coaches [Bottom Left].

The museum's other Bagnall is a 0-4-0ST of 1917 vintage named *Peter* formerly of the Cliffe Hill Quarry Company, Leicestershire, and is seen approaching Brockham Station [Left] with the armanents wagons.



photo: Mike Walker



photo: Tim Edmonds



Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT 1912 built *P. C. Allen* normally based on the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway, is seen entering Brockham station with a mixed freight train.

photo: Tim Edmonds

Visiting from the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway in Kent, was another 0-4-0ST Bagnall *Armistice* built in 1919 for the Ministry of Munitions.

photo: Tim Edmonds



One of the more unusual exhibits was this 1ft 10in gauge 0-4-0T which was owned by the Guinness Brewery in Ireland and the converter wagon that enabled it to shunt 5ft 3in gauge rolling stock.

photo: Tim Edmonds



Besides the steam locomotives, the museum has a large number of internal combustion engined locos. Here Hudson-Hunslet 3097 of 1944 vintage, and previously owned by Merton Sewage Works, brings a train of armament wagons from the siding towards the main line at Brockham.

photo: Tim Edmonds



Another oddity was an industrial monorail system that came from Bishops Waltham Waste Water Works, where it was used to transport sludge. The vehicle was built by Road Machines in 1960 and runs on double flanged wheels, hydraulically driven through gearing by a 4.5hp petrol engine.

photo: Tim Edmonds



Besides the narrow gauge railway exhibits, the museum has a large collection of ex Southdown motorbuses, most of which date from pre 1930. A replica Southdown Garage has been constructed on site to house these vehicles.

photo: Mike Walker



A TRIP TO THE DUCHY

Mike Walker looks at four decades of change in Cornwall



photo: Mike Walker



photo: Phil Searle

It's 28th July 1971, dawn has broken and I wake to find an unusual view passing my window. Passing? Yes, I'm aboard 1C10, the 00.55 Paddington to Penzance sleeper on my way to spend a day exploring some of the Cornish branch lines; part of a week-long holiday with a Western Region Rail Rover and we are about to cross Brunel's magnificent gateway to Cornwall. Fast forward 38 years to the day and I'm repeating the trip to see how much has changed in nearly four decades. I'm expecting a lot, because, although the Doctor's axe had reduced the Duchy's rail network to almost its present extent, in 1971 it was only six years since the last fires were dropped and the mighty diesel-hydraulics still hauled trains on an infrastructure more closely akin to the steam era than today's rationalised, efficient railway.

First, the sleeper. Back in 1971 it was, of course, still formed of the old Mk1 stock, a sort of Bates Motel on wheels rather than today's Mk3s which in comparison are more Premier Inn! But 38 years hasn't seen any progress in speed. In 1971 it left Paddington at 00.55, ran via Lavington, and was due in Penzance at 07.55 although on my trip it arrived 3 minutes early. Today, dubbed the *Night Riviera*, it leaves Paddington at 23.45 and is booked into Penzance at 08.00 but we arrived 7 minutes early this time. I'm told the pre-midnight departure is done to avoid confusing passengers and that the train's routing can be very flexible depending on possessions etc. The Exeter crews sign every possible permutation of route between Reading and Exeter - even via Melksham and/or Yeovil! On this occasion we went via the Badminton line and Bristol Parkway. Journey times haven't decreased to allow this flexibility and because passengers prefer a good night's sleep.

Stepping off the train in 1971 I walked up the platform to find that 1047 *Western Lord* had been in charge whilst this year we had 57604 *Pendennis Castle*, still in FGW green. Over the years the station hasn't changed much. Located on the seafront, it has four platforms, three ending under a short trainshed, and the fourth entirely in the open. On the landward side it is overlooked by a retaining wall although not as tall as that at High Wycombe. In March the station was closed for a week whilst the approaches were renewed and the area resignalled with LED colour-lights but still controlled from the local 'Box'. What has changed is the depot at Long Rock which now has a light maintenance role for the HSTs up to A exams, virtually everything on the sleepers, which are allocated to PZ, and local DMUs.

Contrasting Class 43's at Penzance. On 28th July 1971 [Left] 853 Thruster waited to depart for Paddington whilst on 8th March 2009 [Right] its place was taken by 43151.

Another change was the weather. In 1971 I'd enjoyed a balmy summer's day, sunny with a gentle breeze. This year the entire county was subject to driving persistent rain of monsoon proportions for the whole day. So much for the "barbeque summer" we were promised; I felt sorry for all the holidaymakers.

The trains have changed too of course. This year the 08.44 to Paddington, the *Cornish Riviera* no less, was an HST in platform 1 whilst a Voyager was in platform 2 ready for the 08.28 to Glasgow via Birmingham, Newcastle and Edinburgh (another great way round!) and 150249 waited in platform 3 forcing the *Night Riviera* outside in number 4. In 1971 we'd arrived in platform 2 and my first train of my return journey was waiting alongside in platform 1. The 08.05 to Paddington was formed of Mk1 stock with Warship 853 *Thruster* at its head. These North British built Class 43s had a bit of a reputation. It was said that on leaving Paddington the normal driving technique was to open the cab windows wide then the throttle (they regularly suffered leaking exhausts). If it made it to Southall without at least one engine blowing up there was an odds on chance of it making it to its destination! And Mark thinks he has problems. Well, as far as I was concerned *Thruster* only had to get me to the first station up the line, St Erth, and that it did. This year I caught the 08.57 which is a through train to St Ives, two car 150238 arrived and coupled to its waiting twin to form a four car set. Prior to departure I enjoyed an excellent all-day breakfast in the station buffet as the complimentary fare provided on the *Night Riviera* was inadequate for my needs.

