

Edition

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Rain, Slates and Gravity

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: Metropolitan 'Sarah Siddons' passing Stamford Brook during the 'Steam on the District' event 5 June 1993.

Photo: Mike Walker. (Article page 11)

Bottom: Metropolitan 'Sarah Siddons' & LT Pannier L94 at Railfest York 2012 9 June 2012.

Photo: John Tuck. (Article page 9).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- Thursday 20 September **A SEVENTIES MISCELLANY - PART 2** Tim Speechley
By popular demand - after last year's entertaining journey through his slides of the early 70s, our Chairman has dug out another selection for us.
- Thursday 18 October **FURTHER AFIELD WITH THE KEN NUNN COLLECTION** Graham Stacey
Graham will take us on an exploration of the renowned photographic collection of the late Ken Nunn.
- Thursday 15 November **OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE - THEN AND NOW** Richard Crane
Richard is Chairman of The Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association and has a long-term interest in the former LNWR route between the rival University cities of Oxford and Cambridge.
- Thursday 20 December **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**
Our annual social gathering for members and families will largely follow the pattern of previous years. Full details will be announced at the meetings or from Mike Hyde 01628 485474.
- Thursday 17 January **19th CENTURY MONORAIL SYSTEMS** Adrian Garner
Adrian is the author of a recent and well-received book on this subject, so expect an informative talk on an amazing variety of monorails from around the world.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Saturday 20 October **DAVID BUCK'S PRIVATE RAILWAY** by car
Our good friend David Buck has invited us to make a third visit to his private railway at Fifield near Windsor. This time it will be an afternoon visit lasting from 2.00pm to approximately 4.30pm.
Details and bookings from Mike Hyde 01628 485474.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I suspect you won't get much for your money from me this edition because I am in the process of moving house, with all that entails, and time is at a real premium. It has concentrated my mind on just how much stuff one person can accumulate over the years and I am eternally grateful to a friend who has allowed me to transfer much of the hoard from my garage to hers for the time being. I will then sort through it, bit by bit, as I move it to the new house. Well that's the new plan. The old plan had been to retire, sort through and largely dispose of the collection and then move house. Then the right house became available now and that was that. As I write we are heading towards the exchange of contracts but by the time you read this I may be installed in the new property. I certainly hope so.

Railway activities have not been many, for obvious reasons, but I did make it to "Railfest" at York with other members of the committee on the interestingly routed, Deltic-hauled special from Didcot on 2 June, about which there is an article from Tim Edmonds within this Donkey. Having got back to Didcot at gone midnight, I was back there later that morning with a friend to see 6201 "Princess Elizabeth" heading to London for its role in providing the starting whistle for the Queen's Jubilee Pageant on the Thames, in what was quite an honour for the steam preservation movement. We then paid a visit to the GWS Railway Centre, where the steam railmotor was in action. I was very impressed because I had expected it to produce a rather quiet "whooshing" sort of noise and was totally surprised when it gave a really loud conventional locomotive bark.

Changing the subject completely, as you may be aware, the committee is currently one member short and we are increasingly keen to rectify this as soon as possible. Malcolm Margetts has been a wonderfully hard working and willing secretary but desperately wants to relinquish the minute-taking aspect of his position soon, though is prepared to continue with the speaker liaison role for the time being. Is any one of you prepared to come forward to volunteer to join us, with the specific task of taking the notes at committee meetings in mind? We generally meet no more than six times a year, for a couple of hours in the evening and usually at one or another's house, though the occasional committee meeting has been known to take place in a local hostelry. If you think you could contribute to the running of the Society in this specific way then please telephone Malcolm, who can give full details of the role, or me or approach us at one of the monthly meetings. Most of the committee have been in-post for a very long time and some new blood with some fresh ideas could be just what we need. Please don't be reluctant to come forward, your committee needs you.

In the meantime, all my best wishes to you all.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

June's annual joint meeting with the RCTS Maidenhead branch drew a large audience to hear the Rev. Canon Brian Arman present his programme on The Golden Years of Swindon Works, a period he defines as 1880 to 1924.

Brian is well qualified on the subject as he is Swindon born and bred and from a family with close ties to the Works and he showed us not only how the Works had expanded and its products but also the social effect on the town. An excellent evening.

Unfortunately Mike Page was unable to present his talk on Ireland at the July meeting due to family issues but he hopes to come next year. In his place we welcomed back Peter Groom who took us Westward From Dover In Search of Steam. Presented in typical Peter style this was detailed look at various Southern Region types and, much to our surprise, "Westwards" meant as far as Weymouth.

AND VISITS

Thanks to First Great Western, Network Rail and South West Trains we have been fortunate to secure a number of visits to a variety of operating railway installations during the summer to see behind the scenes of the modern railway and even "have a go" ourselves.

First was a visit on Saturday 23 June to the vast Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot which whilst currently only controlling the majority of the line from Paddington to near Didcot and Lavington, will eventually control all the way to Penzance. The signallers on duty showed us how the advanced control centre operates and made us most welcome during a visit that lasted several hours. Mike Hyde [**Top Left**] who has recently become a signaller at Chinnor, ponders the contrast!

