

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

142

September 2013



Contents:
Swindon and Cricklade
A Connecticut Yankee
Touring Scotland 1966

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

COMMITTEE

President:	Sir William McAlpine Bt	Vice-President:	Mark Hopwood
Chairman:	Tim Speechley. 5 Sunningdale Close, Booker, High Wycombe HP12 4EN Tel.: 01494 638090 email: tim.speechley@ntlworld.com		
Vice-Chairman	Mike Hyde. 11 Forty Green Drive, Marlow, Bucks., SL7 2JX. Tel.: 01628 485474 email: michaelahyde@uwclub.net		
Treasurer:	Peter Robins. 95 Broome Hill, Cookham, Berks., SL6 9LJ. Tel.: 01628 527870 email: pd.robins@btopenworld.com		
Secretary:	Malcolm Margetts. 4 Lodge Close, Marlow, Bucks., SL7 1RB. Tel.: 01628 486433 email: mandw.margetts@btinternet.com		
Assistant Secretary:	Vincent Caldwell. Moses Plat Farm, Speen, Princes Risborough, HP27 0SD Tel.: 01494 488283 email: GandV.Caldwell@virgin.net		
Webmaster:	Dave Woodhead. 7 Larkspur Close, Wokingham, Berks., RG41 3NA Tel.: 0118 979 1621 email: dave@woodhead.tv		
Outings Organiser:	Julian Heard. 58 Chalklands, Bourne End, Bucks., SL8 5TJ. Tel.: 01628 527005 email: julian@jeh.org.uk		
Donkey Editor:	Mike Walker, Solgarth, Marlow Road, Little Marlow, Marlow, Bucks., SL7 3RS. Tel.: 01628 483899 email: mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk		
Press & Publicity:	David Collins, 26 The Lagger, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4DG email: davidcollinsgwr@ntlworld.com		

Website: www.mdrs.org.uk

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

CONTENTS

TIMETABLE - Forthcoming meetings	Page 2
CHAIRMAN'S NOTES Tim Speechley	2
SOCIETY & LOCAL NEWS	3
SOCIETY TRIP TO THE SWINDON & CRICKLADE Tim Speechley	7
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT Part 1 Don Woodworth	9
TOURING WITH OURS IN SCOTLAND IN 1966 Part 1 Mike Page	13
RAILWAYS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE Tim Edmonds	15
FROM THE ARCHIVES - READING REMEMBERED Ron North	19

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: Black 5s 45231 & 44932 at Birkett Common 11 August 2013. Photo: Mike Walker.

*Bottom: 6728 (37505) at Ely with a short train headed for Kings Lynn on 17 June 1971.
Photo: Don Woodworth. (Article page 9).*

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

LONDON TERMINI VISIT

We have arranged a conducted tour of several London Termini for Saturday 23rd November.

It is proposed to examine both Kings Cross and St. Pancras, two stations which have seen major changes in recent years. Our guide will be David Wadley from the London Transport Museum who is extremely knowledgeable and as he does these tours regularly will be able to get us to see both stations from unusual viewpoints. If time permits it is proposed to go on to examine either/or London Bridge station which is currently being rebuilt and Camden Bank and the proposed approaches to Euston for HS2.

We plan to meet David at Paddington at 10.30 so that means using the 09.06 *'Donkey'* from Marlow or the connecting 09.18 departure from Reading. Travel around London will be by rail so you would need a one day Travelcard unless you have an Oyster card. David has requested a small fee of £30 which we can split with the numbers attending.

Numbers are limited to 15 and interest has been good but there are a few places available so if you haven't already booked and would like to go please email Julian Herd at julian.heard@btinternet.com as soon as possible.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS & VISITS

In June the Rev. Brian Arman stepped in to replace Les Nixon at fairly short notice to present the second part of his excellent history of Swindon Works, its workers and products, this time looking at the Collett years between 1922 and 1941.

Another late programme change, Tim Edmonds took us to India in July as he recalled two visits in 1981 and 1985-6 which interspersed views of steam on four gauges with images of Indian railways and life in general.

As usual we did not have an August meeting but a visit was arranged to the Swindon & Cricklade Railway on 11th August the attendance of which was, to say the least, disappointing. Tim Speechley describes what you missed on pages 5 and 6 on this issue.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

There have been a couple of changes in the committee line up in recent months.

Tim Edmonds, who has moved to Somerset, has stood down as webmaster and the Society's website is now being overseen by Dave Woodhead.

Unfortunately, Dave has been in hospital since mid-August with a reoccurrence of an old problem which is likely to keep him out of action for some weeks. We all send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

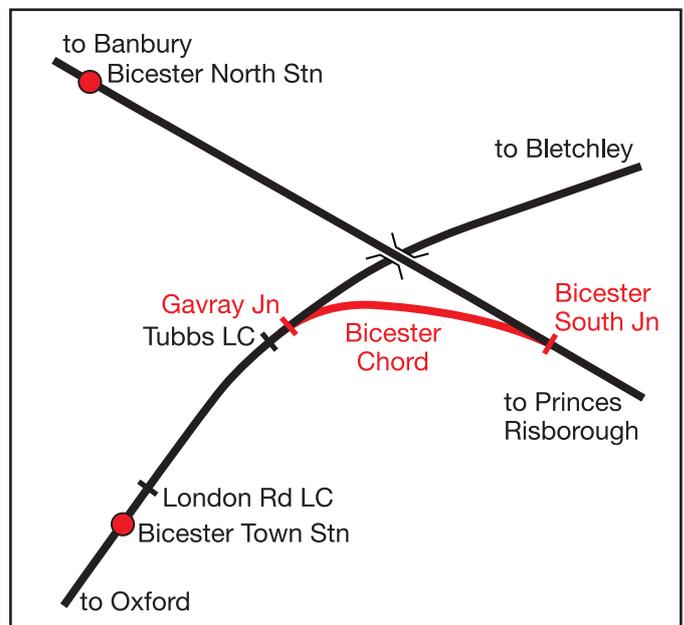
Vincent Caldwell has agreed to take over as secretary from Malcolm Margetts. Vincent is currently "learning the road" and will take over at the AGM when Malcolm retires.

WORK STARTS ON BICESTER CHORD

Work started in mid-August on the construction of the new chord which will connect the Chiltern and the Oxford to Bletchley lines south east of Bicester which will enable Chiltern Railways to operate its proposed Marylebone to Oxford service.

The new line, just under 1/2 mile in length, will join the Chiltern Line at Bicester South Junction and the Oxford to Bletchley line at what has provisionally been called Gavray Junction after an adjacent road and on necessity be quite sharply curved and graded as construction is confined to previously undeveloped farmland.

Provision for Bicester South Junction was built into the upgraded signalling when the Chiltern Mainline project was completed.



Following the successful defeat of the last legal challenge and the final approval of the Transport Secretary in May, contractors have also started on the project to upgrade the neglected line between Bicester and Oxford to a 100mph, mostly double track railway.