The journey from Penzance to St. Erth starts with a trip along the coast as far as the site of Marazion station where you can usually get a good view of St. Michael's Mount (but not this year!) before turning inland and north east. St. Erth is one of the unsung gems of the network, a typical unspoilt country junction still with its semaphores and oozing Great Western character. You almost expect a 45xx and "B Set" to roll into the bay from St. Ives or a Grange or Castle to call at the main line platforms. Instead, in 1971, the branch train was formed of a 3 car Derby Class 116 DMU comprising W50900, W59352 and W50847. It arrived at 08.23, having left St. Ives at 08.10, and



photo: Mike Walker

W50900 sits in the bay at St Erth in July 1971 [Above] having arrived from St Ives. The station still retains [Right] much of its GW atmosphere.



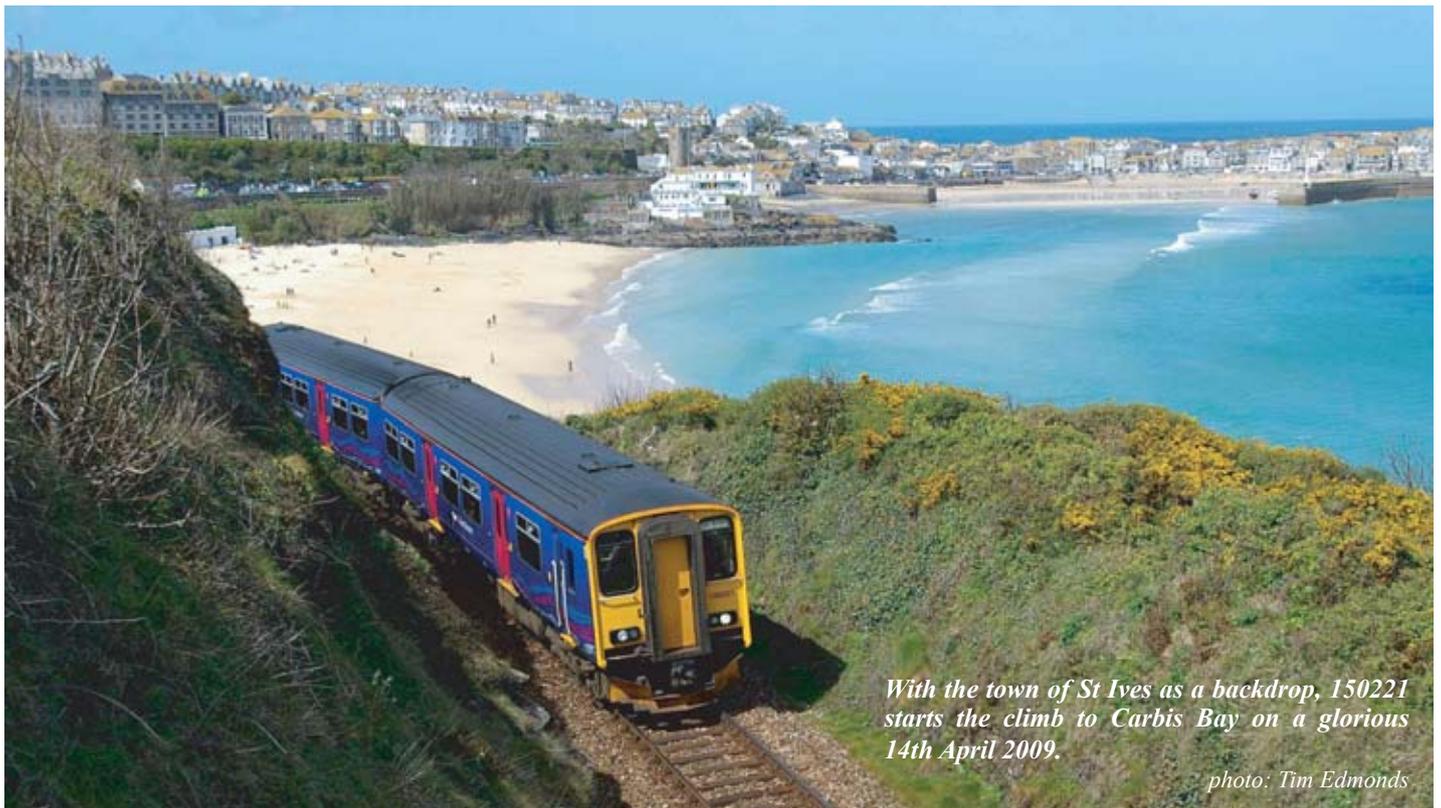
photo: Phil Searle

waited for the arrival of the 07.50 Truro - Penzance, formed of a Swindon built Class 120 Cross Country set, at 08.26 before departing again at 08.30.

