



# THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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Reading: Job Done  
Without Fire  
A Passion for Railways  
A Connecticut Yankee

# The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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

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### FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

*Top: HST 253 056 forms the Flying Scotsman from Kings Cross and an unidentified HST framed by Gas Works Tunnel. 15 February 1982.  
Photo: Col. Don Woodworth. (Article page 15).*

*Bottom: Class 47s 47577 and 47579 approach the platform at March, Cambs. on 28th September 1981.  
Photo: Col. Don Woodworth. (Article page 17).*

# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.45 for 8.00pm.  
(Except June starts 7.30pm)

- Thursday 19 March **SOUTH AFRICA 1979** Tim Speechley  
Unfortunately, Ron White can't make it to tonight's meeting as planned but Tim is stepping in with a replacement programme on South Africa recalling a month-long tour he and Tim Edmonds made in 1979 which was designed for them by Ron.
- Thursday 16 April **MORE FROM THE DEREK CROSS COLLECTION** David Cross  
David last visited us in October 2010, and he will be presenting a further selection of pictures of 1960's trains taken by his father, the noted steam cameraman Derek Cross. This will be an all colour presentation; featuring the Southern, Western, Midland and Eastern Regions; taken at various locations.
- Thursday 21 May **WOLVERTON WORKS** Phil Marsh  
Philip, who is Chief Correspondent for "The Railway Magazine" and author of "The Full Works", gives a presentation of the past, present and possible future of Wolverton Works.
- Thursday 18 June **A NARROW VIEW OF GERMAN STEAM** Steve Ollive  
For our annual joint meeting with the Maidenhead & Windsor branch of the RCTS we welcome their chairman, Steve Ollive who will be presenting a programme on the narrow gauge steam lines of Germany.  
NOTE As usual for these joint meetings it will start at 19:30 instead of our normal 20:00

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

These are my first Chairman's Notes of 2015 and I'm pleased to see that many of you have renewed your membership. You will have noticed we are no longer issuing membership cards but instead you will get a receipt for the payment you have made. This is a conscious decision because we had more or less run out of cards and in any case we never bothered to look at them anyway. I hope nobody objects too much.

My new year did not start in a particularly good way as I had to attend the funeral of my friend Ken Bayley from Hertford with whom I had become acquainted through the Stevenage Locomotive Society and who had been one of the group of us who had gone to Shildon last February to see the six A4's, as featured in my article in the *Donkey*. Ken died in a way very reminiscent of that of our former member Len Aldridge some years ago. He had gone out to photograph a steam special, hauled by two Black 5's, near Roydon on 6 December and some hours later his body was found by a walker not far from the lineside. He had obviously had a massive heart attack. Being a keen photographer and participant in many charters, as well as having worked for years as a steward on SLOA and other specials, the funeral was attended by a huge crowd of friends, many of them well known in the railway enthusiast world. Some of you may have seen an obituary by David Wilcock in *Steam Railway*. Oh, and by the way, he did get the shot – it featured on the back of the service sheet.

Turning to happier thoughts, I've been very pleased to see David Buck's recent acquisition, B1 61306 *Mayflower*, back in operation on the main line again. As I write this it has only hauled three specials but is planned to have a really busy time throughout March and April. I have a close affinity with this locomotive as it was the first of the class I ever saw, at of all places, Oxford. In actual fact I saw very few B1's but 61306 became the object of the B1 Preservation Society, based in my parental home, Chingford and it was through the founders of that society that I came to know many of my oldest railway friends who were very influential in my development of the hobby. So without 61306 I may have lost my enthusiasm. Seeing the first Norwich to  
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Windsor train, or more precisely, the empty stock, I have to say that David Buck's ear to ear smile was very reminiscent of Alan Pegler on *Flying Scotsman* in those early years. I do hope *Mayflower* does not prove to be a similar financial millstone.

The winter doesn't offer a lot of incentive to go out and take pictures, well certainly not for me, but it does allow one to catch up with some reading. I was rather amused when looking at a copy of the American Classic Trains in which there was an article about the Great Western Railway of Colorado back in steam days (and yes, unusually it is Railway rather than the more common Railroad). I have known about this fairly minor and then mainly sugar beet hauling line for many years but what I hadn't realised until now was that amongst the places to which it ran, from its base in Loveland, were Windsor and Eaton (with an a), where sugar factories were located. One has to wonder if its creator had originated from this area of England, or whether the names are just pure coincidence. Mike Walker tells me the railway is thriving today and moving a lot of freight related to fracking.

