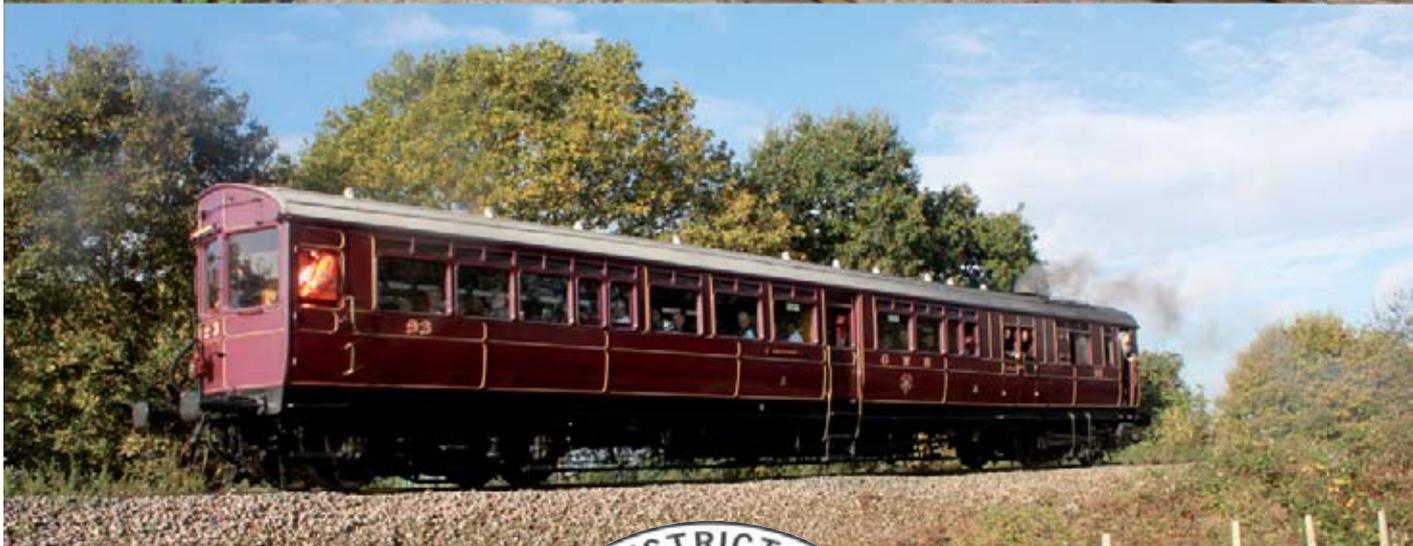


# THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

# 147

December 2014



Contents:  
Great Western Heritage Weekend  
Orient Express Trains  
A Connecticut Yankee in  
King Arthur's Court

# The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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

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*Great Western Heritage Weekend 18-19 October 2014*

*Top: GWR Steam Railmotor No. 93 on the Brentford branch at Warren Farm crossing.*

*Photo: Mike Walker. (Article page 7).*

*Bottom: GWR Steam Railmotor No. 93 on the Brentford branch at Trumper's crossing.*

*Photo: Mike Walker. (Article page 7).*

# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.45 for 8.00pm.

Thursday 15 January **THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 1963** Geoff Plumb

For his latest annual presentation, Geoff takes us back to 1963, the year he first started taking colour slides. The quality will be up to his usual exceptional standards making this an evening not to be missed.

Thursday 19 February **THE WESTERN ROUTE UPGRADE** Mark Hopwood

Following our usual brief business part of the AGM, our Vice President and First Great Western Managing Director Mark Hopwood will be bringing us up to date with a progress report on the upgrading and electrification of the Great Western Main Line.

Thursday 19 March **SOUTH AFRICA "PLUS A BIT"**

Ron may have divested himself of the Colour Rail business but he's still willing to come along and entertain us in his own unique and inimitable style. Tonight he takes us to South Africa but as for the additional bit - well you'll have to come and find out!

Thursday 16 April **MORE FROM THE DEREK CROSS COLLECTION** David Cross

David last visited us in October 2010. Tonight he will be presenting a further selection of pictures taken by his father, the noted steam cameraman Derek Cross.

## FORTHCOMING VISIT

Thursday 5 February **SLOUGH PANEL SIGNAL BOX**

With closure now set for Easter, we are arranging a final visit. The date is provisional and the start time is 19:30. See page 3 for more details.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As mentioned in my notes in the last *Donkey*, the committee members have become aware that support for some visits and general attendances at meetings seem to be in decline and we are all concerned that perhaps we are not doing the right things to encourage participation. To try to gauge your opinions, a questionnaire is being sent out with this edition and may I ask that all members look at this and respond honestly, either electronically or on paper, by the next (January) meeting. Everyone on the committee is a volunteer and individuals spend a lot of time and effort planning and achieving the programme of events and to be rewarded by poor turnouts or lack of interest is very demoralising. Please, please, please, complete the questionnaire and get it back to me, for without feedback it is difficult to know what we are doing wrong, if indeed we are. I realise we can't please all of you all the time and of course there are financial and logistical considerations to be taken into account but if the majority of you make the effort to provide information then I promise we will look at the data and do what we can to act upon it. Thank you in advance.