The St. Ives branch, opened in 1878, had the distinction of being the last line built to broad gauge but has now been reduced to little more than a 4¼ mile siding. Indeed, earlier in 1971 the line had been shortened by 8 chains when BR allowed the original station to be replaced by a car park and a basic station consisting of a platform and shelter, the latter has since been replaced with an even more basic facility! However, on a good day it's a fantastically scenic ride starting out with a trip along the Hayle Estuary, pausing at Lelant Saltings, a new station added in 1978 to serve as a park and ride location for St. Ives, followed by Lelant and then climbing up onto the cliffs some 50-60 feet above Carbis Bay which has its own halt., before dropping back down to the terminus. Unfortunately, the weather this year meant little of the scenery could be seen. The conductor said there was supposed to be a flying display at RNAS Culdrose, "I think they've had that."

On my previous trip I returned on the 08.45 back to St. Erth where another NBL Warship 845 *Sprightly* had arrived in our absence and was engaged in shunting six-wheel milk tanks in the dairy sidings next to the bay. These have now gone, about the only noticeable change at St. Erth in the intervening period. That day I had around 40 minutes to wait for my next train but at 09.03 1073 *Western Bulwark* arrived on the 23.45 from Paddington which had run via Bristol. Note this train had actually taken about 1¼ hours longer than today's *Night Riviera* and did not convey sleeping cars. My onward train at 09.40 was the 09.30 Penzance to Birmingham New Street which was in the charge of Brush 4 1604. This year I had only 5 minutes to wait before the 10.00 Penzance - Paddington HST arrived with 43158 and 43154, on time, to take me on the next leg to Truro.

This section twists and turns its way through western Cornwall. Crossing the first of many viaducts we arrive at Hayle where since my last trip the GWR buildings have been demolished and replaced with simple shelters. Apart from an AHB



With the town of St Ives as a backdrop, 150221 starts the climb to Carbis Bay on a glorious 14th April 2009.

photo: Tim Edmonds



North British Class 22 6336 shunting vans in the compact yard [Above] at Truro station in July 1971. It was withdrawn a few months later. At the other end of the station [Right] a Swindon-built Class 120 Cross Country DMU waited to form the 10.25 to Falmouth.

both photos: Mike Walker



crossing, no trace of Gwinear Road, junction for Helston, remains. Next comes Camborne where the GWR buildings on the up platform have recently been renovated although the down side only has a "bus shelter". There is a footbridge and CCTV controlled level crossing at the London end and a ¼ mile further on another level crossing is alongside Roskear Junction Signal Box which controls a large part of the line from Truro to St. Erth. It gets its name from a long closed goods only branch that diverged to the north. Redruth station is on a sharp curve and also retains its brick GW buildings on the up side and a superb wooden waiting room and shelter on the down with a typical GW footbridge linking the two. The whole place is well maintained and clean.

Approaching Truro the Falmouth branch trails in on the right at Penwithers Junction. Here in 1971, the remains of the goods only branch to Newham, closed earlier in the year, were still visible. This wrapped around the south side of Truro in much the same way that the old Reading Central goods branch did. Unusually though, the junction was off the branch and faced Falmouth. Today there is no trace at ground level although Google Earth reveals a tell-tale line among the trees.

Through the short Highertown Tunnel we arrive at Truro. This is a large station still full of GW character. The impressive main building on the down side has a turreted roof in the style recreated at Kidderminster by the SVR and there's a complementary building on the up side, both platforms being linked by not one, but two footbridges. Again there is a level crossing at the London end beyond which is the signal box which controls the layout with an impressive set of semaphores and, further a field, with colour-lights. Opposite, new offices have replaced the small yard where, in 1971, one of the dwindling fleet of North British Class 22s, 6336, was busy shunting short wheelbase vans. Also gone are many of the up side sidings behind the station and the track in platform 4 where a Swindon Cross Country set comprising W51578, W59580 and W51587 waited to form the 10.25 to Falmouth. As a result, this time I had to cross the footbridge to reach platform 1, the down bay, and await the arrival of 153361 to form the 10.50 to Falmouth.

The Falmouth branch has seen the greatest change since my first visit. BR had closed the original GWR terminus down by the docks in December 1970, replacing it with a new basic halt ½ mile away. This was not popular with travellers so in 1975 the original terminal reopened and the new station renamed The Dell. Subsequently in 1989 it was renamed again as Falmouth Town whilst the terminal became Falmouth Docks. The branch had always been single with passing places at Perranwell and Penryn but both had been removed before 1971.