Very coincidentally, Eaton with an "a" came up in Mark Hopwood's presentation after the AGM but in this case it was a misprint. We were very privileged to have Mark's presence in person and it is solely due to his long-standing affiliation to the Society. I believe other groups requesting talks from him, and there are many, have to make do with lesser mortals, so we must count ourselves very lucky.

I must thank Brian Hopkinson for volunteering to join the committee and I'm sure he will become a valued member of the team. His arrival means that we are up to strength for the first time in quite a while but many of us have been "in post" for an awfully long time, so more new volunteers will be required in due course.

After what seems to have been a long winter, let's look forward with hope for a decent spring to allow us all to get out and look at some trains.

Tim Speechley

# SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

## NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to be able to welcome two more new members who have joined the Society in the past couple of months. Alan Hawes comes from High Wycombe and Alberto Casagrande from Bourne End we hope you both enjoy our activities.

Sadly, we have to record the loss of one member, Roger Woodham who passed away in a tragic incident near his home in Reading in early December.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

We were pleased to welcome back Geoff Plumb in January for another of his excellent "That was the year" programmes, this time focusing on 1963. As usual the quality of the photography and presentation was superb. Let's hope we can get him to do 1962, although that might be partly black and white.

Following the AGM in February our Vice-President and Managing Director of First Great Western brought us up to speed with the massive upgrade of the Western Route and gave us a glimpse into the future as the company embarks on its next franchise period. We appreciate that the modern railway holds little interest for some but Mark's presentation confirmed that we live in exciting times for the industry.

## AND VISIT

We've had our final visit to Slough Panel on 5th February hopefully all who wanted to go were accommodated. Sadly, after 50+ years of faithful service it closes at Easter with control passing to the TVSC at Didcot. Our thanks to Network Rail's Local Operations Manager Matthew Law and his signallers for giving their time to allow the visit.

## BRIAN HOPKINSON JOINS COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce that Brian Hopkinson, who has been a member for many years now, volunteered his services to the committee at the AGM. No doubt he will prove a valuable asset to the team and will get given a "job" in due course - these notes are being prepared before the first post-AGM committee meeting.

## NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

As usual voting for this took place at the AGM. This year's winner was Mike Page for his story "Stood up so I went to Basingstoke" followed by Tim Speechley's account of his ride on the British Pullman with Don Woodworth in third place with his continuing memoirs of his time in the UK.

For those who don't know, whilst Mike is a member, he lives in Cambridge and is currently full-time carer to his wife and therefore doesn't get to see us too often but keeps in touch with occasional well-written articles.

## WHAT STARTED YOU?

This issue features an article by Phil Searle in which he relates how he first became interested in railways and

some of the highlights of his hobby. It is a story many of us can relate to and each of us has our own version. What got you interested? Was it through friends, possibly at school, or a relative in the industry. Some of us have found our way, at various times in our lives, into the industry whilst others have observed from the side-lines.

It would be interesting to hear your particular story in future editions. I already have a contribution from David Kingswood in a similar vein, which will appear next time, and have been promised Tony Caton's memoirs.

If you think you provide a similar story please get in touch - if you all did it we'd have enough for the next four or five years!

In addition to the above, can I repeat again my usual appeal for contributions for future issues. Apart from David's contribution above and with Don's opus magnum drawing towards its conclusion, my "pending" folder is now empty. Please do make an effort and contribute something - it is the Society's magazine and it relies on the contributions of its members.

## DONKEY DISTRIBUTION

Only a small number of members still get the 'Donkey' in printed form and since Tim retired we've had some difficulties in getting the printing done. We are therefore extremely grateful to our Vice-President for agreeing that First Great Western will now take care of the printing as part of their communities programme.

## STEAM FOR SUMMER

With the rebuild at Reading completed the number of steam workings out of Paddington this year will be greater than recent years. The following are currently being advertised but, as always, are subject to change.

Sun 19 April	Paddington - Kingswear and return. 61306 Steam Dreams.
Thur 28 May	Victoria - Minehead and return via Reading 60007 Steam Dreams.
Tue 2 June	Paddington - Chester and return. 70013 Steam Dreams.
Thur 4 June	Victoria - Bristol and return via Reading 60007 Steam Dreams.

## RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

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

Mon 23 March	Collectors Corner The Euston Years - Bob Ballard.
Mon 27 April	A Fourth Colour Rail Journey Paul Chancellor.
Mon 18 May	Branch AGM followed by members' presentations.

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.

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## CHANGES FOR BOURNE END?