A construction base has been set up at Islip and the clearance of lineside vegetation and other preliminary work has commenced. To allow the main work to be undertaken, which include replacement of the badly deteriorated bridge over the River Cherwell, the Chiltern Oxford to Bicester service will be suspended for several months. No date has been set for this at press time but it is expected to start in February next year. During this time a replacement bus service will operate.

Chiltern hope to start services between Marylebone and the new station at Water Eaton (next to an Oxford Park & Ride site) in summer 2015, extending to Oxford in spring 2016. Eventually it is proposed to run two train per hour on this route, all of which will call at High Wycombe.

The East - West project to reopen the Bicester to Banbury section is a separate project and will see the whole Oxford-Bletchley-Bedford line electrified. It should open in 2017.

JOINT LINE STEAM

With the ban on specials over much of the GWML continuing, there is a rare steam working over the Chiltern Line through High Wycombe on Sunday 6th October.

Steam Dreams are promoting the *Cathedrals Express* from London Paddington to Stratford-upon-Avon. A pick-up stop will be made at Beaconsfield.

The currently booked locomotive is LNER 4464 *Bittern*. Times will be given in the e-newsletter when available but as a guide, the promoter's website quotes 11.45 and 20.00 at Beaconsfield.

OCTOBER AT CHINNOR

The good news is that the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway has steam once more, 1369 from the South Devon Railway arrived at the end of August and will stay right through to the Santa and Mince Pie services at the end of the year.

The railway is planning an event spread over the first three weekends in October called "Haversham & Friends". This event has been laid on to celebrate the 60th birthday of loco, D3018 (13018/08011) *Haversham*. It also celebrates the loco's 21st anniversary of joining the railway at Chinnor, as well as the 175th anniversary of Wolverton Works. It is hoped that some of *Haversham's* former "friends" can come to Chinnor. 165001 and Bubblecars 55020 and 55034 have been invited to represent Chiltern Railways, whilst 08629 and 08649 have been invited represent Wolverton Works and GWR No.12 has been invited to represent the early days at Chinnor. Residents *Iris*, the Clayton (D8568) and Bubblecar (55023) will also take part. All these arrangements are still subject to confirmation, in particular the visiting locos and DMUs. Railcare (Wolverton Works) has gone into administration and GWR No.12 is still undergoing a major overhaul, the consequences of which have yet to be determined.

These six days (5th/6th, 12th/13th, and 19th/20th October) will be the most extravagant and ambitious event ever contemplated on the C&PRR. It is hoped to run an intensive service (using two train sets) plus additional brake van and shuttle rides in the station area between "mainline" trains. Through trains from Aylesbury to Chinnor and shuttles between Chinnor and Princes Risborough have been planned. It is also planned to have a Beer Tent and extra catering facilities in the marquee to provide for the many hundreds of visitors expected. Put the dates in your diaries now!

Further details can be found on the C&PRR's website at: http://www.chinnorrailway.co.uk/Havershams_60th_Birthday

RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

The programme for this autumn is as follows. All meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Maidenhead, SL6 3AX, starting at 19:30

Mon 23 Sept Strictly Freight Only pt2 Brian Ringer

Mon 28 Oct Crossrail update John Goldsmith.

Mon 25 Nov Southern Steam from Paddington to Penzance
Terry Nichols

Mon 23 Dec New Zealand Bob Ellison

www.mdrs.org.uk

DON WHO?

This issue of the *Marlow Donkey* contains, for the first time, an article by a non-member, Don Woodworth. While the name is familiar to a couple of members, it is worth introducing him to the rest of you.

Don is a lifelong railway enthusiast and during his service with the US Air Force spent two 4-year postings in the UK during which he became a member of the Cambridge Railway Circle and a good friend of Dave Theobald, Peter Greatorex, Mike Page and, some years later, your Editor taking me around the greater St Louis area on many occasions and accompanying me on several other expeditions in the US. He also acts as my Midwest eyes keeping me updated in changes to the network in the region for my North American railroad atlases.

Don attended Dave's funeral in 2010 and took the opportunity to present a programme to the MDRS on his hometown railways.

His series for the *'Donkey'* was originally produced for the CRC's *Circle Line*, will recall his adventures whilst in the UK over the next several issues - it's quite a story!

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

Another reason why Don's article is included is the paucity of contributions from our own membership. My thanks to Tim Edmonds, Tim Speechley and, especially, Mike Page for their contributions in this issue. However, I now have nothing in stock - even promised contributions have failed to materialise.

The *'Donkey'* relies on contributions from the members. Please don't leave it to someone else - you all have stories to tell so let's hear them.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

For me in the last issue of the *Marlow Donkey* two items were linked in my memory. The first item was the sad announcement of the passing of Ted Gregory, and, secondly, under a heading "From the Archives", Roger Woodham had dug up some photographs taken on the second MDRS visit in 1979 to Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme.

I recall that on the 1979 visit, there was proudly displayed at the Baie de Somme's headquarters, the plaque commemorating the first MDRS visit in 1978. This memento has been designed and made by Ted, and consisted of a 2 foot by 3 foot piece of prime oak painted in Great Western green, bearing the delightful Great Western crest surrounded by the MDRS title. His skills as a Merchant Navy carpenter were much in evidence. I hate to think how many hours Ted had spent on it.

Ted was not only an early member, but was also on the committee for a number of years, and contributor of some interesting, and thoughtful, articles to the *Marlow Donkey*.

Yours sincerely

Stan Verrinder

Editor's note: for newer members, Stan was one of our founding members and served as treasurer and editor for many years for which he was made an honorary member. He now lives in retirement in Seaford, East Sussex.

SOCIETY TRIP TO THE SWINDON AND CRICKLADE RAILWAY

Tim Speechley

It's a shame more members did not participate in this trip on August 11th and in the event all those who did go were part of the Committee. I had never been to this railway before and was interested to see what was on offer especially as this was advertised as their "Steam and Vintage" weekend. Unfortunately, to quote the magician Paul Daniels, it was "not a lot".

Four of us travelled down from Marlow in one car and met up with Dave Woodhead and later Julian and Helen Heard at the main centre of operations, Blunsdon, which lies in the middle of the currently operable section of line. A temporary car park was in use here as the main one adjacent to the station was being used for various exhibits, including two traction engines, two steam rollers, some stationary engines a number of old cars and a few motor-cycles



Part of the old Midland and South Western Junction Railway, opened in 1883 and closed to passengers in September 1961, the current line has been recreated from absolutely nothing and this year is the 35th anniversary of the Society.

After some refreshments, served from a couple of elderly Norwegian railway coaches, we caught the train northward to Hayes Knoll. It was rather disappointing that only one loco was in steam, though I'm pretty sure it is the only workable one available at present. This was *Salmon* an Andrew Barclay 0-6-0 saddle tank, works number 2139 of

1942, named, according to a plate carried on the cabside, after a submarine lost, sadly with all hands, during the war. It had worked latterly at a Stewarts and Lloyds ironstone quarry in Lincolnshire before having a chequered history in preservation, having been at the North York Moors, then the Rutland Railway Museum and finally here, where it had a seven year restoration.