In May this year Penryn, at a cost of £7.17 million, was restored as a passing place but in a rather unusual



The new passing loop at Penryn. On this occasion, before it was brought into use, a down train is passing through the loop alongside the old up platform to the new down platform behind the camera. The refurbished former down platform is on the right is used by up trains.

photo: Tim Edmonds

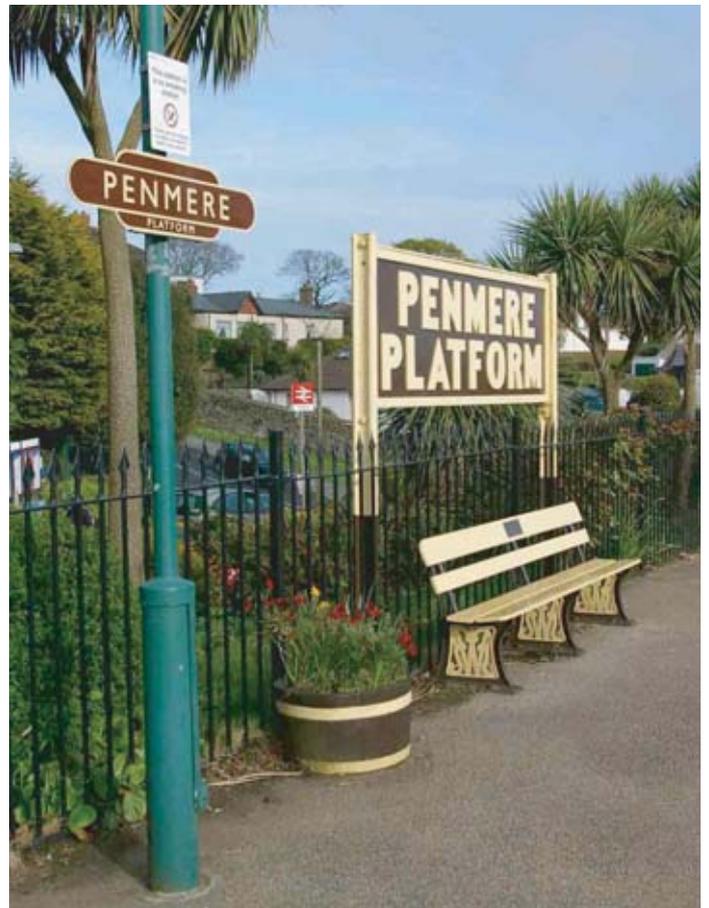
configuration. To avoid having to provide a disabled accessible footbridge and rebuild the old up platform the down one was more than doubled in length at its south end. Controlled remotely from Truro, the operation now sees the up train usually arrive first and stop at the Truro end of the platform. A couple of minutes later the down train runs past the waiting train running right-handed through the loop at some speed before stopping at the south end. Almost immediately, the up train departs. The whole operation is slick and impressive and has allowed FGW to increase the number of daily trains from 13 to 29! On my previous trip, only as far as the 1970 station of course, our departure from Falmouth came to an abrupt halt. The conductor came running through the train and banged on the cab bulkhead shouting "Stop - we've left someone behind!" We did so and reversed into the station to pick up the no doubt grateful stranded passenger. Emerging from the cab, the conductor addressed his audience: "How's that for service?"

Last time I had only five minutes to wait at Truro before continuing on the 11.31 train, the 10.55 from Penzance, the *Cornish Riviera*, which was entrusted to Brush 4 1668 *Orion*, still in its original two-tone green livery. This time, after a wait of 37 minutes during which 150279 (one of those hired by FGW from Arriva) and 153318 passed on the 09.34 Exeter St Davids - Penzance, I caught the 11.40 Penzance - Newton Abbot which was similarly formed. The train, like almost all that day, was very busy but I found a seat in 150278, another Arriva set which seems quite shabby compared to the FGW version. Indeed at one point during the day I heard a family remarking "how nice it was to see new trains on these branches" referring to a FGW 150/2! Their illusion remained unchallenged.

The section east of Truro is devoid of stations in the 14 mile section to St Austell but the section between Probus and Burngullow which BR had singled to reduce costs has been restored to double track. At the latter point a Freightliner Class 66 was in the sidings serving the large china clay dries along with a privately owned Sentinel diesel shunter and along here we passed a EWS Class 66 with a short train of fuel tankers, presumably bound for Long Rock. In 1971 St Austell still boasted a fine set of GW buildings but in 1999 the down side was replaced by a very modern glass and steel structure no doubt in connection with it becoming the railhead for the Eden Project. The up side buildings remain but are boarded up and near derelict which does not present a good impression to customers.

Continuing east we cross over the former branch from Par Harbour to St Blazey, now reduced to a short siding serving a china clay plant (the remainder down to Fowey including the 1173 yard Pinnock Tunnel is now a private road) before arriving at Par. This is the junction for Newquay but today, as before, the timetables don't allow for exploration in a day trip. The station still has many GW features and a small yard all controlled from a modernised GW 'Box at the down end of the up platform and still with a fine array of semaphores. The Newquay branch boasts a daily through HST service to and from Paddington in the summer months which is dubbed the *Atlantic Coast Express* I've pointed out to Mark how un-PC this is. He takes the point but says it's not down to him or FGW - BR adopted the title in 1987 and it's sort of stuck. Anybody got a better idea?