As some of you will know, I have a pretty wide interest in transport and industrial heritage. In early October Gay and I had a trip to the north to see friends and relations in Manchester and Glasgow. En-route between the two I achieved something I had been trying to do for years – visit the Queen Street Mill Museum in Burnley. Run by Lancashire County Council's Museum Service it's not a well-known attraction but is a former cotton mill where they still have over 300 Lancashire looms driven by a locally built stationary steam engine (there were 900 when it was a commercial concern). They don't all work at the same time but they do produce a quantity of cloth each year. The individual looms in operation are incredibly noisy and although the main hall was inactive just the noise from the line shafting was pretty deafening, so once all those looms got going it's no wonder the workers could all lip read. Amongst the staff, one man was so interesting whilst demonstrating different types of

loom that we must have spent an hour and a half just listening to him. It was gratifying too that Gay was equally interested as me, for I'm sure many of you know how quickly one's partner can become bored with even the most interesting of transport subjects.

In Glasgow I had my first visit to the "new" Riverside Transport Museum where the famous "caged lions" are housed – the Highland Railway Jones Goods (Britain's first 4-6-0), Caledonian 123 (the 4-2-2) and 4-4-0 "Glen Douglas" of the North British Railway – all of which worked specials on BR in their resplendent pre-grouping liveries in the early 60's. It's sad to see them trapped inside this modern building with too much stuff around and in front of them but I suspect this is their permanent fate now. There's a Glasgow South Western 0-6-0T and a North British Loco Company built South African Railways 15F class 4-8-2 no. 3007 as well. The Clyde-built three-masted barque "Glenlee", moored outside, is very impressive and the vast collection of ship models also displayed in a very interesting manner. Didn't take Gay to this one - I thought I'd quit whilst I was ahead!

We came south on a lovely sunny Saturday and I had timed it just right to coincide with a southbound steam special on the Settle and Carlisle. Sod's Law came into play and the special, with 45699 *Galatea* roared through Armathwaite in a heavy downpour. I suppose beggars can't be choosers but it was annoying that a few minutes later, just down the road, there was a lovely double rainbow. We stayed in Morecambe that night and some b..... had tried to steal Eric Morecambe's statue that very day, so all we saw during our Sunday morning stroll was a single shoe embedded in the prom. That's life.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a very happy Christmas, good luck for the New Year and I look forward to seeing you in 2015.

Tim Speechley

# SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Our new season opened in September with a return visit by Ken Horan, who took us along Parallel Lines in a programme of black and white images from his days as a BR steam fireman mixed in with more modern shots of main line and heritage line steam operations.

In October our guest was Richard Furness who took us into the world of railway poster art, a subject new to many of us. The evening was fascinating as Richard not only showed how the style of posters had evolved but also his effort to track down, catalogue and restore as many examples as possible.

Bob Sweet returned in November with a collection of photographs he's taken in the twelve months since his last visit. Once again the subjects ranged from events on heritage railways to the main line including some scoop shots which Bob is able to capture through his contacts. Bob could well become a regular end-of-year attraction.

## AND VISIT

We've had only one visit in the past three months which was the visit to Reading's new Train Care Depot and flyover which is fully reported in this issue.

Apologies for the extremely short notice of this visit which made it difficult to notify all members as we would normally wish, particularly those of you who do not receive the e-newsletters. The problem was that we only got about a week's notice ourselves which was just in time for the September meeting and we then had to get the details submitted to FGW and Network Rail by the following Monday so the final arrangements could be made.

It was a unique visit - as far as we are aware no other groups from the "general public" have been allowed onto the site - which had to be done quickly as the flyover opens at Christmas. Our thanks go to Vice-President Mark Hopwood who as MD of FGW is probably the only person who could have set the wheels in motion and particularly to his PA Julie Rainbow who had to make all the detailed arrangements on our behalf.

## RETURN VISIT TO SLOUGH PSB

Network Rail have now confirmed that Slough Panel will close at Easter 2015. Mindful that there were several members who were unable to attend our visit last August we are hoping to arrange a final visit with a provisional date of Thursday 5th February at 19:30.

Any members interested in coming along please contact Mike Walker at [mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk) or on 01628 483899.

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

As mentioned by Tim in his Chairman's Notes on the previous page, a questionnaire is being distributed with this issue of the *'Donkey'*. It is important we know what you think so please take a few minutes to complete and return it. Thanks for your help.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions become due for renewal in January. The good news is that Peter Robins has decided to keep the rate unchanged for the coming year, that is £16.00. The reduced rate for those of you who live some distance away and therefore attend meetings only on rare occasions remains at £8.00 with a meeting attendance fee of £2.00. Visitors to the Society's meetings will be asked to pay a £3.00 admission fee although that will be reduced to £2 for our friends from the Maidenhead RCTS branch in a reciprocal arrangement.

Please use the form supplied with the AGM pack so we can ensure our records are kept fully up to date. We look forward to your continued support.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As in previous years, a pack containing all the reports and other documentation will be distributed to members in advance of February's AGM to enable us to keep the business part of the meeting to a minimum.

## NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

As usual voting will take place during the Annual General Meeting in February for the Norman Aston-Smith Trophy which is awarded annually to the author of what is considered to be the year's best contribution to the pages of the *Marlow Donkey*.

As Editor, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed material over the past year and remind you all that I'm always looking for content. I have a couple of articles in the "pending" file but the *'Donkey'* needs a lot of filling so please help!

## RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

The Maidenhead & Windsor branch of the RCTS have the following meetings planned for the coming months:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Mon 22 Dec.  | Great Western Electrification - Jacqueline Day - Network Rail.                  |
| Mon 26 Jan.  | Operating Heritage Transport in London - Andy Barr Heritage Operations Manager. |
| Mon 23 Feb.  | The Work of the BTP - Bob Burrowes  |
| Mon 23 March | Collectors Corner The Euston Years - Bob Ballard.                               |

All meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead starting at 19:30 and MDRS members are always welcome to attend.