In his interesting presentation to the February meeting, Mark Hopwood revealed plans to remodel the junction at Bourne End to permit two trains to pass at Bourne End whilst running through between Maidenhead and Marlow.

This will permit a half-hourly service to run all day on the branch rather than the present hourly off-peak service. The half-hourly peak service requires one train to shuttle between Maidenhead and Bourne End and another from there to Marlow, requiring Marlow passengers to change at least once, sometime twice when commuting to and from London. With Crossrail meaning and end through trains from the branch this, combined with Mark's plans for fast FGW services serving Maidenhead will actually improve the service for branch customers.

Funding for the plan has in part been secured from the Government's Growth Fund through the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and it is hoped that additional funding, including from the DfT, will allow the scheme to move forward. As shown above, it will return the junction to near its pre-1956 layout and will see the existing token working to Maidenhead and train staff to Marlow replaced by full signalling controlled from the Thames Valley Signalling Centre.

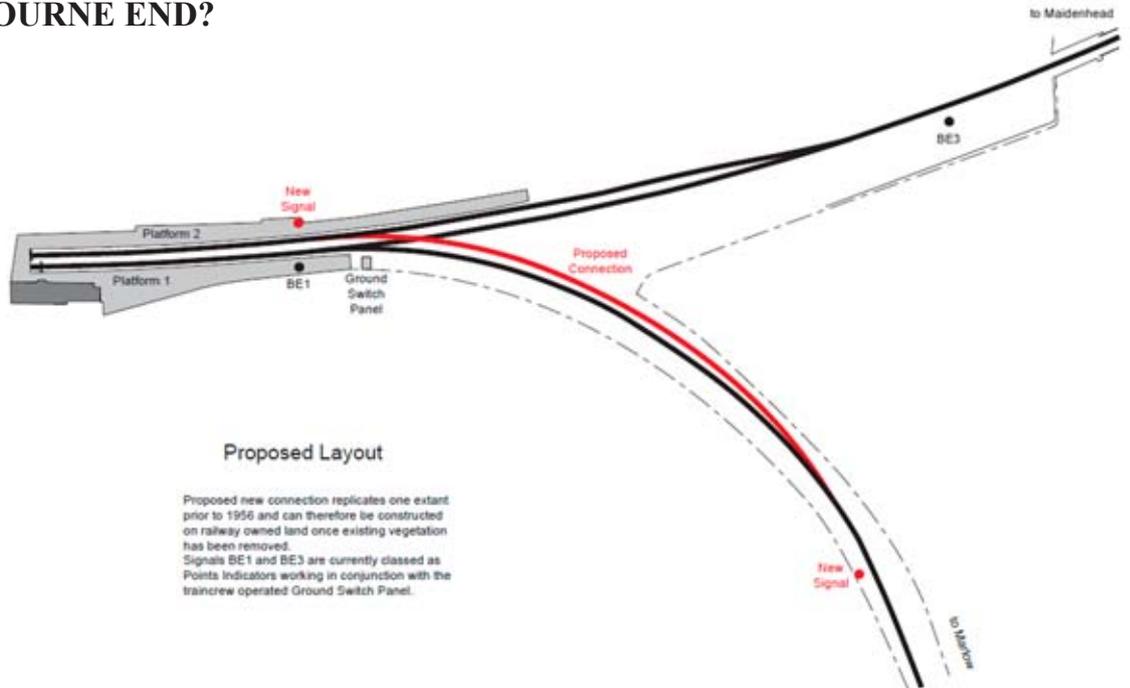
## MAYFLOWER ON THE MAIN LINE

David Buck, well known to MDRS members for his garden railway at Fifield, has recently become the owner of LNER B1 4-6-0 61306 *Mayflower* and has lost no time in returning it to the main line for the first time since the 1980s.

Its first trip was on 11th February when it hauled a Steam Dreams *Cathedrals Express* from Norwich to Windsor & Eton Riverside where it is seen arriving. This was followed by trips from Victoria to Havant and Brighton three days later whilst on 1st March it was booked to run from Paddington to Cardiff becoming the first steam over the Reading Viaduct!

*Photo: Mike Walker*

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## ELECTRIFICATION PROGRESS

Despite a few problems installing the bases for the masts, they are now beoming a familiar sight particularly between Reading and Didcot whilst increasing numbers of the bases are appearing east of Reading.

As part of the electrification work and associated resignalling, many of the signal gantries have been replaced with new higher structures those near the bridges at Breadcroft Lane, Shottesbrooke and Milley Bridge effectively blocking the view for photography. On the plus side, trees are being felled reopening views not seen for decades particularly through Sonning Cutting and on the branch out of Maidenhead.