East of Par the scenery changes, we leave behind west Cornwall's surprisingly "industrial" landscape with its china clay belt and evidence of former (and at one point current) tin mining with ruined engine houses dotted across the horizon, and enter a region of deeply wooded valleys and hills. The line twists and turns crossing a succession of viaducts, on a good day it's a beautiful ride, today the train was continually hitting overhanging branches laid low by the sheer weight of the rain



Penmere Platform in north Falmouth [Above] has been adopted by a local group who have restored it to a Western Region look. FGW 153369 [Below] arrives at Falmouth Docks on 14th April 2009.

both photos: Tim Edmonds

water on their leaves and clouds settled on the higher ground

Lostwithiel comes next, where the GW station buildings were replaced by BR in the early 1990's but the GW signal box remains. EWS 66021 was standing in the Down Goods Loop east of the station with a train of CDA china clay wagons on one of the shuttles between the works off the Newquay branch and the docks between Golant and Fowey. These join the main line at Par and run to Lostwithiel where they run round before taking the branch to Fowey whose junction faces east just west of the station, and vice-versa. Now, if the St Blazey - Fowey line was still open. . .

Next up is Bodmin Parkway. In 1971 this was still Bodmin Road (it changed in 1983) and had been reduced to a very basic halt with simple shelters. Now of course it's seen a renaissance thanks to the reopening in 1990 of the branch to Bodmin General by the Bodmin & Wenford Railway whose 4247 was





standing at the head of four red and cream Mk1's across the platform when we drew up. They too seemed to be doing brisk business. The station now has better facilities including a café located in a signal box on platform 1, although I suspect this is a modern "replica" in the original location.

A short section of single line remains across the East Largin and St Pinnock viaducts which are regarded as weak and ensures two trains aren't on them at once. As a result our 2009 train had to slow to allow the slightly late running Paddington - Newquay HST (the aforementioned *ACE*) cross first. Clear of this we arrived at Liskeard.

Liskeard must certainly be the most unusual junction station in the country. Alighting from a main line train there is nothing to suggest a junction, just two platforms with simple shelters in a deep cutting and no bay. The only clue is a point off to the left at the London end opposite the signal box. Signs on the up platform direct you to the Looe branch train by "turning right out of the gate and left at the end of the road". Doing so brings you to a delightful little station with a single platform and a wooden building at right angles to the main line. The link between the two is via a tortuously sharp curve through a small yard. This year 150266 was waiting to make the run to Looe but in 1971 I found another Class 116 in occupation but was advised not to board as it would not be working the next train at 13.21.

So I walked back to the main line platform to see what, if anything was happening. Soon the 12.10 Plymouth - Liskeard appeared over the viaduct. The unit looked familiar and as it drew up revealed itself as W50411 and W56467, one of the tired Class 103 Park Royal two-car units transferred from the LMR in 1970 which had become a familiar if unwelcome sight on the Thames Valley branches. There then followed a complicated series of manoeuvres to swap the 103 for the 116 and I took my place on the former for a ride down the branch.

The unusual station layout provides the overture to an equally unusual branch. Departing Liskeard, trains briefly head north east before turning through 180° and descending a steep hill which takes them under the main line Liskeard Viaduct. After nearly two miles (but only ½ mile as the crow flies) and now facing north west, they come to Coombe Junction where a reversal is made. Just north of the junction is a small halt called Coombe and whilst all trains served this in 1971 very few do today. In 1971 the signal box at Coombe was still operational but today the conductor has to get out and change the points, and exchange the Liskeard - Coombe token for the Coombe - Looe staff - not the best of jobs in a monsoon!

The reason for this layout is dictated partly by geography, the need to get from the main line which jumps from ridge to ridge,

1668 Orion [Left] departing Liskeard with the up *Cornish Riviera* on 28th July 1971. Later the same day, 1033, 1059 and 1036 [Right] lined up at Plymouth.

both photos: Mike Walker

down to the Looe valley, and partly history. The Looe - Coombe section was once a separate railway which continued north to Caradon on Bodmin Moor (it still extends to Moorswater) and was not connected to the main line until 1901.

The remainder of the branch is delightful. It follows the deep wooded valley and calls a three tiny halts, St Keyne Wishing Well Halt (surely the longest station name on the network and one of the shortest platforms) Causland and Sandplace. Today most trains either treat these as request stops or run as nominal non-stop services between the two termini but on my most recent trip we had to do a swift stop at the former when the driver spotted someone on the platform. However it turned out to be a man doing a spot of videoing (in that weather?!) and I'm not sure if he actually boarded. The other two did not require us to stop.

Looe itself is another example of "shrinking Cornish branch syndrome" having been shortened by 110 yards by BR in 1968. The old station site is now occupied by a police station but like its predecessor, the present basic station is in a delightful spot alongside the Looe estuary. All the stations on the branch may be simple but they are all nicely presented in chocolate and cream paint and sport "traditional" BR style totems.

This year the branch has reported a 40% increase in business and on my journey the train was very busy although how much was down to the weather is debatable. It was summed up by one soaked family who when asked by the conductor what they wanted replied "A sunny day". They went on to buy return tickets to Liskeard just for the ride and to keep dry for an hour. The conductor conceded inside his train was probably as dry as anywhere that day. Outside the small streams that normally flow quietly down the lineside into the estuary had become raging muddy torrents, swirling around trees and lapping the ballast. It wasn't quite as bad as the conditions that devastated Lynmouth or Boscastle but still a little worrying if the rain continued. However 150266 and crew went about their business and climbed back up to Liskeard with little fuss, unlike 1971 when the 103 didn't get out of first gear and barely kept moving up the 1 in 37 hill. BR observers riding this obvious test run made notes and I doubt if the experiment was repeated until the equally unsuitable 142's were tried in the mid-eighties.