## ORIENT EXPRESS TRAINS

After preparing Vincent Caldwell's article for this issue came news that Belmond Hotels are planning to add another luxury tour train to their portfolio. The *Belmond Grand Hibernian* is due to start touring Ireland, north and south in 2016.

There is also an article on the *Northern Belle* in the November *Railway Magazine* which is worth reading.

Steam has been somewhat scarce on the London end of the GWML in recent times so the appearance of 70013 Oliver Cromwell working a Cathedrals Express from Newbury to Ely on 16th October was a welcome sight particularly as it passed Ruscombe church in full sun.

Photo: Chris Waite

Work progresses on the removal of the platform 5 trainshed and canopies on platform 4 at Maidenhead on 5th October.

Photo: Mike Walker



## MAIDENHEAD DEMOLITION

After 143 years of sheltering passengers waiting for the branch trains the trainshed over platform 5 at Maidenhead along with much of the canopies on platform 4 were demolished over the weekend of 4th/5th October, the first real steps in the rebuilding of the station as part of the Crossrail project. The remainder of the canopies are to be taken down and new ones erected.

The trainshed has been saved and taken to the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway for eventual re-erection although it was so well built that removal meant more damage was done than had been expected.

As a result of Crossrail being extended to Reading, removing the need for their trains to stand for extended periods at Maidenhead, the proposed new bay platform for the branch trains is no longer required and will not be built.

Further along the line the canopies at Taplow and Burnham were also cut back at the same time, however the valences have been restored, those at Taplow to the original distinctive design which it shared with Marlow.

[www.mdrs.org.uk](http://www.mdrs.org.uk)

## CHRISTMAS PROJECTS

The Christmas and New Year period will, as usual, see a lot of work being carried out in connection with the Great Western Main Line upgrade and Crossrail project.

At Ladbroke Grove the former Eurostar North Pole depot will be connected to the GWML for the first time. The depot has been taken over by Hitachi and will become the London base for the GW based IEP fleet.

Close by, major changes are being made to the western approach to the Engine & Carriage line flyover to accommodate the future dedicated Crossrail tracks between the Paddington tunnel portal and new Old Oak Common station.

At Airport Junction, west of Hayes, the first of the new flyovers will be commissioned connecting the Up Airport line with the Up Relief. Construction of the second new flyover here will then commence.

At Reading the new viaduct will also be commissioned with the Main lines being diverted over it. Bay platform 3 will also be brought back into use along with part of what is called the Festival line. This will also use part of the east ramp before joining the Main Lines.

But all this is but nothing compared to what's coming at Easter - full details next time.

## MAIN LINE STEAM

There's not much local activity to look forward to but early plans are for David Buck's newly acquired 1306 *Mayflower* to make its main line debut running from Norwich to Windsor & Eton Riverside on Wednesday 11th February and from Paddington to Cardiff on the 1st March. Seven days later there is a Southend to Bristol working but the loco has not yet been allocated. All these are *Cathedrals Expresses* promoted by Steam Dreams.

We will keep you posted as things develop.

# AN EVENING IN READING

Mike Walker reports on a unique Society visit.

When we visited the old Reading Depot in July 2012 our host, London & Thames Valley Fleet Manager John Murphy, issued an invitation to come back and visit the new depot. For various reasons that took some time to arrange.

Then our Vice-President and FGW Managing Director, Mark Hopwood suggested it would be a good opportunity to combine that visit with a walk across the new Reading Viaduct. Only Mark could arrange this and it had to be at short notice, in reality only one week but despite this 16 members took part on Thursday 25th September.



Fully kitted out in head-to-toe HV, hard hats and safety boots, the party was led by John Fitzpatrick, Project Manager for Carillion who is the main contractor.

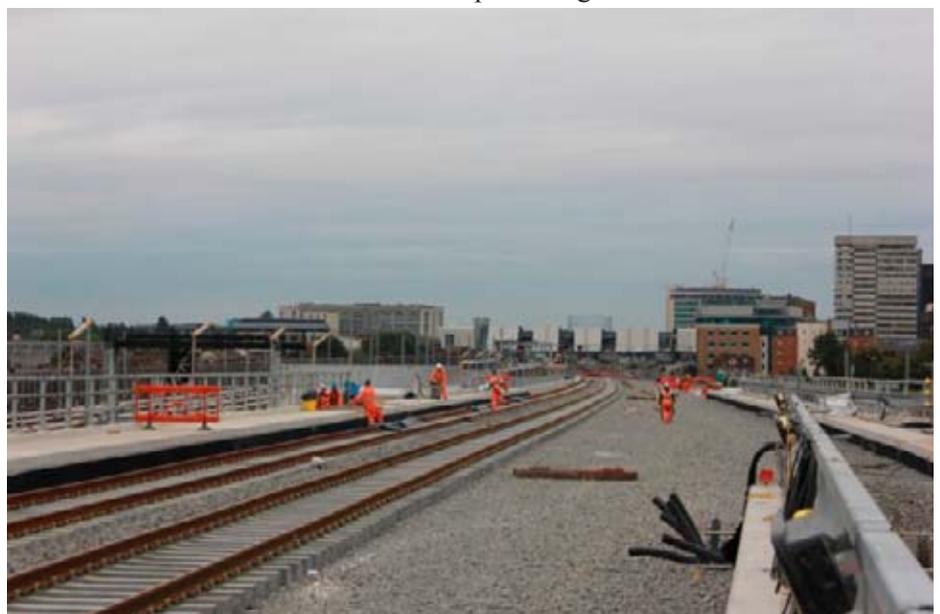
It is not until one gets onto the structure that its sheer scale becomes apparent. At approximately 1,850 yards in length it will carry the Main Lines west of Reading station above new connections from the Berks & Hants line and over the West Curve thereby eliminating the notorious bottleneck that was caused by the old flat junctions.