A short, leisurely journey followed and we arrived at Hayes Knoll where the loco shed and restoration workshop are located. *Salmon* ran round the train and, rather unannounced, departed fairly soon afterwards with most of our party, though leaving Dave, Vincent and myself behind, in my case unintentionally. This did, however, give us plenty of time to examine the extensive collection of rolling stock, which includes a class 73 electro-diesel (E6003), 08 shunters D3261 and D3668, a very old John Fowler 0-4-0 diesel mechanical (21442 of 1933 named *Woodbine*) and a much newer equivalent (JF 4220031 of 1964 – *Blunsdon*). All these seemed to be in working condition. Also in the shed were two steam locos undergoing overhaul. An 0-6-0ST that I understand is a sister to *Salmon*, named *Swordfish* (AB 2138/42) and an 0-4-0ST named *Richard Trevithick* believed to be AB 2354 of 1955 and formerly at Goldington Power Station in Bedford, though the motion carries 2353, which was another Goldington loco.

Outside, alongside the shed, were several steam locos in various states of disrepair, obviously awaiting their turn in the restoration queue. Amongst these was Manchester Ship Canal “No 70”, a Hudswell Clark 0-6-0 side tank (1464/21) in reasonable order, but the others were largely unidentifiable, including a paint-less Barclay 0-4-0ST that Vincent rather cruelly described as being in “Desert Sand” livery. A couple of large locos have been restored at the S&C in recent years, most notably 7903 “Foremarke Hall” (now on the GlosWarks line) and 56xx class 0-6-2T 5637 (on loan to the East Somerset Railway) and there was evidence of a very high standard of work being done, exemplified by a newly outshopped maroon Mark 1 coach. The next big engine project is 6984 “Owsden Hall”, the chassis and tender of which were seen at Blunsdon (and by which I was hauled from Oxford to Banbury sometime in 1965). Out of reach at Hayes Knoll was a two-car “Thumper” unit (1302 - originally an East Sussex three-car unit) which is used for the service on non-steam days.



Despite spending quite a long time making a comprehensive inspection of the stock, we still had some time to wait for the next train. The station here gives every impression of being a traditional GWR one, though in fact it is a newly built platform with a cleverly embellished side to the metal stock shed and a canopy mounted on, new brackets embellished “S&C”.

Eventually the train arrived again from Blunsdon and we embarked for the return journey, through Blunsdon and www.mdrs.org.uk

then onward to Taw Valley Halt, where I was told off by the guard for alighting onto the platform (to get a photo) because the station has not yet been open to the public and there was a health and safety risk. Whoops !

So, back to Blunsdon, where some of our group got some much deserved food (after an incredibly long wait) and yours truly headed to the real ale tent, already discovered by Mike Hyde. After sampling a couple of very tasty liquid offerings it was time to have a look round the assorted stalls and exhibitions which, to be honest, were rather disappointing, have a final look at the road going exhibits, most of which had already disappeared and then get together for our return to Marlow, courtesy of Vincent and the Volkswagenwerk.



It had been an interesting day – a first visit for me and others (and maybe the last ?). It’s certainly no Severn Valley or West Somerset Railway but the trains were pretty full of passengers and where else can you wander round the workshop and yard to your heart’s content, unaccompanied, without a hi-vis vest ? Everybody seemed very friendly (except when telling me off !) and I wish them every success for the future.

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

Part 1 First Encounters

Col. Don Woodworth USAF (Retired)

Don Woodworth, a friend of the late Dave Theobald, spent 8 years living in the UK in the seventies and eighties whilst serving with the US Air Force. A lifelong rail enthusiast, in this new series Don looks back at his experiences during that period which led him to explore almost every mile of the network and provides an interesting perspective on our railways at that time from the viewpoint of an outsider.

The literati amongst the membership of the Marlow District Railway Society may be familiar with the American writer and humorist Samuel L. Clemens, better known by his pen name of Mark Twain, via his most popular books *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. In 1899, Mr. Clemens published a satirical comedy entitled *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. It was set in 6th century England and looked at its early medieval culture through the eyes of Hank Morgan, a 19th century resident of Hartford, Connecticut. Though born in the mid-Western part of the United States in 1835, Mr. Clemens spent the latter part of his life from 1873 until his death in 1910, in Hartford. It is here he conceived the idea for his comedy.

Hartford, capital of the small state of Connecticut, and its environs was at the time a hotbed of ideas and invention (often referred to by Americans as "Yankee ingenuity") and was hence a likely venue for the staging of his comedy. Without belaboring things, the protagonist, Hank Morgan, of 19th century Hartford, receives a severe blow to the head and awakens to find himself inexplicably transported back in time to early medieval England at the time of the legendary King Arthur. The fictional Mr. Morgan, whose image of that time had been colored over the years by romantic myths, takes on the task of analyzing the problems and sharing his knowledge from 1,300 years in the future to modernize, Americanize, and improve the lives of the people.



The interior of Liverpool Street held the greatest appeal for Don, like stepping back in time from Dr. Who's Tardis!



Over here for Dave's funeral, Don at Marylebone on 19th February 2010, the morning after he gave a presentation to the MDRS and just prior to making a cab ride to Wrexham courtesy of WM&SR.

As it happens, the author of this piece happens to be an actual Connecticut Yankee (my home is in Oxford, CT) and, having had the privilege of being posted in the UK for a total of 8 years, could not resist the urge to borrow Mr. Clemens' title as an apt way to describe his introduction in 1971 to what was then British Rail and his travel over the next 8 years over 99.999 per cent of the system offering regular passenger service at the time.

Coming from railway passenger service-starved America to Britain in 1971 was like suddenly being thrust into a giant toy store! Amtrak had begun in the United States on 1 May 1971, reducing the already somewhat anemic national passenger network from a total of 364 individual trains (not counting commuter service) on 30 April 1971 to a paltry 182 serving half a continent on Amtrak start-up day! Though I frequently read letters in the British railway enthusiast press by those still smarting from the cuts of the (in)famous Dr. Beeching, I could not help with my outsider's perspective to be astounded by the immense variety of passenger service offered by British Rail. The city of St. Louis, MO (population 319,000), near to my last posting in the States, was reduced to just 6 trains a day. The town of Ely (population 15,000) saw more trains than that in less than an hour. I was in heaven!



The Great Eastern Hotel's inner facade took Don's fancy along with the two extra long platforms for the Norwich trains. But the cars on the platform - were they on show, perhaps?