On both occasions I had to wait for some time at Liskeard before heading east once more. In 1971 the boredom was broken by the arrival of the down *Cornishman* from Leeds to

The Marlow Donkey

Penzance behind 1066 *Western Prefect*. This year the equivalent entertainment was provided by 150219 on the 13.54 Plymouth - Penzance which is actually a through train from Gunnislake. Back in 1971 my next train left Liskeard at 15.27, the 13.45 Penzance - Cardiff, behind 1036 *Western Emperor*, this year it was at 15.32 on the 14.00 Penzance - Paddington HST which carries the appropriate name of the *Royal Duchy* and was powered by 43040 and 43021.

This would take me through to Reading whereas in 1971 I alighted at Plymouth in order to catch a London train. Plymouth that day was busy. A 3 car Class 116 departed for Saltash whilst a bevy of hydraulics gathered at the east end of the station with 1033 *Western Trooper* and 1049 *Western Monarch* joining 1036 for a photo line up. Nearby Swindon Class 42 Warship 821 *Greyhound* idled along with 08 shunter 4130 acting as station pilot. *Trooper* would take me back to Reading on the 16.30 to Paddington, *The Mayflower*.

The trip up from Plymouth was largely uneventful on both occasions. I did manage to spot another Class 22, 6339, the last I ever saw, waiting to come off the truncated Moretonhampstead branch at Newton Abbot and this year the South Devon Railway had 3803 and train waiting at Totnes whilst our departure from Exeter was slightly delayed first by a late running train to Barnstaple (the old GWR would never have allowed that!) and a delay in getting the barriers down on the Red Cow Crossing. Local motorists seem to ignore the box markings and routinely queue across it.

East of Exeter on both occasions I decided to avail myself of the on-train catering. In 1971 I went to the restaurant car where I enjoyed a full dinner of roast turkey and choice of vegetables served "silver service" by a small army of stewards all for the princely sum of £1.25 which even then was excellent value. And today? Oh dear, FGW can't compare! Whilst tastes have changed and the demand for full dining has fallen to the extent that today FGW offers "Pullman service" on only two trains each way on weekdays it does offer what it calls Travelling Chef providing lighter meals on many. The *Royal Duchy* isn't one of those so favoured having only Express Café buffet service. Attending this soon after Exeter I was surprised and annoyed to find it had only three packs of sandwiches left plus

a few other pieces of cake, bags of crisps, etc. I was not impressed, this was early evening and the train still had a couple of hours to run, I'm sure many passengers were equally or more disappointed! Fortunately I got home early enough to go round to the Kings Head for a portion of Clive's legendary steak 'n' kidney pie!

Some of you might have noted that the Hymeks haven't been mentioned. Well, they were rarely seen west of Bristol but on the occasion of my trip 7034 put in an appearance at Reading whilst I was changing trains. It arrived on an Oxford to Paddington service and was promptly declared a failure. With little delay, Reading shed sent Class 43 857 *Undaunted* to the rescue and 7034 retired hurt although it seemed in fine fettle as it headed for the shed!

So what of the trip in general? The whole trip went well, of the 14 trains I used from and back to Bourne End all were on time to within a minute or two except for the early arrival of the *Night Riviera* and the *Royal Duchy* which breezed into Reading 7 minutes early after a blistering run up the Berks & Hants. Whilst slimmed down and rationalised, the Duchy's infrastructure is in good shape and much of the heritage survives in good order.

Perhaps though, things are best summed up by the conductor on the Falmouth branch with whom I struck up a conversation whilst we awaited our respective onward trains from Truro. She was very upbeat in particular full of praise for the way the company had changed over the last year or so. "We have a new MD" she said "and at last we seem to have someone running this company who knows how to run a railway and treat us like human beings not an inanimate extension of the trains. We take pride in running a good service and appreciate the support of management" Not revealing my connection, I asked if she'd had the chance of meeting this guru and she replied not yet but she'd spoken to some who had and they'd been very impressed and the results speak for themselves. As she walked off to take the next Falmouth train she called back over her shoulder; "Pity he can't fix the weather too!"

Yes, Mark and his team really are putting the *Great* back in the Western - just get the catering sorted out!

Welcome to Penzance!

57604 Pendennis Castle stands at a very wet Penzance on 29th July 2009 brought the Night Riviera from London. It actually got wetter as the day went on and as your author (never mind his camera) is not waterproof, few reasonable photographs were taken.