Our visit gave us the unique opportunity to record 66091 emerging from the West Curve "Box" with 6042, the 11:31 Halewood (Jaguar Cars) to Southampton Eastern Docks [Top] loaded mostly with export Range Rovers.

In addition to the two main lines, the station end of the viaduct will also carry the new Festival Line which will climb and cross the new Feeder Lines from Oxford Road Junction to the station before descending on a separate structure [Above] to pass under the viaduct to reach Reading West Junction, again eliminating conflicts.

The London-end ramp rises at 1 in 93 for around 27 chains [Right] then comes a section of 1 in 730 rising for 26 chains before the descent at 1 in 85 down to ground level at the west end.

It will be opened after the Christmas - New Year shutdown and when the Feeder and Festival Lines are brought into use at Easter 2015 the Reading project will be complete.





Still fully kitted out, we next made our way to the new Train Care Depot where John Murphy and his team were waiting to greet and give us a tour of the facility.

A new depot had to be provided as part of the Reading scheme as the Feeder lines will pass right through the old site but the new depot has a much greater capacity than its forebear, is better laid out for efficient working and is designed to handle both Diesel and electric traction - in fact most of the depot already has the catenary in position but not currently energised, although the depot working practices assume they are in fact live.

The main building is huge and consists of three through roads and a single ended road on the north side used for heavy maintenance work. Sprinter 150001 [Above] was in residence during our visit having had a new transmission fitted.

The other three roads are used for lighter work, the southernmost two for fuelling, tanking/ detanking and cleaning whilst Road 3 is used for units needing slightly greater levels of repair such as 166202 [Right] which appears dwarfed by the cavernous building.

There are two additional buildings which house the train wash and an underframe cleaning facility.



The depot is fully signalled and has its own state-of-the-art control room [Left] which works in conjunction with the Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot.

Our thanks to Mark, his team and to Network Rail and Carillion for allowing us this unique opportunity to see these two remarkable structures at such close quarters.

More photos on our website: [mdrs.org.uk/2014gallery.htm](http://mdrs.org.uk/2014gallery.htm)

photos: Mike Walker





# GREAT WESTERN HERITAGE WEEKEND

**First**   
Great Western

**18th - 19th October 2014**



*Peter Robins*



Over the weekend of 18th - 19th October the Great Western Society and First Great Western, assisted by Network Rail, West Coast Railways and the Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust staged a Great Western Heritage Weekend.

The centre piece of this was the operation of the GWR Steam Railmotor No.93 on the Brentford branch from Southall. This was a homecoming as it was allocated to the branch when new in 1908 for its first two years of service.

*Peter Robins*

*Mike Walker*

The sun shone brightly on Sunday when No.93 was caught passing Trumper's Crossing [**Top**] and approaching Warren Farm Crossing [**Right**]. Confusingly, the latter was the site of Trumper's Crossing Halt which was the only intermediate stop on the line.

At Southall the Railmotor worked out of the old branch platform adjacent to the main line. Access was to ticket-holders only but photographs could be had from the road bridge [**Above**].

Watering was carried out here between trips using a garden hose, an operation which took around 25 minutes to complete.

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The Marlow Donkey



Mike Walker

First Great Western's contribution to the weekend was to operate special trains over the Greenford Loop, via Park Royal, and on the Colnbrook branch both providing an opportunity to ride track not normally traversed by passenger trains.

The former were operated on the Saturday only using the stock from the *Night Riviera* sleeping car train which would normally be languishing at Old Oak Common and which includes three seated vehicles in addition to the sleeping cars.

Top-and-tailed Class 57s were used, namely "celebrity" 57604 *Pendennis Castle* in GW-style green, seen passing Acton [Below] and 57605 *Totnes Castle* at Paddington [Left].

Peter Robins



Mike Walker

Services operated on the Colnbrook branch hourly both days between West Drayton and a Stop board just south of the M4-M25 interchange. Prototype Sprinter 150002 was used both days and is seen passing Thorney Mill [Above] on Sunday's 12:00 service.

The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust ran free services both days from Slough to Hedgerley and Eton replicating as closely as possible the routes of the old GWR bus services.

Six buses were used to provide a half-hourly frequency on both routes and these included the superbly restored former GWR 1278, YF714 [Right Upper] a 1927 Guy FBB 32 seater which spent nearly 70 years sitting on a Cornish cliff top before being rescued for preservation. It is now the only survivor of the GWR fleet which once numbered more than 400 vehicles.

Also in use were two Thames Valley double-deckers one of which was 446, DBL154 [Right Lower] a 1946 Bristol K6A which spent most of its early working life at High Wycombe.



Mike Walker



Mike Walker

# ORIENT EXPRESS TRAINS

In the last issue Tim Speechley took us aboard the Belmond British Pullman. Here **VINCENT CALDWELL** looks at the other luxury trains in the company's portfolio and describes a trip he and his wife took during 2013 on an extravagant holiday to the Far East, travelling on Emirates Airlines' double-decked A380 Airbus aircraft to Bangkok, returning from Singapore having travelled overland on the Eastern & Oriental Express.