A rather rare and also unsuccessful British Thompson-Houston Class 15 8234 living on borrowed time as a station pilot at Liverpool Street Station, London, on 15 November 1970. This photo illustrates the time-honored principle of “Even a blind squirrel sometimes finds an acorn.” Had I known how rare these locomotives were, the last few examples being removed from BR stock by March 1971, I’d have taken many more photos. As it turned out, this was my first and last sighting of one in service. The only other Class 15 that I ever got to see was ADB 968001 (Ex D8233) dumped at Stratford Depot which I photographed on 5 June 1982 during a Cambridge Railway Circle visit. Happily, that locomotive was preserved and is now at the East Lancashire Railway.



When I first came to the UK, BR was in a period of transition from the conventional numbering of locomotives (ex. 9002 *Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry* to the TOPS system (55002) and, of an image change from the lion rampant and wheel to the stylized double arrow logo. I rather liked the TOPS approach as it made it easier for me to remember what I was seeing. I had already had quite enough of the logo change process in the States however (the Penn Central mating worms come to mind) and would have been quite happy with the “ferret & dartboard” logo for the duration of my postings in the UK.

Imprinting

It is known that under certain conditions, newly hatched ducklings will imprint upon, bond, and socially follow the first moving object they encounter. Konrad Lorenz, the Austrian zoologist and ornithologist, in his classic studies of this behavior noted that the bond seemed to be formed immediately, that it seemed irreversible, and that it seemed to develop only during a brief critical period in the first day or so after hatching. He used the term “imprinting” to describe the process by which the bond was formed and, in doing so, implied that during a duckling’s first encounter with a moving object, the image of the object is somehow stamped irreversibly on the nervous system. For many years, this has been the accepted notion of the process.



I have a rather strong suspicion that the same process might also apply to gricers. I have been to a lot of places and seen a lot of railways that I’ve genuinely liked during my life, but, in my heart of hearts, there’s no place I like better and no railways that I like better than those where I grew up. In my case, that would be along the lines of the west end of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad in the state of Connecticut in the United States.

Jumping about 3,000 miles east to the UK, the same feeling would pertain to East Anglia and the locomotives most commonly used by BR there during the years 1971 -1982. These would include Classes 08, 37, 47, and 55 (by slight extension) and, to a lesser degree, 31 and the 40. No matter how long I was exposed to them, they would be “different” from those with which I grew up in the States, but they would be my new normal in the UK.

My first railway trip in the UK began with a minor bit of trepidation. Flying in to Heathrow on 15 November 1970 to meet a party of other U.S. Air Force people that had preceded me to RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk, I made my way north to London and Liverpool Street Station. I had been cautioned to ensure that it was Liverpool Street Station I sought as some other first-time visitors from the States had inadvertently found their way to Beatles Land on the coast of Lancashire.

After safely reaching the booking office at London Liverpool Street, a kindly ticket clerk assured me that I indeed wanted to travel to Shippea Hill, Cambs. and not Biggin Hill, Kent. Thus began the first of a continuing series of railway adventures I had in the UK. My locomotive-hauled train got me safely to Ely, where I changed to a diesel multiple unit (the technical term for which I later learned from Bill Last was “bug box”) that soon set me down

My first trip out of London to fen land was most likely behind a Class 37 or Class 47 diesel. While I did not have the presence of mind to record the details of the trip, something that later become second nature to me, the photo of green 1525 (later 47422) waiting to depart on a Norwich express nicely captures the atmosphere of this great station on the sunny afternoon of 15 November 1971.



Ely was a natural break point for many journeys. Lines radiated from here for Peterborough and the Midlands, Kings Lynn, Norwich, and Ipswich. For Americans travelling to RAF Mildenhall, one would usually change to a connecting set of "bug boxes" that made all stops to Norwich, setting down at Shippea Hill (first stop east of Ely) for those wishing to go to the air base. 6728 (37505) is shown with a short train headed for Kings Lynn on 17 June 1971.

at the unstaffed Shippea Hill halt. Fortunately, the friendly signal box operator there was used to at least a generation of befuddled Americans being abruptly thrust into the wilderness of the fens with only the adjacent Railway Tavern (if one were lucky enough to be set down during opening hours!) serving as a beacon of civilization until the Shippea Hill Flyer (a somewhat antiquated bus) arrived to take them onward to the airbase. It was a chilly afternoon, and I was the only one on the platform, so he invited me up into the signal box to wait until transport arrived from the air base.

I greatly enjoyed this brief trip to RAF Mildenhall as part of the staff assistance team that was visiting the 627 Aerial Port Squadron there. My short visit re-enforced a long-standing desire to be posted to the UK. I had wanted to come to the UK as early as 1966, when I realized that I had a new posting on the horizon after completing my first year of service. The Air Force had other plans though and I instead received an all expense paid tour to sunny Viet Nam. My posting officer assured me that I could go anywhere I'd like after Viet Nam, so I said "the UK!" Not comprehending either American or British English, my posting officer sent me to California. Not bad, but still not the UK. When time came for another posting, I was asked again if I had a preference and I again said "the UK." This time, my uncomprehending posting officer sent me to the scenic cornfields of Illinois, not far across the great Mississippi River from the city of St. Louis, Missouri. I was slowly moving east! The fates tantalized me even more when LNER 4472 (aka *Flying Scotsman*) paid a visit to America and happened to be on display in St. Louis, Missouri on 4 July 1970.

An overview of greater metropolitan Shippea Hill. In this view looking northeast, one sees the only signs of human habitation at Shippea Hill – the Railway Tavern, the open shelters on the railway platform, Shippea Hill signal box, and a single home. Careful observers will note a fierce fen grizzly bear poking its nose around the corner of the house. Looking across the tracks, the A1101 leads across Burnt Fen toward Littleport. In the opposite direction, it leads toward RAF Mildenhall and the town of Mildenhall itself.



By this time, I had become wiser to the ways of the USAF. I discovered that one of the civilian ladies that worked for me carpooled to work with the Chief of Personnel for the Military Airlift Command, to which I was assigned. I also discovered that this dear lady was partial to an alcoholic beverage called Southern Comfort. I gave her a bottle of it as a gift the following Christmas as I wanted to ensure she was "comfortable" in her job. While she was getting comfortable, I found time to get married in December of 1971 and to get, you guessed it, a new posting – this time to the UK through the miracle of Southern Comfort!

I arrived in the UK for my first posting on 14 February 1971. Happy Valentines to my new wife! My wife was unable to join me until I could find a place to live. This presented my first great dilemma. Did I want to spend the next four years having the world's most splendid grice or did I want to find a place for the two of us to live so I could send for Donna to join me? Familial responsibility won the day and I found us a cozy bungalow in Barton Mills, close to the market town of Mildenhall, Suffolk and also the airbase.