## BICESTER CHORD NEARLY READY

The new chord connecting the lines at Bicester is nearly complete and ready for use in May although Chiltern services to Oxford North won't start until September. There will be a feature in the next issue.



# READING: JOB DONE

MIKE WALKER

**After six years of construction, engineers will commission the final major works of the Reading project over the Easter holiday. At a cost of around £850 million the station has been doubled in size and the junctions to the east and west grade-separated to banish once and for all the notorious Reading bottleneck.**

The Great Western Railway opened to Reading from Twyford on 30th March 1840 continuing to Steventon on 1st June of the same year. Right from the start it has been a somewhat difficult station to operate being one of Brunel's somewhat eccentric "one-sided" stations - in effect two separate stations on the same, south, side of the line. That for Up trains being at the London end with the Down station at the Bristol end. This meant that trains had to cross in front of each other when arriving and departing in much the same way as happened at Limerick Junction until recently but in those early days the level of traffic was so light that it did not present a problem.

With the opening of the first part of the Berks & Hants Line to Hungerford on 21st December 1847 and the branch to Basingstoke on 1st November the following year an additional platform was provided for those services north of the Up platform to which it was connected by a footbridge.

The West Curve opened on 22nd December 1856 and was mixed gauge from the start, a third rail having been provided from Oxford and on the Basingstoke line from the same date which allowed through running of standard gauge trains between the South and Midlands although passenger trains on this route ignored Reading completely. When mixed gauge was extended towards London in October 1861 it was deemed too difficult to convert the station layout at Reading so another platform for the exclusive use of standard gauge trains was provided on the north side of the station. However, north-south services continued to miss the town until Reading West station opened in July 1906.

The South Eastern Railway had arrived in Reading from Redhill on 4th July 1847 and established its own station to the south east of the GWR one and from 9th July 1856 it was joined by the London & South Western using running powers from Wokingham. The latter company had ideas of extending beyond Reading to Oxford so to thwart this unwelcome ambition the GWR constructed a line connect-



*The remodelled Westbury Line Junction at Reading as viewed from the station's "transfer deck". On 9th January 2015 FGW 43024 trails 1C10, the 10:30 Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads climbing onto the new Reading Viaduct as it leaves the station with 43040 leading. To the right, work proceeds on the laying of the Feeder Lines due to be opened at Easter.*

*Photo: Mike Walker*

ing the SER/LSWR lines with Reading West Junction by means of a subway under the GWR main lines east of the station. This line opened on 1st December 1858 and was laid as standard gauge only. It was used only irregularly for passenger services (involving reversal in the SER station) and was latterly used for goods traffic until the track through the subway was lifted around 1962. A more convenient connection between the two systems comprising a steep ramp from the same junction point on the SER up to the east end of the GWR station opened in 1899 which was itself largely superseded by a new connection - the Reading Spur lines - opened in March 1941.

The rather random nature of the GWR station remained until the final abolition of the broad gauge in 1892. The Up and Down platforms had been linked to form a single platform about 1868 but the separate track layouts remained. At the same time a new station building in stone topped off by a clock tower was provided replacing the original timber Up and Down station offices.

With the broad gauge finally gone and the main lines quadrupled in 1893, the GWR started on a complete reconstruction of the station with only the 1868 building and associated platform surviving from the original. The "new" Reading station boasted four through platforms plus three bays on the Down side at the west end for services to Basingstoke and the B&H together with additional bays at each end of the main island platform and one at the London end of the Up Relief platform for local services towards London or Oxford. A through line was provided

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*Reading station as it was. An unidentified Class 50 arrives at the Up Main platform, no. 5, with a service probably from the West of England whilst a Class 117 sits in bay platform 6 ready to work a stopping service to Paddington. The date isn't recorded but it must be around 1980 or later as both the Southern platforms, 4A and 4B are in use.*

*Photo: Ron North*



between the Up and Down Main lines for non-stop trains (of which there were many until comparatively recent times) but only a siding between the Relief lines.

Each of the new platforms carried new buildings in typical GWR style of the period, constructed in red brick with blue brick corners and decorations whilst large canopies were provided. The platforms were connected by a subway. The layout was controlled by two large signal boxes, Reading Main Line East (115 levers) and Main Line West (222 levers) plus five other smaller 'boxes along with two more on the SER.