Next came an evening visit on Wednesday 18 July to FGW's soon to be replaced Reading Depot. Fleet Manager LTV, John Murphy made us most welcome and showed us round the two level site where among others, a pair of Turbos [**Bottom Left**] were receiving attention in the Plant Shop.

The final visit was to South West Trains' training centre at Basingstoke on Saturday 25 August where six of us were able to try our skills on their four Class 450 simulators. These are much more advanced than the Class 165 simulators at Reading as they include complete replica cabs and better graphics (FGW's new ones now being installed are similar). Chris Lemon gave us an excellent morning and each member got several trips including Graham Robinson [**Below**] and Luke Ripley who managed a perfect run - a rare occurrence



Three photos: Mike Walker



RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

The next two meetings of the RCTS at Maidenhead are as follows:

Monday 24 Sept. Strictly Freight Only by Brian Ringer.

Monday 22 Oct. Indian Railways Today by Tony Skinner.

As always the venue is the Cox Green Community Centre Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead, SL8 5SX starting at 7.30 pm. MDRS members welcome.

READING - ALMOST THERE

Despite the dreadful so-called summer and the effects of the Olympics, the contractors have been making rapid progress with the rebuilding of Reading station to the point where it is possible to appreciate what the finished product will look like.

By late August the two new island platforms were taking shape on the north side with their canopies partly erected. The huge new transfer deck has been pushed into position over the currently used platforms along with their associated stairs and escalators and the new north and south entrances.

The three new Southern platforms, 4 to 6, were fully completed and brought into use in July, the first part of the new station to be completed. The new island platforms should open at Easter 2013.

MARLOW BRANCH TO BE WIRED

The recent announced High Level Output Specification for Control Period 5 (2014-19) includes adding the Marlow branch along with those to Windsor and Henley to the Great Western electrification scheme which is welcome news as it secures the long-term future of these lines.

Also to be electrified is the West-East route from Oxford to Bletchley, the reopening of which had already been announced.

Two photos: Mike Walker



To the west of the station the new maintenance depot is approaching completion and FGW are hoping to start moving in early next year. It will be the first part of the GW west of Hayes to be fully wired.



BERNIE WHEELER RETIRES

Fifty years of work on the railway

When he was 15 years old Bernard Wheeler got his first job on the railway. As a lad/porter at Bourne End station he earned £3.15shillings for a 44 hour week. That was 1962 when Bourne End was a very busy station with sidings going off into the paper mills and the line continuing through to High Wycombe. Bernard was on the bottom rung of the ladder in a staff of 17.

Now retiring 50 years later Bernie has become the familiar face in the ticket office at Bourne End Station and the only member of staff. With his retirement date confirmed his customers wonder how things will be without him. He soon reassures them that his job has been advertised and there will be a new booking office clerk in the future.

Asked about the changes he has seen over those five decades Bernie has endless stories that would delight anyone who loves trains and stations. He paints a picture of Bourne End's industrial past and how it has developed into today's commercial centre with more people commuting to work each day. And he's delighted to report that the station is scheduled to have new automatic information panels which should make things easier for his replacement.

Stopping to answer a query about the next train and then issue a ticket Bernie remembers that after two years in Bourne End he was able to move to Maidenhead and work their shift patterns which meant a wage increase to £9. 8shillings a week. Then he moved to Taplow Station. "It was a great job where I was on my own and did everything".

Geest bananas had a depot at Taplow and a number of coal merchants had premises in the goods yard. There was heaps of paperwork depending on how long goods stayed in the yard. It was a six day week as there were no Sunday trains stopping at Taplow then. Occasionally he was able to work a weekend at Twyford Station which meant more money.

Then it was back to Bourne End. Times were changing with plans to close the railway line from Bourne End to High Wycombe. Less goods were being sent by rail so many of the goods staff and signalmen would no longer be needed. Bourne End's industrial sites became office blocks and warehouses, lots of new houses were built and people packed the trains at peak times to go into London or Reading. More restructuring left Bernie as the only member of staff in Bourne End.



Pat Reade, FGW's Deputy Station Manager at Maidenhead, makes presentations to Bernie and Pamela Wheeler on the occasion of his retirement on Tuesday 3rd July.

Now retirement is ahead with lots to do in his large garden. He has plans to build a new workshop and has a scheme for his neglected outdoor swimming pool. Add to that plenty of dog walking with two Labrador puppies. But will he miss working on the railway? "Well, it was never boring" he admits, "I know so many people and I've seen babies carried by mum or dad become adults and then with children of their own."

Bernie has seen huge changes in his railway life. He can remember when all the station lights were powered by gas and the only electricity in Bourne End Station was in the signal box. Tickets today are issued by computer at the press of a button but in Bourne End booking office there's still the framework which held row after row of cardboard tickets. He will tell you that people used to send lots of goods by train and station staff would deliver personally. In Maidenhead there was the Ruff Donkey Stud and they sent stud donkeys all over the country by train.