My wife soon joined me but, in the intervening few months, I began a modest exploration of the BR system in East Anglia. It didn't take me long to buy a complete set of regional time tables and to discover the huge network of lines offering passenger service throughout the kingdom. The flat lands of my previous posting in Illinois turned out to be perfect training for the fens of East Anglia. Not too long after my wife joined me, the USAF assigned us to RAF housing at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk, a bit farther out from my posting at RAF Mildenhall but actually a bit handier to the Kings Lynn-Ely-Cambridge-London line,

Cravens Motor Brake Second E50249 leads E56101, E56312, and one other unit on an Ely to Norwich stopping train arriving at Shippea Hill on 20 September 1972. This is the type of conveyance that brought untold numbers of American airmen on the final leg of their journey to RAF Mildenhall. I'm a bit ahead of my tale here because I don't believe I met my friend David Coleman (a BR guard) until sometime after this photo was taken. Suffice it to say that, after I got to know him, I would always look for him on Ely-Norwich trains and on Ely-London trains and it was always fun to have a chat when we did meet.



which actually made taking the train a bit easier as it was a very direct run from Feltwell to Littleport. If we wanted a full day in London, it was a cinch to drive to Littleport and catch the up *Fenman* first thing in the morning.

Exploring East Anglia

It all began simply enough as I noticed that in many cases there were alternative ways of reaching the same destination. My wife and I would set out on short journeys on a Saturday or a Sunday, though we soon learned to avoid Sundays if at all possible because of the dreadful “E” word (does “engineering works” ring a bell with anyone). We would select a likely destination where we could do a bit of sightseeing, enjoy a nice lunch or dinner, and be home at a sensible hour. In this way, we covered a reasonable amount of East Anglia. As the journeys became a bit longer, Donna (my first wife of 42 years and counting) started noticing a slightly glazed look in my eyes as I increasingly contemplated the international question that eventually besets all gricers – “I wonder where that line goes?”

The movie *The Railway Children* had been released in 1970 and my wife and I had seen it. She soon began to suspect that there might be a sequel to the film – “The Railway Widow” in which her adoring husband would disappear on progressively longer journeys at weekends whilst she was left at home to entertain herself. We worked out a modus operandi that allowed for my travel in exchange for various shopping trips and, as long as I didn't over do it, this worked quite well. Using the regional time

tables, I soon began working out marathon day trips with all sorts of improbable routings to cover as much new line as possible. Sometimes Donna would accompany me but, often as not, she'd pass on the thrill of photographing a Class 25 at Nuneaton for the joys of shopping at the fine shops in Bury St. Edmunds or Cambridge.

The early 70s were an interesting time of transition. Just as I was beginning to understand the change from the BR system of numbering for its diesel and electric locomotives, things became much easier with the introduction of the class/individual locomotive number system. Knowing that 6729 was really 37 029 started to make life a lot easier for a novice like myself. Likewise, the change over from old pence to New Pence during this period also made life a lot simpler for people from “away.” I could see where history and culture became somewhat poorer with the disappearance of thrup'ny bits, tanners, bobs, and crowns, but I could also sense the happiness of accountants and the like who would find bookkeeping easier with a decimalized system.

Having set the stage, I'll now recount some of the more interesting journeys that I made, starting perhaps first with the one that introduced me to the Cambridge Railway Circle. I initially did not keep logs of my trips but, as time went on, I began to do this so I'd have a record of where and when I travelled and the details of the equipment upon which I rode. I would keep track of the time each station was reached, etc., though I made no pretense at time keeping in the manner of the late, great O. S. Nock. I was in no way ready for the big leagues!

My wife and I would often take the train to London to sightsee, to attend a play, or to visit with my English cousin who was attending nursing school there. It was on one of these trips where we were anticipating a pleasant



The up Fenman behind 6825 (37125) booms into Littleport, Cambs. for an 08.13 departure on the sunny Saturday morning of 4 August 1973. This was the perfect train for a day out in London as one could at that time get a full breakfast aboard the buffet car seen midway back in the train.



A “Gronk” at Ely – 08083 with the great cathedral looming behind it. Although Ely is no longer surrounded by water (unless the dikes fail!), the appellation “Isle of Ely” never failed to conjure up an image in my mind of the wonderful cathedral on a hill sailing above all the surrounding fens. Approaching Ely from any direction, it was always a delight to see the cathedral looming above the town and always a goal to capture it as a background for my photos.

Sunday afternoon train ride from London back to Ely that I noticed a great commotion on the platform just outside the window of our carriage. As I watched events unfold, it became clear to me that it was likely an American serviceman who was involved in a scuffle with the BR staff and had knocked one of the men to the ground.

The BR staff followed what turned out to definitely be an American airman from RAF Lakenheath onto the train. At this point, I made myself known to the trainmen as an U.S. Air Force officer and offered to assist them. Had the airman involved shut his mouth and let one of his friends or myself pay the fare that it turned out he was indeed trying to avoid, he could likely have proceeded onward after making the necessary apologies. As the airman elected to let his mouth over-ride his brain, he was instead taken away and arrested by the BR police authorities. I gave my name to the BR authorities in the event they might need a witness to what had occurred. In the process of doing so, I came to meet David Coleman. As we chatted, David learned of my interest in railways and invited me to attend a meeting of the Cambridge Railway Circle. Thus, out of an initial bit of unpleasantness, I came to develop a wide circle (pun intended) of friends and a very pleasant 40+ year association with the CRC. I also value the wonderful program of tours which the CRC consistently sponsored. I tended to prefer the ones related to modern traction but, with steam so recently disappeared from Britain, I fully understood the attraction of preserved railways to our membership and quite enjoyed those visits as well.

A temporarily Americanized LNER 4472 Flying Scotsman on display at St. Louis, MO Union Station with headlight, bell, whistle, and cow catcher installed for its sojourn in the United States. Union Station was completed in 1894 and at the time its train shed was the largest in the world, covering 30 tracks beneath a roof area of nearly 10 acres. With less than a year to go before the advent of Amtrak, the huge train shed was nearly bereft of trains and pigeons usually outnumbered passengers except on special occasions that would draw people to the station, such as the visit of Flying Scotsman.

I soon discovered during my travels that most major railway stations in England had paper shops and these shops sold a wide variety of railway oriented publications. Never having met a railway magazine that I didn't want to read, I quickly became a regular reader of *Modern Railways*, *Railway World* and *Modern Tramways*. Armed with the unending stream of information that these publications provided, I was armed to set forth and conquer King Arthur's realm. What follows are some of the highlights of my various journeys and adventures on the rails during my two postings to RAF Mildenhall (1971-74) and (1978-82); plus some of my subsequent trips to the UK in later years.

Now if the Air Force had done things according to my original plan, I would have been in the UK in sufficient time to enjoy the end of mainline steam on the Southern Region. As that unfortunately didn't happen, I instead had to find examples of “honorary” steam locomotives to keep my interest up. For whatever reason, Class 37s and Class 55s won this honor – likely because of their family resemblance and because their “noses” at either end at least gave the semblance of American passenger diesels with which I was familiar – and I loved the growl of the Deltic's twin Napier engines!!

To be continued.