The Orient Express family of trains were owned by Sea Containers Ltd. as was the now defunct GNER. James B. Sherwood, founder of Sea Containers Inc. and his wife Shirley, started collecting vintage railway sleeper and parlour carriages in 1978 creating a family of luxury trains and hotels across the world. Following the collapse of Sea Containers in 2006, these assets were sold to Orient-Express Hotels Ltd which earlier this year renamed itself Belmond Ltd prefixing each train name with the Belmond title. The trains in the group are:

## VENICE-SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS

Probably the most well known train, the Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express was re-inaugurated in 1982 and runs on a variety of routes through mainland Europe, now including Stockholm and Copenhagen. For glamour, the overnight journey from Venice to London, is an experience hard to beat. Private cabins have daytime seating which converts to upper and lower berths at night positioned across the carriage width; cabins have the facility of hand washbasins

In continental Europe the stock is blue-and-gold liveried Wagons-Lits authentic vintage carriages with splendid 1920's décor.

## THE BRITISH PULLMAN

In chocolate, cream and gold livery, the British Pullman embarks on day trips and weekend breaks to many of Britain's historic cities, social and sporting events, sometimes hauled by a steam locomotive.

## THE NORTHERN BELLE

This is a sister train to the British Pullman and is a celebration of British heritage and craftsmanship capturing the luxury and elegance of the great Belle trains of the 1930's.

## THE ROYAL SCOTSMAN

Runs from Edinburgh and accommodates a maximum of 36 passengers travelling through the glorious scenery of the Scottish Highlands; journeys are of two- to seven-night duration in Edwardian splendour. Carriages are in maroon livery.



*Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express bar car No. 3674 built in France in 1931 as a dining car.*

*photo: Vincent Caldwell*



*6024 King Edward I leads the British Pullman past Shottesbrooke on 14 July 2010 bound for Bristol.*

*photo: Mike Walker*



*The Northern Belle leaving High Wycombe on 16 August 2014.*

*photo: Mike Walker*



The exterior of the Eastern & Oriental Express cars [Left] leave onlookers with no doubt to the train's identity whilst the large windows reveal the opulence within.

Haulage within Thailand is provided by Alstom AD24C 2,400hp diesel-electrics such as 4405 built in 1985 [Right].

two photos: Vincent Caldwell

## THE EASTERN & ORIENTAL EXPRESS

The Eastern & Oriental Express was launched in 1993 at a cost of \$25m. Arguably it is the most luxurious of the fleet and from March to December travels north / south and south / north through Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore on a four day / three night journey covering in excess of 2,000 km. (1,240 miles) at an average speed of 60 km/h (37 mph), running under an agreement between State Railways of Thailand (SRT) and Malaysian Railways, Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM).

Running track is metre gauge throughout Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore but on board, there is no narrow gauge compromise to space, either in width or height of carriage.

The north / south adventure commences at Hua Lam-phong station on the edge of Chinatown in Bangkok. The train's stainless steel carriages in sparkling green, cream and gold livery consist of no less than 21 carriages plus a generator car supplying AC and DC power to the whole train. The power cables linking the carriages measure some 50 mm. (2 inches) in diameter. The rake is 433m. (1,421 ft.) long, weighs 844 tons and occupies the entire length of the longest platform of Bangkok's main station; an Alstom AD24C 2400 hp diesel electric Co-Co locomotive (built 1985) is hooked up by buck-eye coupling to haul the train.

The train comprises two kitchen carriages, three restaurant cars (*Adison*, *Rosaline* and *Malaya*), a bar car, a saloon car with boutique and reading room, five service and eleven sleeping cars containing cabins and an observation car at the rear with its own bar and open air verandah. In the bar car drinks are available for as long as guests require and contains a piano where a resident pianist entertains guests throughout evenings. Local entertainment is performed in the bar car on selected evenings.

The train is fully air conditioned and carries 110 passengers with a complement of 50 crew including cabin stewards, Maitre d'Hotel, Guest Relations Manager, Train Manager, Chef de Cuisine etc.

Table d'hote meals are served in two sittings at lunchtime and dinner; breakfast and afternoon tea are served in the cabins which are of three different categories of elegant, private accommodation:

**Pullman** 5 sq.m. (53 sq.ft.) single and 5.8 sq.m. (62 sq.ft.) double cabins; daytime seating converts to upper and lower berths at night positioned across the carriage width, with en suite shower/toilet/handbasin

**State** 7.8 sq.m. (84 sq.ft.) cabin; daytime seating converts to two single beds positioned lengthwise with the carriage, with en suite shower/toilet/handbasin.

**Presidential** 11.6 sq.m. (125 sq.ft.) cabin, with the facilities of the State cabin but with room to entertain a couple of fellow guests, complimentary mini-bar, CD player etc.

The carriages were originally built in 1971 by Nippon Shayro & Hitachi of Japan for the New Zealand Railways, where they were operated as the Silver Star train until 1991 when the carriages were brought to the Eastern & Oriental workshops in Singapore and totally transformed, the interiors remodelled and rebuilt to designs by Frenchman, Gérard Gallet.

The panelled interiors are exquisitely decorated in elm, cherry, teak, ash and rosewoods featuring diamond-shaped marquetry hand-cut by local craftsmen.



The exquisite marquetry in one of the VSOE's dining cars. photo: Philip R Watkins



*In the State cabins daytime seating converts to two single beds positioned lengthwise with the carriage, with en suite shower/toilet/handbasin*

*three photos: Vincent Caldwell*

The train travels west to Kanchanaburi in an area of lush jungle; the line branches off the main line at Nong Pladuk Junction and heads towards the River Kwai, crossing the 300 m. (985 ft.) long wooden trestle Tham Kasae viaduct, travelling along part of the historic Thailand – Burma railway. Whilst the train re-stocks and waters, passengers are taken to the Thailand-Burma Railway Museum and adjacent War Cemetery.