After 50 years Bernie agrees that working on the railway was regarded as a good steady job when he started. His father had been a railwayman and his sister had worked at Reading Station for awhile. Bernie reckons that he has been lucky "I've enjoyed it, but my job won't be repeated again in this modern age". He might not agree but Bernie is certainly a one-off and he'll be remembered with great affection by his customers at Bourne End. He'll also be wished a very happy retirement.

Barrie Penfold

Barrie is the Managing Editor of the Target, the magazine of the Bourne End Community Association for Bourne End, Wooburn Green and surrounding villages, in which this article first appeared. It is reproduced with their kind permission.

Bernie's retirement brought together in one place, probably for the first time, all of the current branch staff so the opportunity for a "group photograph" was not missed.

Left to right they are: Barry Haines, Cookham station booking clerk; Jaswant Lota, Sales Office Supervisor Maidenhead; Liz Jasiewicz, Furze Platt station booking clerk; Bernie Wheeler of course; Harry Franklin, Maidenhead area relief clerk who will be filling in at Bourne End until a permanent appointment is made and Pat Reade, Deputy Station manager, Maidenhead.

two photos: Mikw Walker

The Marlow Donkey



The Chiltern Lines in Virtual

By Murray Tremellen

Rail simulators have become a topical issue for the MDRS lately, thanks to last year's visit to FGW's "Turbo" simulators at Reading and the visit to the SWT simulators at Basingstoke. Therefore, I thought members might be interested in a project to re-create a significant section of our local railway network in virtual.

Most members will probably have heard of Microsoft Train Simulator (MSTS), and I expect a fair proportion will have played it at some point. This program is now more than ten years old and newer simulators have appeared on the market, but many veteran train-simmers feel that these fall short of MSTS in some respects. Therefore, the "sim" retains a loyal following, including a small but dedicated group who continue to create new content for it. Indeed, the Chiltern route is perhaps one of the most ambitious projects ever attempted for MSTS.

It is being undertaken by Martin Phillips, now resident in the USA, but who lived in Bicester and used the Chiltern line regularly in the 1980s. His original plan was to model the route from Banbury to Marylebone. However, he also has fond memories of the London Transport lines, and had to model significant sections of those which parallel or cross the Chiltern line. He says it was therefore "logical" to extend them further; this culminated in the addition of the Metropolitan line right through to both Uxbridge and Aylesbury! A number of smaller branch lines have also been added, which will allow for a greater variety of activities to be played on the completed system. The principal lines included are:

- Marylebone to Banbury
- Baker Street/Marylebone to Aylesbury
- Baker Street to Stanmore (then Bakerloo, now Jubilee Line)
- Park Royal – Uxbridge (Piccadilly Line)
- Harrow-on-the-Hill to Uxbridge
- Moor Park to Watford
- Chalfont and Latimer to Chesham
- Princes Risborough to Aylesbury
- Princes Risborough to Chinnor
- Princes Risborough to Thame
- Wendover to RAF Halton
- Oxfordshire Ironstone Railway (industrial line just north of Banbury Jct.)

The route is modelled to represent a period of approximately 1958-62, an era which many MDRS members remember fondly. Martin says that the choice of dates was an easy one:

"I have not lived in England since privatisation and therefore have little knowledge of the post-BR scene. At the same time, there seemed little point in modelling the route at its nadir in the sorry state it had been allowed to degenerate into in the 1980s. I therefore opted for its glory days in the pre-Beeching period, setting the route notionally in the 50s to early 60s. Because the route passed under the control successively of the Eastern Region, the Western Region and the London Midland Region, opting for this time period also afforded the advantage of permitting an amazing variety of stock to be seen, including locomotives from all of the four main English regions. There were even through trains from the south passing through Banbury hauled by Bulleid Pacifics."

The greater number of operational stations and more extensive goods facilities were another point in favour of a steam-era model; stations that closed before 1958 have been modelled in derelict condition, adding further variety. However, stock from any era can be run on the route, if users are prepared to exercise their imagination a little! The 1960s setting has also allowed



A general view of Princes Risborough. From left to right we can see the bus for Aylesbury, which competes with the push-pull autocar train just about to depart from the bay platform propelled by a 64xx; the autocar from Banbury standing at the main up platform behind a 14xx; an ex-LNER B1 heading a train with domestic coal, which has travelled over the old GCR main line, joining the GCR/GWR joint line at Ashendon Junction; Beenham Grange, which has just pulled in with the 4:34pm from Paddington, and the connecting 5:44pm to Oxford, which will leave behind a 61xx small Prairie from the other bay platform.

Martin to indulge his interest in LT road vehicles, many of which can be spotted on roads near the line as either animated or static items. Particular care has been taken with the buses; types visible include standard RTs, roofbox RTs, RTLs and RFs. All have been placed in appropriate locations along the line, complete with correct identification numbers, route blinds and number plates. Other LT service vehicles, such as mobile canteens, tree loppers and overhead wire tower lorries, can also be spotted.