Touring with OURS in Scotland in 1966

By Mike Page



The Oxford University Railway Society's annual 'tour' scheduled for 1966 was for one week in Scotland, where steam was fighting a rear-guard action and diesel reliability was improving (except the D8500s!).

On the first morning I was being 'told off' by the manager of the Perth Youth Hostel (YHA) for getting up and doing my chore (sweeping the steps and paths) too early (06.30h)! Well, I had had no chance to visit Perth motive power depot (MPD) the previous evening as it was dark on my arrival and we were scheduled that morning to 'grice' to Stonehaven before travelling over to Balloch to stay in the 'haunted' hostel by Loch Lomond.

I was very surprised to hear, some years later (like the 1990s) that the old Oxford University Railway Society (OURS) had folded while the Cambridge University Railway Club soldiers on. The OURS meetings would attract 20 or more. It was very active in organising brake van trips, MPD and works visits as well as sessions in signal boxes (such as Waterloo). Engine driving was still in vogue in 1965 and I had my turn at the regulator of an ex-GWR 61XX tank, 6106, on the Thames branch. A half-dozen or so of us (I was a 'mature' undergrad at 23!) had cleaned the engine the night before.

The attraction of the Scottish trip was to see the last of the surviving pre-grouping North British Railway (NBR) J35 and J36 locomotives operating in the Fife coalfields. Also a few A4s were still in action on the Glasgow-Aberdeen/Dundee lines as well as three surviving A2s at Dundee (62B) and two A3s at St. Margarets (64A) in Edinburgh.

So, back to Perth, and having said that I was not aware of the hostel's morning ruling, peace reigned and we tucked in to bacon and eggs. Earlier, the Perth MPD (65A) shed www.mdrs.org.uk

The shedmaster at Perth obligingly brought 60034 Lord Farringdon out into the daylight on 13th March 1966.

foreman had been surprised to see me as the morning light struggled to brighten the day (the OURS group had 'done' the shed the afternoon before). I explained I was a late comer to the OURS visit and so he took me around and gave me a ride up and down the yard on Aberdeen Ferryhill (61B)'s 60034 *Lord Farringdon*! My last visit to 65A was in August 1960 when only a couple of North British D6100s could struggle into service on the Glasgow – Dundee and Aberdeen trains while Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon 'D5300ers', along with a few Derby (or Crewe)/Sulzer D5100s had taken over nearly all the trains to Inverness and beyond. Everything else was steam – even yard shunting with Caledonian McIntosh '29' and '782' 0-6-0Ts.

The previous day, I had journeyed down from Wolverhampton with Crewe North (5A)'s D335 on a Birmingham - Manchester (07.27 off Wolverhampton High Level) to connect with the 09.25 Crewe-Perth, reputedly still a steam job forward from Carlisle. At Crewe, the empty coaching stock (ECS) was brought in by Crewe South (5B) Jinty 47530. Also on station pilot duty was 5B's Jinty, 47482, which had been overhauled at Darlington and carried its number in North Eastern Region fashion in large characters on her side tanks.

The run up to Carlisle with a D200er produced a still fairly 'steamy' scene with Stanier Black Fives and 8Fs, a few Standard 9Fs and Britannias seen mostly with freight trains. Adding to the steam show was escaping steam from the diesel loco's train heating boiler's safety valve. I noted 47 steam locos, among which were the few survivors of Stanier and Fairburn Class 4 2-6-4Ts such as Bolton (9K)'s 42464 at Wigan and Fleetwood (10C)'s 42431 in Preston Station.



A wonderfully atmospheric scene at Crewe Station on 12th March 1966 as Crewe South's 'Jinty' 0-6-0T 47530 brings in the empty stock to form the 09:25 to Perth.

A call at Motherwell Station: 70016, formerly Ariel, is about to leave with the 09:25 Crewe-Perth. Next stop is Coatbridge on 12th March 1966.



Our train called at Tebay (12E) where bankers on view included 42210 and 42232. Newton Heath (9D)'s 48174 waited to climb Shap to be assisted by 42134. In the shed yard were, perhaps unexpectedly, Carlisle Upperby (12B)'s 70019 and Bournemouth (70F)'s Ivatt Class 2 2-6-2T 41224! In company were two of 12B's Ivatt Class 2 2-6-0s (46426 and 46434). We did not ask for a banker and so off we went.

Waiting for our train at Carlisle was Carlisle Kingmoor (12A)'s 70016, which took us punctually past 12A, where among the growing numbers of the withdrawn stood 'Royal Scot' 46115 and rebuilt 'Patriot' 45530. 70016 romped up Beattock at a steady 40-45mph having only seven or so coaches on our tail. The next 'steam pocket' was Motherwell shed (66B) where in the yard among Standard 4 2-6-0s, two Standard 5 4-6-0s and Stanier Black Fives stood Aberdeen Ferryhill (61B)'s 60026 *Miles Beavor*. We joined the Glasgow-Perth line south of Glenboig. 61B's 60034 Lord Farrington passed us shortly afterwards on her way to Glasgow Buchanan St. with the 13.30 from Aberdeen.

So now, on Sunday, March 13, 1966, Perth MPD was fairly sparsely populated with 50% steam (18 locos) and 50% diesel. As well as 61B's 60034 there was also the grimy 60024 *Kingfisher* from St. Margarets (64A). There were three Britannias present too: 70016/33 and 35. The remainder included nine Stanier 'Black Fives' and three Standard '4' 2-6-4Ts. The diesels included operational D6121, Sulzer and BRC&W Type 2s and one Brush Type 4.

I forget why we went to Stonehaven, but we did in a few coaches hauled one way by D5130 and the return with D5346. I think it was a suggestion to fill in time as the five of us had 'done' Perth MPD and were hoping for an A4 or an A2 on a late morning Aberdeen – Glasgow (Buchanan St.). No: in rolled D6103 + D6121. Then we rode a 'Blue Train' from Glasgow Queen St. (Low Level) to Balloch to stay in the fortified manor house YHA hostel reputed to have been haunted.

After a ghost-free night we 'blue-trained' via Glasgow to Coatbridge where we were to take a brake van ride on a

Gartsherrie – Bathgate coal empties. While waiting for our train, we watched 0-4-0 saddle tank 'Gartsherrie No. 7' busily shunting the ironworks' sidings. The ironworks only had one more year of operation to go. Eventually D8030 had readied the train, we all got into the brake van and off we trundled noting a number of ex North British Railway lattice post lower quadrant signals beckoning us onwards.

We passed three English Electric Type 1s – D8112 (up bogie bolsters) and D8028 and D8074 on coal. We also passed collieries, one of which gave us a tantalising glimpse of a J36 with a brake van. As we detrained in Bathgate yards, Bathgate's 65319 caught up with us, divested herself of her brake van and proceeded to shunt the yard.