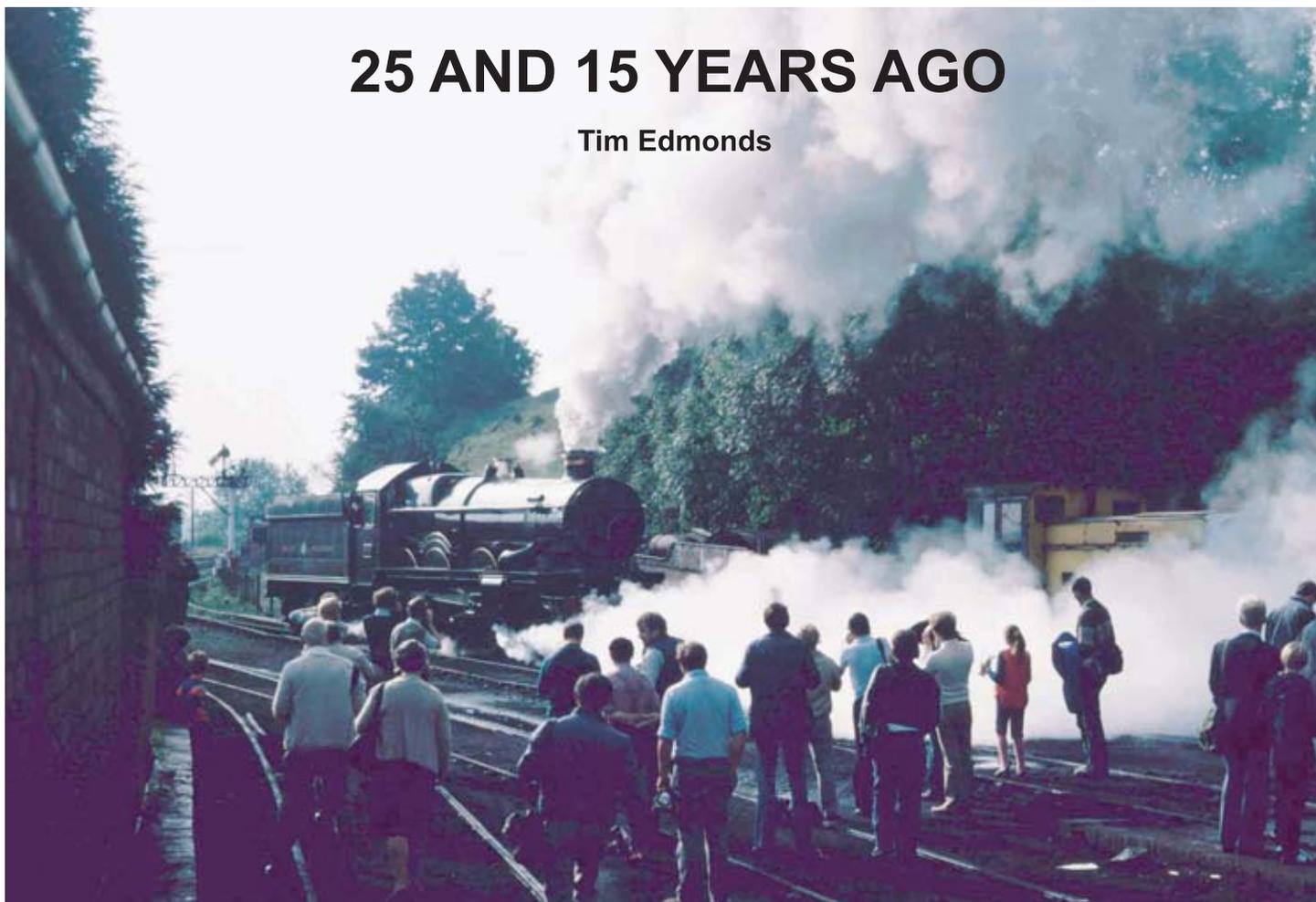
I'm therefore grateful to Tim Edmonds and Phil Searle for allowing me to use shots they took earlier in the year in more benign conditions.

photo: Mike Walker



25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



25 YEARS AGO

Having been closed to passengers since 1955, Melton station, on the East Suffolk Line between Woodbridge and Wickham Market, reopened as an unstaffed halt on 3rd September - largely in response to local pressure. On 15th September the station at Dyce, on the former Great North of Scotland Railway route out of Aberdeen and closed in 1968, was reopened experimentally as an unmanned halt in order to see if there was sufficient demand for a permanent reinstatement.

Fourteen locos - D1013 *Western Ranger* plus every available steam loco - were in action at the Severn Valley Railway Enthusiasts' Weekend on 15th/16th September. This was the first time that the intensive five-train service had worked over the full length of the line, including the extension from Bewdley to Kidderminster which had opened on 30th July. There was also a shuttle service between Bewdley and Ardley, plus a goods train between Bewdley and Highley.

On 11th October the 17.54 Euston - Bletchley commuter service, formed of an eight-car class 310 EMU set and travelling on the down fast line, collided with a Freightliner train that was crossing from sidings to the down slow line south of Wembley Central. Three passengers died. The line was blocked for nearly three days, with West Midlands services diverted to Paddington, Scottish services to Kings Cross and those trains serving north west England to St Pancras.

During October the former Locomotive Testing Station at Rugby was demolished. Opened in 1948 and a familiar landmark on the West Coast Main Line, the station tested many steam locomotives in the early years of the nationalised railway, including the new standard types.

Preparatory work to electrify the Wickford - Southminster branch in Essex began in the latter part of 1984. This was to change the character of the line from a rural branch into a

Those were the days! No restrictions on access are apparent at Bridgnorth during the Severn Valley Railway Enthusiasts' Weekend on 16th September 1984, where 5051 Dryslwyn Castle comes off shed.

four photos: Tim Edmonds

London-orientated commuter railway. The electrification was completed in 1986.