Martin modestly describes his work as "not the Chiltern Line...not even the Chiltern Line as it was 50 or 60 years ago...[but] a representation of the Chiltern Line as it was in the post-WWII and pre-Beeching period within the limits of, in decreasing order of importance, my skill, my knowledge and the limitations of MSTS." Unfortunately, the MSTS route editor is, to say the least, idiosyncratic. Its DEM (Digital Elevation Model) topographical data is not always entirely accurate, which sometimes forces alterations to track orientation. The most notable example of this is the Risborough – Aylesbury link, which has turned out almost two miles longer in the sim than it is in reality, with a short section in the middle that does not correspond to the real landscape. Martin says that if he were starting from scratch he would create all the terrain manually to overcome these issues, but he has come too far to turn back now! Nevertheless, he concludes that "I do not think that the anomalies are sufficiently glaring to diminish the overall realistic feel of the route"; judging from the screenshots, I have no doubt readers will agree.

As can be imagined, this is not a short-term project. Work began in April 2007; all the trackwork is now laid and the scenery is complete from Banbury to West Wycombe. There is still a long way to go, but Martin is determined to see the project through to completion. If members are interested, I shall submit progress reports to future editions of the *Donkey*.

By Deltic from Didcot – and back (eventually)

Tim Edmonds



55022 Royal Scots Grey at York [Above] after its on-time arrival from Didcot on Saturday 2nd June and at Coventry [Opposite] after its unscheduled trip up the WCML on the return trip.

two photos: Tim Edmonds

In spite of a scheduled departure time of 06:30, the prospect of a day trip from Didcot to York behind a Deltic was enticing. Add in an interesting route that included the possibility of fast running sections on both the West Coast and East Coast main lines, plus a few hours in Railfest at York, and it looked like an opportunity not to be missed. So it was that taxi driver Tim Speechley set off before 5 o'clock on Saturday 2nd June, collecting Tim Edmonds in High Wycombe, then Malcolm Margetts and Mike Hyde in Marlow, to arrive at Didcot in good time to take our seats on 1Z80 "The York Flyer" with D9000/55022 *Royal Scots Grey* up front.

We were a few minutes late departing and the first part of the route took us via seven further pick-up stations, starting with Oxford, Banbury, Leamington Spa, Coventry and Birmingham International, where we paused as scheduled from 08:08 until 08:24 waiting for our path. For a reason that was not explained in the tour itinerary we then embarked on a tour round Brum rather than proceeding direct to New Street via Adderley Park. From Stechford we took the Aston line and the east curves at Perry Barr and Soho to arrive at New Street facing towards London. An on-time departure at 08:53 then completed a circle to Aston via Duddleston, but this time we took the Grand Junction line from Perry Barr and arrived at Tame Bridge Parkway for the last pick-up.

Then the fun began. Leaving a minute early at 09:16, and with no stops due until a 10:35 crew change at Warrington Bank Quay, 3300hp of vintage diesel power had the WCML before it. By Crewe we were 13 minutes early, and even a signal stop near Winsford did not prevent us from reaching Bank Quay three minutes up. We took the east curve at Earlestown, and paused briefly at Manchester Victoria to make the ascent of Miles Platting bank a little more interesting, then went via the Ashton branch to Stalybridge, where a lengthy signal stop took us from being five minutes early to three minutes late. The climb to Standedge tunnel presented no problems and we steadily made up time through Huddersfield and the Calder Valley to be back on schedule at Horbury Junction, passed at 12:09. The last part

of the journey through Castleford and Church Fenton to York was fast and we gained another eight minutes, with the result that we were held just south of the station until our platform was available. An unexpected benefit of this pause was that we had a grandstand view of the flypasts by a Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane which followed the renaming at Railfest of 91110 as *Battle of Britain Memorial Flight* by Carol Vorderman. We then pulled in to York station bang on time at 13:01.

Of Railfest itself I will say little. The accompanying pictures from the event give a good idea of the large number of exhibits that were on show, but unfortunately the layout did not lend itself to easy navigation or photography. It was difficult to get round the whole show in the time available, so inevitably we missed a few things completely. Never mind, we were looking forward to finding out what the Deltic would be capable of doing on the return journey, which was to include the ECML to Copenhagen Junction, then round the North London line to join the GW at Acton Main Line and thence to Didcot for a scheduled arrival at 20:36. The train would then continue to set down at the stations in the same order as in the morning.

Things began well, with 1Z81 making a prompt 16:19 departure from York. Doncaster was passed a minute early at 16:46 and then we were treated to a fine display of high-speed running – 3 minutes up at Retford, 5½ up at Newark, 7 up at Claypole loop and then, alas, we slowed to a crawl at Grantham and passed the station only 3½ up. A short stop outside Peterborough meant we were ½ minute down passing the station, but the Deltic rose to the challenge and we were 4 up by Huntingdon, 8 up at Hitchin and passed Alexandra Palace 14½ minutes early. It was exhilarating stuff, but what happened next was to extend our journey home by over three hours.