The MPD produced 12 operational 'steamers' including J36s 65297, 65267 and 65345 sharing tracks with three Standard 4 2-6-0s, two Standard 2 2-6-0s, three B1s and an Ivatt 2 2-6-0. An equal number of D8000s stood around. The sidings, which a year or so ago had contained a large dump of ex-LNER Pacifics and V2s as well as ex-NBR old-timers, had been cleared. From Bathgate, an OURS member who lived in Edinburgh, met us and carted us to Waverley Station in his Dad's shipping firm's Rolls-Bentley.

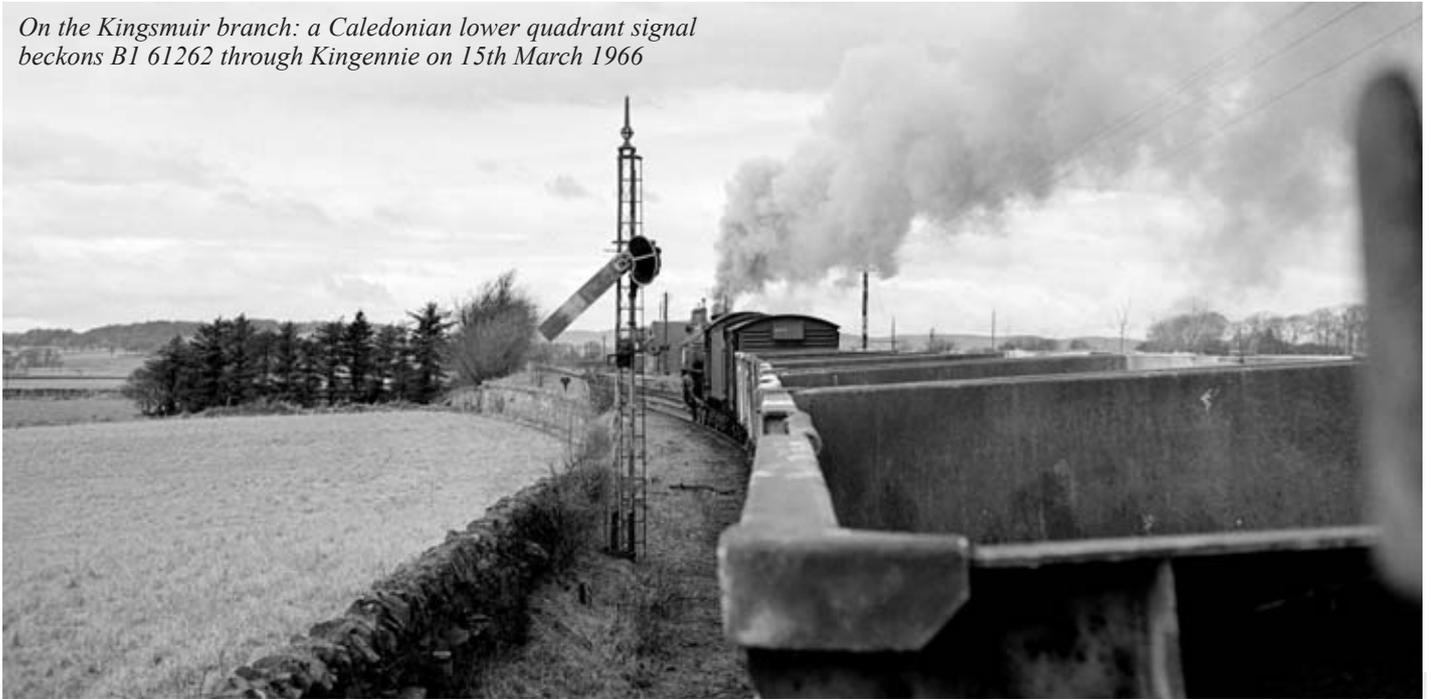
While waiting to catch a DMU to Stirling, Dunfermline's J36 65288 came through light engine while 64A's 80114 acted as station pilot and Dalry Road (64C)'s 45162 brought in empty stock. Our DMU went via Polmont East Junction, Falkirk and Larbert. Among Type 1 and Type 2 diesels seen on freight was 70016 running light at Larbert Junction.

Half-an-hour or so on Stirling Station produced: Motherwell's 45084 on a train from Glasgow at 17.57; D5344 on an up mails at 18.00; D6101 on a Glasgow-Aberdeen at 18.03 and our 'stopper' to Perth at 18.20 pulled by Perth's 44704. An evening's 'dawdle' on Perth Station produced Dundee (62B)'s B1 61262 on an up fitted freight from Dundee. We were to become more closely acquainted with this engine next day.

There is a crew change before J36 65319 prepares to shunt the yard at Bathgate on 14th March 1966. The MPD yard is on the left, populated by English Electric Type 1s.



On the Kingsmuir branch: a Caledonian lower quadrant signal beckons B1 61262 through Kingennie on 15th March 1966



At Kingennie, 61262 divests itself of the mineral wagons while a Ford Thames Trader truck on the left waits to deposit its load into one of the wagons. 15th March 1966.



A bit of hand shunting at Kingsmuir is needed to move a van out of the way before 61262 can run around to begin shunting on 15th March 1966.



There was quite some variety that evening with Willesden (1A)'s D211 on a Perth-Euston sleeper, 62B's 61102 arriving with a local from Dundee, 64A's 60024 Kingfisher going on to shed after bringing in an up mail, Eastfield (65A)'s D5364 light engine to wait in a bay and 12A's 70035 coming off shed to pick up a 'fish'. The evening concluded with 65A's D5348 bringing in ECS off the Dundee line, Inverness (60A)'s D5328 light engine to shed and 12A's 70039 light engine to the yards at 21.15. We had to be in the hostel by 22.00 so off we went.

Wednesday was a brake van day: we were to take a trip down the Broughty Ferry – Kingsmuir branch after visiting 62B. We had not seen any of St. Rollox (65B)'s Caprotti Standard Fives on the trip so far, so it was nice to see 73149 roll in to Perth Station at 09.02 on a Glasgow-Dundee service. She gave us a smart run along the Dee's north shore to arrive punctually at surprisingly steamy Dundee.

Until we joined the Kingsmuir freight at Broughty Ferry we saw eight J35 0-6-0s including four inside 62B's running shed. Celebrities included 60530 *Sayarjirao*, 60532 *Blue Peter* and 60528 *Tudor Minstrel* as well as five B1s (two on freight), a solitary J38, Thornton (62A)'s 65901, and for the diesel buffs, D2414. There were V2s too, such as 62B's 60818 on shed and, on our return from Kingsmuir, 62B's 60836 on an up Class 5 freight.

At Broughty Ferry, 61262 arrived with one van and eight mineral wagons of coal to do the honours, taking us on a leisurely ramble along this former Caledonian line to Forfar. The line had lost its passenger service on January 10, 1955. We shunted wagons at Kingennie, Monikie, Kirbuddy and Gavie. The line had been cut short at Kingsmuir on December 8, 1958, where we exchanged the van for two more to take back with us. The single line, with its Caledonian lower quadrant semaphores, tailed off into the weeds with Forfar visible about two miles away. One got the impression that this line had not many more years to go. Indeed, the line was to close completely on October 9, 1967.