With the assistance of a second locomotive connected to the rear, the train returns to Nong Pladuk Junction then continues 910 km. (565 miles) south to the Malaysian border, passing through Hua Hin, holiday haunt of Thailand’s royal family, for whom a highly decorated royal waiting room flanked by topiary in the form of elephants has been constructed on the platform. Signage on station platforms confirms that WiFi is available!

Some track renewal is evidenced by the sight of BS 100A concrete sleepers with 50 kg/m. rail secured with Pandrol clips.

Thailand meets Malaysia at the border town of Padang Besar, Perlis where the traction is changed to a KTM Class 24 2400 hp. diesel electric Co-Co locomotive in “retro” maroon and yellow livery. It is immediately apparent that the railway is in the process of wholesale and complete reconstruction in preparation for a new 160 km/h. (100 mph) rapid transit system over the 1000 km. (620 miles) through Malaysia to Singapore due for completion in 2015, and possibly, a high speed rail service from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s federal capital, to Singapore.

Tracks have been up-graded with 60 kg. flat bottomed rail profile with welded joints; masts are being installed to carry overhead electric supply cabling; the electrical and power supply contract was awarded to the Balfour Beatty Group in 2008, at a value of £160m., to provide 25 kV. AC 50 Hz. catenary. Signalling and communications are by Ansaldo STS, with a contract value of €135m. Plasser + Theurer track-laying equipment is seen in use.

KTM Class 91 six-car electric multiple units have been in service since 2010 on inter-city express services between Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh. New stations have been constructed, seemingly to a standard design, incorporating expansive car parking provision.



*The open-ended E&OE observation car.*

*photo: Vincent Caldwell*



*The generator car supplying AC and DC power to the whole train.*

*photo: Vincent Caldwell*

The ride of the train on the reconstructed tracks is now seamless and in comparison with the lurching on Thailand metals, eating meals is less hazardous! However, in consequence of the buck-eye couplings, whenever the driver accelerates or applies the brakes there is an uncomfortable and somewhat disconcerting shunt lurch throughout the train.

The train diverts from the main line to halt at Butterworth where passengers are taken by motor coach for an excursion to George Town, Penang, whilst the train is re-stocked and watered and re-arranged : the Observation Car is turned and connected to what was the front end of the rake, now the rear for the onward journey. From Butterworth, the train returns to the main line, turning south to continue to Kuala Lumpur and onwards, eventually to cross the 6 km (3.75 mile) long Johor Bahru causeway to its Singapore terminus at Tanjong Pagar station. The distance from Butterworth to Singapore is 785 km. (487 miles).

The Eastern & Oriental Express train is advertised as “the most memorable journey of your life”; it is no idle marketing boast.

#### Acknowledgements

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“Classic Railway Journeys of the World”, Max Wade-Matthews

Wikipedia and internet search engines



*In Malaya the E&OE express is handled by KTM Class 24 2,400hp Co-Co diesel-electrics built by Toshiba in 1987. 24109 Hang Kasturi is painted in a “retro” livery similar to that used by KTM in the 1970s.*

*photo: Vincent Caldwell*



*The E&OE traverses spectacular jungle scenery for much of its journey. In this view it is hauled by a pair of Thai GE ‘Shovelnose’ diesels.*

*photos: Eastern & Oriental*



# A DIFFERENCE OF DECADES

PETER ROBINS revisits Torside



Torside was a level crossing alongside the reservoir of the same name where the B6105 crossed the west slope of the fabled Woodhead route near Crowden and was a favourite photo location.

Peter's first visit was in 1974 when the trains were still running and 76015 and 76022 are seen passing with a westbound coal train. Passenger traffic ceased in 1970 and closure came in 1981.





A year later, apart from the rusty rail heads, all the infrastructure remained in place waiting for the next train which would never come.

Today the trackbed has become the Longdendale Trail, a part of

the Trans-Pennine Way and National Cycle Route 62 with nature slowly taking over. A mature tree has replaced the classic GC signal box and the B6105 is unimpeded. Only the distant hills confirm that trains once ran here. Truly, 'Gone Completely'.



# A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

## Part 5 The West of England and other interesting places.

### Col. Don Woodworth

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, Don continues his look 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.



Having made the trek to Thurso, I figured it was only appropriate to find my way to the far opposite corner of the kingdom and by 18th June I was in Penzance. I had spent the better part of this day riding the Cornish branch lines, ending up at St. Erth in time to catch the 17:20 departure (which departed 21 minutes late) behind 50002 *Superb*. This deprived me of the time I had planned to poke around Penzance for a little bit (alas, I didn't get to see the famous Pirates of Penzance!) and I was back behind the 18:08 departure (leaving one minute late) behind 45011 enroute to Truro with onward connection to Bristol.

I suppose it approaches heresy to admit to my fellow members of the Cambridge Railway Circle that I have a great fascination for the works of I. K. Brunel, but I do. On my railway journey to and from Cornwall, I was totally thrilled to see his great Saltash Bridge over the River Tamar when leaving/approaching Plymouth. I have the usual views of it taken from the train which I'm sure everyone has previously seen in various railway publications, so I'll spare readers from seeing them again here. I should have liked to have had occasion to prowl around the environs of the bridge on a sunny day to see what views I might be able to obtain from line-side but that never happened. Over time, I have managed to see bits and pieces of remaining parts of Mr. Brunel's work – some



*A view of 45011 with Penzance station in the background. I had hoped to extend the amount of time available on this trip to spend a while doing some photography farther along the line toward London along the famous seawall at Dawlish. I have seen wonderful videos shot here following a bad storm with huge waves breaking over the seawall and the trains running along it. I wasn't looking for this type of drama, but a well lit classic shot of train coming along the sea wall would have been lovely.*

large like the Sounding Arch Bridge at Maidenhead and some small like the section of his atmospheric railway preserved at Didcot. One of my favorite bits of Mr. Brunel's handwork is Bristol Temple Meads Station, dating to 1840.