From 1st to 29th November holders of Senior Citizens Railcards were able to make a single journey anywhere over the BR network for just £2 on Mondays - Thursdays after 09.30 and all day on Saturdays.

An East Suffolk line train from Lowestoft to Ipswich calls at Melton on 28th August 1990, six years after its reopening to passenger traffic. Note that the original station building has survived 29 years of closure.



The Marlow Donkey

15 YEARS AGO

In Leicestershire a new road bridge was completed in the autumn of 1994 over the trackbed of a 1 in 17 incline on the former Leicester & Swannington Railway, opened in 1833 and closed in 1947. Thanks to the efforts of the Swannington Heritage Trust, parts of the trackbed had been incorporated into a historical walk known as the Swannington Village Trail. The bridge under Church Lane had been damaged by mining subsidence, but Leicestershire County Council agreed to build a new bridge to preserve the trackbed.

The railway world said goodbye to several significant servants in September. Ron Jarvis, a distinguished locomotive engineer for the LMS and BR and best known as the designer of the rebuilt Bulleid Pacifics, died on 2nd September aged 82. Then on 9th September Miles Beevor, the last General Manager of the LNER and after whom an A4 was named, died at the age of 94. On 12th September the man whose name will long be associated with railway preservation through his ownership of Barry Scrapyard, Dai Woodham, died aged 75. Then on 21st September the signalling engineer and prolific railway author, O S Nock, died at the age of 89.

The winter timetable came into operation on 25th September and included were significant improvements to the Chiltern services. The frequency of Marylebone - Birmingham trains was doubled to hourly on Mondays to Fridays and an hourly Aylesbury - High Wycombe - Marylebone service replaced the bi-hourly Princes Risborough - High Wycombe shuttle. The frequency of trains serving West Ruislip was increased to hourly, following a request from local residents.

Against the findings of the Transport Users Consultative Committee, Transport Secretary Brian Mawhinney authorised the closure of Aldwych station, on the Piccadilly Line, and of the Central Line from Epping to Ongar. Services ceased on both lines from 30th September. However, conditions were put on the closure of the Ongar line to ensure that the track and structures remain in place for at least three years, to enable another operator to purchase the infrastructure.

The last Ministry of Defence train to operate from the MoD sidings at Dinton, between Salisbury and Tisbury, ran on 2nd November when 47347 left with the 11.40 to Didcot. The Air Force Department depot at also had an internal 2ft gauge railway system at Dinton.

During the evening of 2nd November the 19.41 Paddington - Slough all stations service, formed of Turbo unit 165102, collided with the buffer stops in the bay with such force that the entire leading coach and the leading end of the middle coach climbed onto the station platform. The train was lightly loaded and the only injuries were to the driver and a member of station staff. At the time Mark Hopwood was Area Manager at Slough but was on leave touring Europe by rail. Staying in an Ibis Hotel in Vienna, the only English speaking TV he could find was carrying a news report on the incident with his Duty Station Manager doing a piece to camera! The cause was identified as slippery rail conditions which reduced the effectiveness of the disc brakes and the incident was a key factor in the much closer management of autumn issues we see today.



At its closure the Epping - Ongar line carried only a peak Monday to Friday service. The picture was taken at Ongar station on 14th June 1975, a Saturday, at a time when a regular and frequent service was provided.



The MoD sidings at Dinton, on the LSWR line near Tisbury, closed in November 1994. Having removed it from a westbound "Enterprise" train worked by 47376, an MOD Barclay 0-4-0DH shunts a single wagon into the platforms of the former passenger station (closed in 1966) before taking it under the road bridge into the depot on 26th July 1985. Two minutes later a Land Rover pulled up on the bridge and a military policeman greeted the photographer with the words "Please tell me that you are only taking pictures for a private collection..."



Oops! Turbo 165102 on platform 5 at Slough following the accident on 2nd November 1994.

photo: Peter Robins

Summertime Specials

There have been few special workings locally during the summer months but those that have run have been notable.

On Saturday 18th July, 5972 *Olton Hall* in its role as *Hogwarts Castle* led a special from Paddington to Oxford [Right] for Harry Potter fans passing Shottesbrooke.

A week earlier, on Saturday 11th July, D1015 *Western Champion* [Below] took a private charter for First GBRf from Paddington to Minehead past Cox Green just west of Maidenhead.

two photos: Mike Walker



Only two steam-hauled specials have worked over the Chiltern line.

On Saturday 6th June, 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* returned to the line for the first time in around 20 years when it worked the *Cathedrals Express* from Chester through to Paddington. This was a late change of plan as originally it was to have come off at Banbury. It is seen [Above] making its stop at Beaconsfield.

photo: Peter Hicks

Chiltern Railways sponsored a special from Marylebone to Stratford-upon-Avon on Saturday 1st August to mark the 80th anniversary of Bekonscot Model Village. Dubbed the *Bekoning Bard*, it was formed of the Tyseley chocolate and cream set hauled by 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* and, despite steady drizzle, made a fine sight [Left] leaving White House Farm Tunnel.

photo: Mike Walker