To be continued..



Dunfermline's J36 65288 paid a surprise visit to Edinburgh's Waverley Station heading south past Fairburn 2-6-4T 42273, which was acting as station pilot.



Dundee MPD still operated three A2 Pacifics on 15th March 1966: 60532 Blue Peter (left) is seen with 60530 Sayarjirao. The third A2, 60528 Tudor Minstrel was undergoing light repairs inside the shed.

Dundee's B1 61262 brings the trip freight to Kingsmuir into Broughty Ferry on 15th March 1966.



RAILWAYS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

Tim Edmonds, with additional notes by Mike Walker

One of our son Matthew's friends, Chris Duncalf, is a flying instructor at Booker, so we arranged a 45 minute flight on Tuesday 6th August with Veronica as "trainee pilot". I asked for the inclusion of certain railway locations in the itinerary and the pictures here are the result. The quality isn't that brilliant as they were taken through perspex windows and it was blowing around a bit on the thermals but they do offer a different perspective on local railways. For the record, the aircraft was a Piper Warrior II, G-SIXT, in 'heritage' livery with a split personality – the port side was BOAC and the starboard side BEA!

At right, Chiltern Railways' 165001 forming 2A42, the 15:21 London Marylebone to Aylesbury service via High Wycombe makes its way along the branch roughly halfway between Little Kimble station, which is out of sight at the bottom of the picture, and Marsh Lane Level Crossing.

Below, the distinctive light green Shanks livery identifies Freightliner's 66522 sitting under the container unloading gantry crane at Calvert. It had arrived on 6M21, the 08:21 from Cricklewood and would depart as 6M23 back to Cricklewood at 19:20. At the left can be seen the mechanical grab that is used to unload the spoil trains from Willesden and Thorney Mill. Notice too the proximity of the new housing built on part of the former landfill, the current workings are off to the lower right of this picture. Aylesbury is to the right.





Above we see the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quinton Road. This view looks south with the former Oxford Rewley Road station visible between the car park and the original Metropolitan station. The curve of the former Brill Tramway to start roadside running is clearly visible.

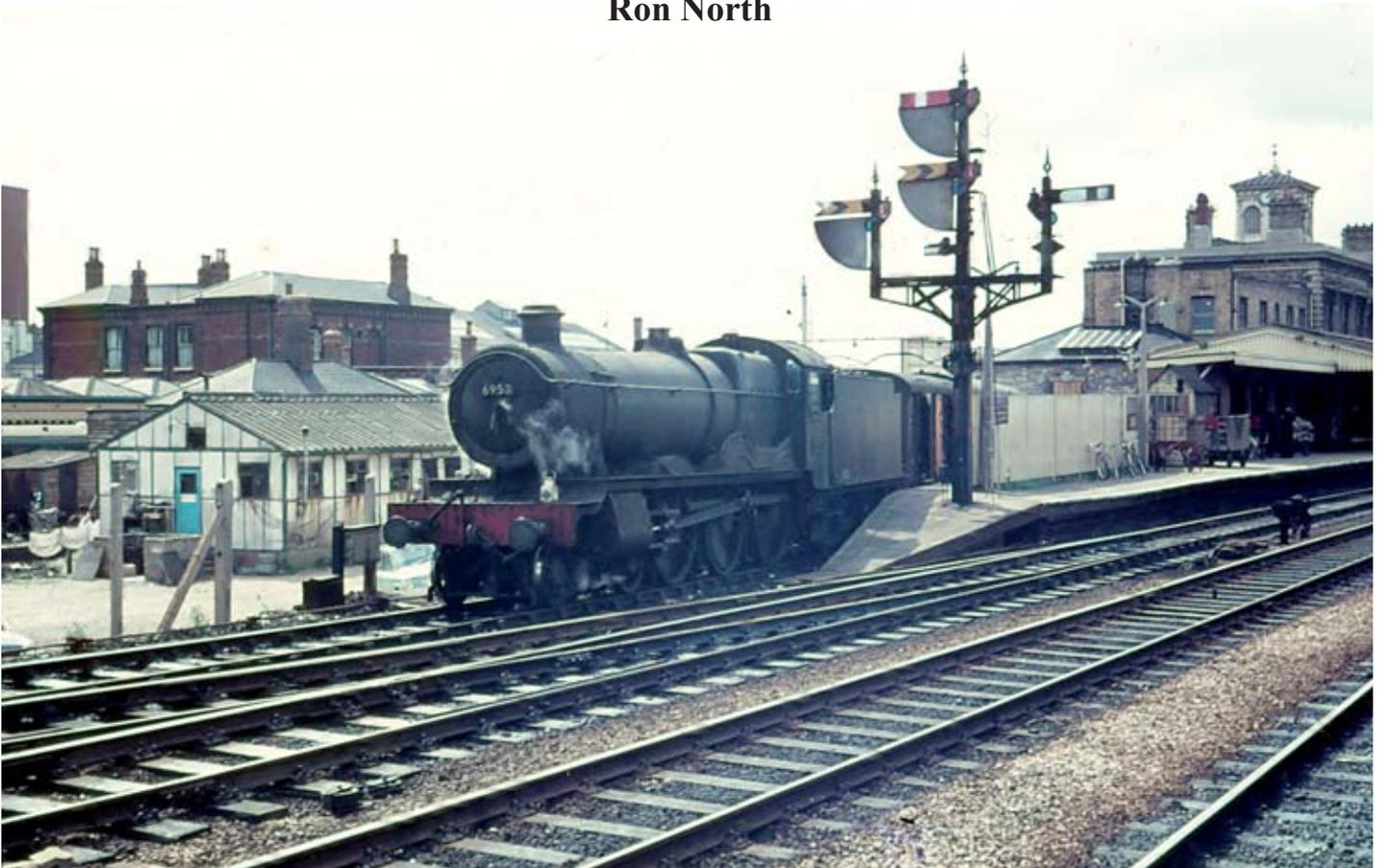
Our other local preservation centre, Chinnor, is seen below. The new car park and upgraded road access are clearly visible, both of these resulted from the housing development on the old cement works site to the right. The paucity of cars in the car park shows it was not an operating day.. The C&PRR's 'Bubblecar' W55023 is hiding behind the trees just right of centre.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

READING REMEMBERED

Ron North



The rebuilding of Reading station has changed it beyond all recognition so here are a couple of reminders of how things used to be.

Above, 6953 *Leighton Hall* standing in the former short dock adjacent to platform 4 at Reading General around 1963. The Southern station is on the left of the picture and

between it and the WR station is the area where Thames Valley used to park its buses between trips. New platforms 4 to 6 occupy this area today.

Below, An anonymous Western races through Reading on the up main bound for Paddington, probably on the same day