Two other interesting places: Brighton and Blackpool. Had I more time during my postings in the UK, I think I would have (in retrospect) spent considerably more time photographing railway stations in addition to the trains themselves. I suspect that (to the consternation of the railways) in many cases preservation orders were the reason for the survival of so many lovely old station buildings – considerably more expensive to maintain than modern buildings in many cases but certainly more pleasant to look at than much of the faceless architecture that passes for "modern." Thank you Prince Charles!! Though I have no proof, the razing of old Euston Station may have had the same galvanizing effect upon the preservation movement in Britain as had the razing of the great Pennsylvania Railroad Station in New York City in the United States. New York City's great Grand Central Terminal was set to follow Penn Station under the wrecker's ball but the hue and cry that arose from the destruction of Penn Station set in motion a preservation movement that not only saved Grand Central Terminal but later led to its complete renovation and restoration.

*46028 at Paignton, Devon on 27th April 1974. I couldn't resist a photo here because of the name of the location. Whereas it is very uncommon to name one's home in the United States, the practice is very common in the UK. At it turns out, I had an honorary grandmother who lived in Southampton whose home just happened to be named "Paignton." How could I not take a photo?*



*A tale of two St. Ives branches: My wife sometimes claims I should have been a musician because I was always working a fiddle. I don't recall how I found myself in the UK in April of 1977, but I somehow found my way to RAF Mildenhall. The St. Ives, Cambs. branch is long gone, a victim to dubious "bustitution." I got to ride a portion of it as far as Fen Drayton on a RCTS special excursion on 7 April 1977. It ran as far as the Fen Drayton level crossing, the line being either taken up or not usable between that point and St. Ives. I had occasion to ride the "other" St. Ives branch on 18 June 1980. I had arrived at St. Erth from Truro aboard a HST set at 16:32, 9 minutes late. There, I transferred to the branch train, and departed four minutes late at 16:37 for St. Ives, which we reached on time at 16:50. I departed aboard the same unit at 16:55, three minutes late, and arrived back at St. Erth at 17:07. Here, I shot 50002 Superb as it arrived to take me westward to Penzance, leaving St. Erth at 17:41, 21 minutes behind schedule*

My investment in railway enthusiast publications paid big dividends later on when I learned that GWR 6000 *King George V* was going to be operated from Paddington Station on 1st March 1979. I made what was by then becoming a familiar pilgrimage into the city and found my way to Paddington, only to be dismayed by the huge number of people on the platforms. Using my inherent Yankee ingenuity, I quickly found a Plan B and made my way to a road overpass at the west end of the station, only to discover that the girders forming the size of the bridge were too high to see over. Oops! I quickly spotted a gricer who had thoughtfully brought a ladder along with him to get a view over the edge of the bridge. Plan C was quickly put into place when I decided that if I spoke nicely to the nice man on the ladder, I might get a view after all. I quickly went into my best Uriah Heep act and was soon standing one level below my new found friend with an excellent view of the platform from which *King George V* would soon depart.

The photograph accompanying this paragraph is proof that my trip to London was not in vain. After the departure of 6000, I went onto the platforms at Paddington and discovered that GWR 5900 *Hindertons Hall* was on display. After photographing this immaculately turned out engine, the rest of the day was anticlimactic, riding electric bug boxes to cover some new parts of the Southern Region 3rd rail electrified network before returning to Liverpool Street for the 20:38 departure for Cambridge behind 31229. A quick change at Cambridge to some diesel bug boxes on the 22:11 Ex-Cambridge soon had me to Ely and on my way home after a wonderful day out to see steam return to London.

### **Last Run of Steam on London Transport.**

I didn't really think about as I traveled up to London on 6th June 1971 to photograph what was advertised as the last run of steam on London Transport, but that date was

*First of the GWR King class, King George V makes a spectacular departure from Paddington on the morning on 1 March 1979 after an 11 year absence of steam from this great main line station. Note the commemorative bell that the locomotive bears on its pilot, a souvenir of a trip to America in June 1927. It is a wonder that the station platforms did not sink under the weight of people wishing to see this train!*

also the 27th anniversary of D-Day. A set of "bug boxes" took me from Shippea Hill to Cambridge and another set took me on to Kings Cross. The tube took me to Farringdon Station, where I managed to tuck myself away at what turned out to be a pretty advantageous spot to get a very nice photo of LT L94 as it passed by. Unbeknownst to me at the time, my future (and somewhat younger) friend Mike Walker of Little Marlow was tucked away close by with his Brownie camera and also trying for a shot.

(A lamentable failure! - Ed.)