After weaving through the junctions south of Finsbury Park we took the line up to Camden Road Central Junction, where we came to a halt. After standing for about 40 minutes the news came through that the overhead lines were down on the line through Gospel Oak to Willesden Junction, blocking the line. Instead we moved off at 19:57 and took the Primrose Hill line to Camden Junction, but rather than heading onto the SW lines at West London Junction and picking up our planned route at Acton Wells, we soon found ourselves heading north through Willesden Junction at speed on the WCML. A fast run via Rugby brought us to our Coventry set-down stop at 21:38 instead of 22:29. From there the passengers for Birmingham and Tame Bridge were to travel onward by Virgin service train, while the Deltic would run round and proceed to Didcot via the remaining set-down points. Presumably pathing problems were the reason for a lengthy stay at Coventry, but we were on the move towards Leamington Spa at 22:25 and finally rolled into Didcot at 23:43:30. We had been denied the opportunity of a fast Deltic run on the GW, but it had been an interesting day and of course we had the bonus mileage over the WCML. The loco performed superbly throughout.



Finally, thanks to Tim Speechley for acting as taxi driver and for the keeping the timings log, and to Mike Hyde for sorting out the bookings with Pathfinder Tours.

CHILTERN'S OLYMPIC SILVER



During the Olympic Games many of the train operators serving London and the other venues operated extra or strengthened trains and Chiltern were no exception.

With Olympic events at Wembley stadium as well as in London itself on Saturday 11th August Chiltern elected to use its loco-hauled Mainline sets on certain Marylebone to Birmingham and return workings in place of the usual Class 168s. Normally, the Mainline sets do not operate at weekends.

One of the trains was 1H55, the 16.12 Birmingham Snow Hill to Marylebone with 82302 and 67012 *A Shropshire Lad*.

Geoff Plumb could not resist the opportunity of taking a trip in his brother's light aircraft to get this stunning shot of the train

crossing Souldern No.1 Viaduct just south of Aynho Junction (the one you can see from the M40).

Geoff says: "We took off at 17:00 and were over Banbury by 17:05 and could see the train approaching past Cropredy and so able to get a shot of it at Banbury station. Once it was away, we were able to pace it to the viaducts and I got quite a lot of shots. It was pretty breezy and the plane was being buffeted around quite a lot and I had to shoot through the perspex of the plane's canopy. We got the relationship of plane to train just right and even the sun shone! I was very pleased with the results and my brother enjoyed the "chase", making a change from tooling around giving joyrides - a flight with a purpose!"



Murray Tremellen

RAILFEST

A number of members attended the 9 day Railfest held at the NRM in June which saw one of the biggest gatherings of historic and modern locomotives in one place for many years.

There were both standard and narrow gauge demonstration tracks [Above] where *City of Truro* is seen pacing *Palmerston* past a static *Duchess of Hamilton*. Also on static display was the NRM's newly overhauled 925 *Cheltenham* [Left].

The opening day saw the naming and unveiling on East Coast's 91110 in its Battle of Britain memorial livery [Below].

Among the smaller locos in operation was this superb 7 1/4" gauge replica of Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes no.25 [Bottom Left]



Murray Tremellen



Murray Tremellen



Tim Edmonds



Tim Edmonds

YORK 2012



Tim Edmonds



Murray Tremellen

GNR 1744 leads a line up off 45596 *Bahamas* and 31601 [Top] with a Javelin set just visible beyond.

The Ffestiniog's venerable *Palmerston* was in action [Above] but the NRM's troubled 4472 *Flying Scotsman* was only able to make a static appearance [Centre Right] before returning to Bury to continue its protracted overhaul.

Also appearing mid-overhaul was prototype HST power car 41001 reunited [Right] with one of the trailers originally in the prototype set which continues in service with FGW's current fleet and was returned to its original livery specially for Railfest.

Roger Woodham



SARAH SIDDONS AT 90

David Collins



This year marks the 90th anniversary of the oldest working British electric locomotive, the oldest non-preserved locomotive and perhaps the most famous non-steam locomotive, the former Metropolitan Railway Bo-Bo locomotive *Sarah Siddons* (No. 12). Although maintained as part of London Underground's service fleet she has been made the pride of LU's heritage stock and since the 1980s has appeared on railtours both on LU and on the former Southern Region. Below is a brief account of the history of this locomotive and her sisters.

Since its opening in 1863, the Metropolitan Railway had used steam locomotives (as this was the only viable form of railway locomotion at the time). However, despite having condensing locomotives which took steam from the cylinders back into the side tanks to be cooled as to be used again, the atmosphere in the tunnels on the Inner Circle was far from pleasant for passengers. As a consequence the MET's management, along with that of the Metropolitan District Railway, were compelled to look for an alternative means of propulsion. By the start of the 20th century the first of the tube railways, the City & South London, Waterloo & City (operated by the LSWR) and Central London Railways, were operating successfully by electricity and so the two older companies were prompted to carry out experiments which lead to the Circle being electrified by 1905 along with the Hammersmith branch and the main line from Baker Street to Harrow and the recently opened Uxbridge branch.

At this time, it was felt unecomincal to electrify the main line north of Harrow so there was a requirement for a fleet of electric locomotives for hauling trains bound to destinations such as Chesham, Aylesbury and Verney Junction from Baker Street (or Aldgate or Liverpool Street) to either Wembley or Harrow where steam traction took over. The original batch of locomotives were built by British Westinghouse in 1905 and were of "Camel Back" design with the cab positioned in the centre of the loco. A further batch were flat fronted with driving positions at each end. By 1919 it was decided that more powerful locomotives were needed as trains coming off the steam section (some of which included Pullman Cars) were becoming heavier and longer. Initially it was decided to rebuild the existing twenty locomotives with Nos. 6 & 17 being used as prototypes. The rebuilding involved a change of appearance and the extension of the frames, which proved to be unsuccessful so an order was made from Metropolitan Vickers for 20 new locomotives. These were fitted with electro-magnetic control and four MV 339 Motors (the biggest to be used on the underground), the wheel diameter was 3 feet 7½ inches with the overall weight of the locomotives being just over 60 tons.

Entering service in 1922/23 the locomotives took over the duties of their predecessors with their sphere of operation extended to Rickmansworth in 1925 following the opening of the electrified Watford branch. The class would dominate MET mainline services south of Rickmansworth for the next 36 years (with multiple unit stock serving the Uxbridge and Watford branches). As well as main line passenger turns, the locomotives worked through Great Western peak hour workings from Paddington to the city up until 1939 and a few goods workings to Vine Street Goods Depot (near Farringdon).

Metropolitan 12 Sarah Siddons [Above] passing Stamford Brook during the 'Steam on the District' event of 5th June 1993, one of the few times it took the lead.

photo: Mike Walker

Back in regular service days, 16 Oliver Goldsmith [Left] has just taken over from a BR Fairburn 2-6-4T at Rickmansworth.

Pamlin Prints

The Marlow Donkey



In 1924 Loco No. 15 was displayed at the Wembley Empire Exhibition and in recognition was fitted with *Wembley 1924* nameplates. This was followed by the decision in 1926 to name the remainder of the class after personalities associated with Metroland. These were as follows;

1. John Lyon
2. Oliver Cromwell later Thomas Lord
3. Sir Ralph Verney
4. Lord Byron
5. John Hampden
6. William Penn
7. Edmund Burke
8. Sherlock Holmes
9. John Milton
10. William Ewart Gladstone later W. E. Gladstone
11. George Romney
12. Sarah Siddons
13. Dick Whittington
14. Benjamin Disraeli
15. Wembley 1924
16. Oliver Goldsmith
17. Florence Nightingale
18. Michael Faraday
19. John Wycliffe
20. Sir Christopher Wren

Two notes of interest are the fact that the MET had a different numbering systems for steam and electric locos, both starting at No. 1, and British Railways would later use no less than four of the same names for the Britannia Class.

Following the formation of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933 it was decided that the remainder of the Metropolitan Line would be electrified which would abolish the need for locomotives (most of the MET's steam locomotives being passed to the LNER in 1937). However these plans were delayed by the Second World War and the post war austerity years meant the electrification was not completed until 1960. Changes in war-time included the repainting from maroon to grey and removal of nameplates. These were replaced by new plates and a simplified maroon livery when fifteen were overhauled in 1953 – the other five were withdrawn being involved in accidents (worse being No. 19 which crashed into the back of a T Stock train at Northwood in December 1945).

With the completion of the Amersham/Chesham electrification new trains were ordered, however due to a delay in delivery the loco hauled service continued on through Chesham trains for the first year (Aylesbury trains were still steam hauled from Rickmansworth). After the completion of the delivery of the A Stock the locomotives were withdrawn and scrapped except for three Nos. 1, 5 & 12 which were retained as Depot Shunters (No. 3 was originally going to be retained but scrapped soon after the last delivery of A Stock). No. 1 was brought up to exhibition standards and used as part of the Underground Centenary Parade with No. 5 working a special railtour on the MET in conjunction with this. The poor operating condition of No. 1 led to her scrapping at Neasden by 1970. However Nos. 5 & 12 continued as Brake -Block Testing locomotives and were repainted to be exhibited at Neasden on the last day of LT steam operation on 6th June 1971 and the following year worked a brake van railtour for the 50th anniversary of the class which ran over the Metropolitan and District and the former MET Stanmore branch (which was then part of the Bakerloo, now the Jubilee). After this No. 5 was retired to the LT Museum at Syon Park (moving to Covent Garden in 1981), No. 12 carried on with departmental duties and in 1975 attended the 150th anniversary Stockton & Darlington Cavalcade at Shildon where she obtained a commemorative plaque. At this time she was also used on Sand-ite duties in the autumn, clearing the lines of leaves with high pressure water jets.

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Following a heavy overhaul at Acton Works in 1981, during which she was made compatible with the Southern Region's third rail system, *Sarah* (as No. 12 has become known to enthusiasts) undertook her first solo railtour in September 1982 on the Amersham, Watford and Uxbridge branches hauling BR Mark 2 coaches. Over the next decade she appeared on several tours and at several BR Depot open days, including visits to Windsor, Portsmouth, Brighton and Eastleigh, and an exhibition at Neasden in 1983 to celebrate 50 years of LT. Subsequent LT open days attended included Ruislip, Ealing Common, Stanmore and Upminster. 1989 saw her taking the supporting role in the Chesham Centenary Celebrations by providing air braking assistance to the former MET E Class steam loco No. 1 and GWR Pannier Tank No. 9466. This was followed by similar roles at Steam on the Met events over the next 11 years, plus a one off District Line steam event in 1993. The previous year LUL acquired two redundant EMUs from BR to use as coaching stock at these events. Along with *Sarah*, they were stabled at the Central Line's Ruislip Depot which has a rail connection with the MET between Ruislip and Ickenham stations. These units had the facility to run in push-pull formation with *Sarah* which was put to use on many solo outings, most notably running a dining special along the East London Line in November 1994 in conjunction with the Thames Tunnel's 150th anniversary. This line is now part of the London Overground Network.