*London Transport pannier tank L94 passing through Farringdon Station on 6th June 1971 with the Last Steam Train on the Underground – until 24th January 2013 when Metropolitan Railway 0-4-4T No.1 repeated the feat with a steam train celebrating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the London Underground. The number 544 on L94's smoke box is apparently a trip number used to identify it and its train during this special run, which ended at LT's Neasden Depot. LT L94 began life as a GWR 5700 series pannier tank, later coming to London Transport as Western Region 7752. Happily, L94 lives on in preservation.*



Later the same day, I made my way out to Neasden Depot on an LT special train and managed a few shots of LT L90 which was in steam there. The heavy overcast that day made picture taking a bit difficult as did what seemed to be the entire population of the Home Counties crammed into the depot and all trying to simultaneously take photos of L90. My kingdom for a people filter! The trip home was a bit unusual in that I traveled from Kings Cross to Peterborough and then took a set of “bug boxes” onward to Ely and Shippea Hill, a somewhat roundabout way home.

### **Ferry Cross the Mersey (or Third Rail Electric Beneath It).**

On my great summer railway bash of the UK in June 1980, Liverpool and the interesting 3rd rail electric system that served Merseyside was on my list of things to do. By then, I was very familiar with Southern Region electrification, but though it would be interesting to see what the little-noted system serving the Merseyside area looked like. I spent the best part of a day on 23 June 1980 photographing

EMUs at Birkenhead and New Brighton, Cheshire station and ended up in conversation with the driver of the unit I planned to ride.

He said that I didn't sound like I was from the area and I agreed that no, I wasn't, as I lived about 3,000 miles to the west. On that happy note, he invited me onto the foot plate and I enjoyed the great Circular Rail Trip Beneath the Mersey tour from aboard his Wirral and Mersey Class 503 EMU. We chatted about other things besides railways and I learned first-hand about scouse accents. During my time in Britain, it never ceased to amaze me at how rapidly accents could change within such a relatively small geographic area – one of the great delights of being in the UK.

*Class 503s M28373M, M29838M and M29131M arriving at Rock Ferry, Ches. at 15:00 on the afternoon of 25th June 1980. Through the courtesy of the driver noted in the preface above, I was privileged to ride the cab of M28385 later in the day from New Brighton to Hamilton Square.*





*BR possessed just three Class 13 locomotive sets, constructed from modified pairs of the familiar Class 08 shunters. As it turns out, David & I must have visited Tinsley near the peak of its operational life. Opened in 1965 to consolidate freight, especially coal traffic, from many smaller yards in the area, Tinsley enjoyed only a very brief life. With the rundown of coal mining in the UK, Tinsley was closed in stages as from 1985, and was almost entirely gone by 2011 (including the Tinsley Traction Maintenance Depot) except for a small part of the yard devoted to international freight.*

*A down-on shot of 13002 provides an excellent view of how these interesting modifications of Class 08 shunters were put together. 13003 was nearby so had 13001 deigned to make an appearance on the afternoon of 14th August 1971, I would have had complete photo coverage of BR's most unusual class of shunters!*

### **Not All Gricing Trips Involved Rail.**

Once in a while, I would drive to do some gricing because an automobile was the easiest way to reach the desired spot, especially on a line where only goods trains operated. In retrospect, I should never have shipped my American car (often called a “Yank Tank” due to its rather hulking size compared to most British models) but I was stuck with the beastie. Coincidentally, the license plate that the British authorities gave me when I registered my estate car was HGV628V. This proved amusing as I often thought of my car as a heavy goods vehicle when I tried to maneuver it in spaces better suited to domestic British autos and also because 628 was just one digit removed from the unit designation of my squadron at RAF Mildenhall.

Having a car meant to be driven on the right hand side of the road proved to have some interesting moments in left side oriented Britain. My friend David Coleman did not drive, but was accustomed to being a passenger in the standard British automobile. I called by Fulbourn on the morning of 14 Aug 1979 to pick David up for a trip to the large Tinsley marshalling yards near Sheffield, Yorks. to see the rare BR Class 13 shunters at work. I was quite interested in seeing the Class 13s as they were the British equivalent of what we'd call a “cow and calf” set in the

States. These engines weren't overly common in the United States either, and Tinsley was the only place to see such beasts in the UK, so David had a willing driver.

He got into what would normally be the passenger side of a British automobile and was immediately startled to find himself facing a steering wheel. Oops! After getting this little contretemps sorted out, we proceeded on our way. As one might expect, overtaking whilst driving an American-built automobile in Britain did present some challenges. With the driver situated on the left side of the car instead of on the right, as in a standard British automobile, overtaking was a bit of a challenge when one has to edge out a bit farther than normal to determine if it is safe to overtake. With David as a passenger, this challenge suddenly became much easier – if his face turned a ghastly white, I knew immediately that I should pull back in and await a safer passing opportunity.

We reached Tinsley safely and lived to tell the tale. With a bit of prowling around, we found a good overlook point which enabled us to observe the unique Tinsley Class 13s at work (both now long gone). We had a rather murky day to work with but I managed to get a few satisfactory shots for our trouble

*To be continued...*

*Brighton's principal railway station was built by the London & Brighton Railway in 1840. Today, it is Britain's 8th busiest railway station outside of London. I traveled to Brighton on 21st July 1974 on a BR special train from Cambridge. We departed at 07:58 behind 37056, arriving at London Kensington, where the Class 37 was changed out for 33040 which took us onward to Brighton with a 12:32 arrival. Roughly six hours in Brighton allowed me time to ride the lines to Lewes and Seaford, return, before making an 18:20 departure, again behind 33040 to London Kensington with a change of engines back to 37056 (which had spent the day waiting for us there) and arrived back in Cambridge at 21:30.*



# MAIDENHEAD REMEMBERED



In view of the recent demolition of a large part of Maidenhead station it is opportune to look back at how it looked around the start of the 20th Century in these two official

views taken before the replacement of the buildings at the London end of platforms 4 and 5 and on the island platforms 2 and 3.