Following the cessation of Steam on the Met in 2000 and two private charters in 2001 and 2002, *Sarah* fell from the public eye until she was given a overhaul by Metronet in 2007, repainted in original Metropolitan Railway livery (complete with crests and replica nameplates) and relaunched in 2008 as the Metropolitan Line's Heritage Train with the 4TC unit repainted in a mock teal livery. Since then she has appeared at the LT Museum's Acton Depot Open Days and made several runs on the MET, usually in connection with Amersham Heritage Day or the Rickmansworth Canal Festival along with the LTM's 1938 tube stock train. Since push-pull operation is now prohibited, one of two preserved Class 20 diesel locomotives top & tails with No.12. These events have brought the interesting sight of three generations of Metropolitan Line traction working alongside each other in the form of *Sarah*, the A stock and the new S Stock.

In 2012 *Sarah* made the long trip north to take part in the National Railway Museum's Railfest event, in addition in taking part in a special gauging run with former LSWR Beatie well tank No. 30587 on the Circle Line in preparation for the Underground 150 event in 2013 in which *Sarah Siddons* is expected to take a prominent role.

Whilst researching this article, David came across an internet reference that that a number of the Met electricians went to the London Midland Region for trials after LT withdrew them. Can any member shed any light on the authenticity of this? Editor



12 Sarah Siddons passing the carriage sidings at Rickmansworth during one of the Steam on the Met events.

photo: Brian Hopkinson

Rain, slates and gravity

Tim Edmonds

An international Early Railways Conference (ERC) has been held in the UK every few years since 1998 and has proved to be a successful research forum on railways that were pre ‘main line’ in date or concept – including such things as plateways, rutways and stoneways. This is the sort of stuff that fascinates me, but the conference is residential and until this year it has never been convenient to attend. When I learned that ERC5 was to be held at Caernarfon from 7th -10th June this year I decided that this was my opportunity. It was half-term and a “spouse’s package” enabled Veronica to get the same accommodation deal without the main conference sessions but including participation in the conference excursion – a special Friday evening train on the Ffestiniog Railway with a meal provided at Tan-y-Bwlch.

In the booking confirmation there was an important note about the FR trip which read “... pack stout boots and warm/waterproof outerwear ... as we intend to recreate the atmosphere of the railway’s slate-carrying operations as authentically as possible. Please also ensure your clothing is not such that it will be damaged if smuts land on it.” It turned out that as well as a special passenger train the FR were to run their demonstration gravity slate train for us, recreating the early operation of the line in its horse-worked days of 1836-63. The slate wagons were to be brought up behind steam power (rather than horses) to Tan-y-Bwlch, then continue to Dduallt to begin the return by gravity right through to Porthmadog Harbour. Only a limited number would be allowed to travel on the wagons and this was to be determined by ballot. One small group would travel on the upward train, while the lucky few would get the chance to travel



Tim Edmonds on board Taliesin at Rhiw Goch loop. Who cares about the rain? It’s warm on the footplate.

photo: Michael Messenger

down by gravity. My name didn’t come up for either of these. However, the ballot also included eight footplate rides on the loco hauling the passenger train – two at a time on two parts of the journey in each direction. This time I was lucky and I had a prime slot – Penrhyndeudraeth to Tan-y-Bwlch on the uphill journey.

Given the weather on the day – bucketing with rain – a footplate ride rather than an open wagon seemed like a pretty good deal. After a coach journey to a wet and gloomy Minffordd we boarded our passenger train with 1999-built 0-4-4T single Fairlie *Taliesin* up front. The first two footplate riders took their places and we set forth soon after 18:00, leaving the first slate train group to pick up their train later on. At Penrhyndeudraeth I signalled from the carriage (which in usual FR fashion was locked) and identified myself as one of the next on the footplate, but my companion could not be found so Veronica asked if she could take his place. I sat on the right side of the footplate as we set off in steadily falling rain and was soaked on that side by the time we reached Rhiw Goch loop, just over a mile up the line. Here we paused while the last service train of the day from Blaenau Ffestiniog passed. I decided to move to the left seat and get my other side soaked, while Veronica returned to the passenger coach because the ballot winner, Michael Bailey, had now been found.

Taliesin was steaming well and Driver Sam and fireman Tim ‘the monkey’ were in complete command. Sam knew his loco well and was able to talk on equal terms with Michael, who is an engineer (and an expert on early locomotives) and who asked some pertinent questions about a recently completed overhaul.

Taliesin brews up in the gloom at Minffordd with the ERC5 passenger special for Tan-y-Bwlch.

photo: Tim Edmonds

The Marlow Donkey





In heavy rain and failing light, the ERC5 gravity train passes Tan-y-Bwlch at a fair pace. Note the bugler on the leading wagon.

photo: Tim Edmonds



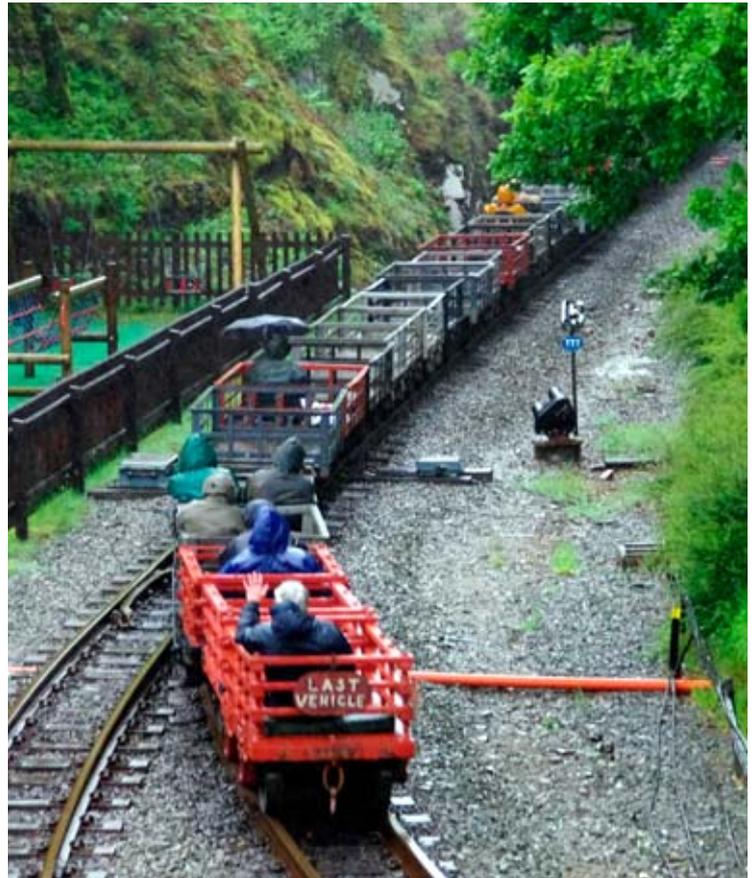
The last few wagons of the gravity train leave the loop at Tan-y-Bwlch and head down grade.

photo: Tim Edmonds

All this was interspersed with a commentary by Sam on lineside features and stories of the wildlife seen from the footplate, which included snakes, buzzards and osprey (whose nest site was pointed out as we passed). It was a great experience and a privilege to enjoy a footplate ride on a line that I have known since I was four years old.

At Tan-y-Bwlch it was still raining steadily and hard, so our large party headed straight for the station refreshment rooms, where the staff had prepared a substantial cold buffet. Those who were to travel on the downward slate train were fed first, since they had to be ready to board the train and go on to Dduallt to start their descent. They were replaced by an extremely wet group who had travelled up in the open wagons. In spite of the difficult conditions, the staff did a great job to ensure that everyone had plenty of food and a hot drink.

Photographic conditions were dire and there was little shelter so I did not attempt to fight my way out of the buffet for a picture of the ascending slate train, but I did want to get a shot of the gravity train. We were told it was due through the station at 20:45, so Veronica and I made our way to the footbridge, which seemed the best bet for an uninhibited view and a modicum of light. By the time the train arrived at 21:05 we were soaked and the light was abominable, but boosting the ASA setting on my camera to 3200 I was able to get a few passable shots. On the lead wagon the warning was sounded by a bugler in period costume, complete with billycock hat, then there were several FR brakemen and a collection of hardy ballot winners huddled under umbrellas and hoods. One was shooting video from under a broad-brimmed hat, and an edited version of this was shown during the last day of the conference. It was a stirring sight as the train passed at a surprisingly high speed, but the passengers must have been soaked through and through. They managed to reach the Cob under gravity, but with one pause on the way. Restarting the train looked easier than you might expect, as we saw on the video. You get the first wagon moving and, as the coupling slack is taken up, each successive wagon starts to move.



After what seemed like a long wait, the passenger train got underway from Tan-y-Bwlch and headed for Porthmadog Harbour with a load of damp, cold but contented passengers. There must have been some doubt as to whether this excursion could have taken place at all, since there were floods not far away and 'health and safety' could have reared its head. However, the FR clearly wanted to put on a good show for ERC and they did an excellent job in very difficult circumstances – thanks to all for a memorable evening.

A DIFFERENCE OF DECADES



Incredibly these two photographs were taken from almost the same spot outside Weymouth more than forty years apart. Above, Ron North took this view of 34008 *Padstow* passing the loco shed whilst below is the same location today captured by

Alan Costello during the Olympics. Note how the extensive sidings have been reduced to just two and a modern housing estate occupies the site of the loco shed. It is hard to believe it is the same location.