The station and layout had now taken on the appearance that became familiar up to around 2010. The only major changes in recent times were the opening of the Panel Signal Box and conversion to colour-light signalling in 1965 together with the closure of the Southern station (as it had become) on 6th September 1975. To facilitate this, an extra bay was constructed on the London end of the Down Main platform accessed by the 1899 incline. This soon proved inadequate (one platform replacing four) so with the introduction of hourly services to Gatwick Airport in May 1980 a second bay platform (4B) was provided. In 1989 a new ticket hall and retail arcade was opened to replace the now hopelessly inadequate 1868 building which became a pub. As part of these improvements, a new footbridge was constructed although this too soon proved inadequate as it had to be split in two to keep a right of way to the car park with the result that

the ticketed side often became dangerously overcrowded particularly in the peak hours.

The Achilles Heel of Reading lay in the complex flat junctions to the west of the station at each corner of the triangle and the fact that there was only one through platform for each running line. As the industry contracted through the fifties, sixties and seventies this didn't present too great a problem but following the introduction of the HSTs from 1976 and the increase in traffic which started modestly around 1980 before exploding in this century it resulted in trains regularly having to queue outside the station for a platform. The through platforms were signalled for bi-directional operation but this facility resulted in trains having to cross over other lines at one or both ends of the station causing further delays.

The flat junctions also caused considerable delays. A train to Bristol or South Wales for example would have to wait for one arriving off the B&H which in turn delayed following services. To add to the operator's headaches, the explosion in container traffic between Southampton and the Midlands and North created further serious delays as these heavy, slow trains made their way across the diamonds at Reading West Junction.

British Rail had made several proposals to rebuild the station including one grandiose scheme for a double-deck station but none came to fruition. Instead it was left to the privatised era to come up with plans which were first revealed around 2007.

These proposed roughly doubling the size of the station increasing the number of

*Reading station as it is now. Taken from approximately the same viewpoint barely anything is recognisable apart from the 1868 station building, just visible. This survived only by virtue of being a listed building and today the ground floor is the Three Guineas pub accessed from the street whilst the upper floor provides office space for the station staff.*

*Photo: Mike Walker*



through platforms from four to nine all of which would be bi-directional and long enough to accommodate two trains of up to 5 cars each, however the bays would be lost apart from the three at the west end for Newbury and Basingstoke services. The initial plans showed the Southern platforms would remain largely unchanged but before too long it was decided to provide a third and all would be long enough to accommodate 12-car trains rather than the previous 8-car sets.

Equally radical was the proposal to replace the flat junctions with grade separated ones. Initially it was proposed to take the West Curve over the Main Lines on a flyover whilst a second flyover would carry a pair of new lines from Oxford Road Junction across the Main Lines to reach the new platforms on the north side. As these would cut across the site of the Lower Triangle DMU depot, a replacement depot would be built on the site of the once extensive yards on the Up side west of the station.

Inevitably when detailed planning began, changes took place. Concern was soon expressed about the ability of heavy freight trains to climb onto the proposed flyovers because of the steep gradients. A plan to lower these lines to pass under the Main Lines was also quickly abandoned when it was realised this would take them below the water table and still present gradient problems. The final solution was to keep the West Curve and new lines - designated the Feeder Lines - at ground level and carry the Main Lines over them on a concrete flyover nearly a mile long. This would have fairly steep gradients but would in the main be used only by passenger trains.

All the plans also proposed a new connection at the east end of the station between the new north side platforms and the Southern lines which reused the long-disused 1858 subway to eliminate the need to cross lines on the level.

Not only would the station be expanded but it would be completely rebuilt with the inadequate 1989 footbridge replaced by a massive over-line structure dubbed the Transfer Deck which is around 100 feet wide and gives access to a new north side entrance, something the old station lacked. Only the listed 1868 building and the 1989 ticket hall/arcade would survive.

Work on site began in 2009 although initially there was little visual impact as these early stages mostly involved



*The only parts of the "old" Reading station to survive are the 1868 building (left), now The Three Guineas pub, and the Brunel Arcade and ticket hall which had just opened when this picture was taken on 22nd April 1989. Even the road in the foreground no longer exists. Who remembers Austin Allegros and Ford Granadas?*

*Photo: Mike Walker*

preparatory work such as rerouting utilities. The first major phase came over Christmas and New Year 2010-11 when in a major blockade the Caversham Road Bridge was replaced as it was too narrow to accommodate the additional lines whilst control of the signalling was transferred to the new Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot which allowed Reading PSB to be demolished as it stood right where the new platforms were to be situated. East of the station, the Vastern Road bridge merely needed widening on both sides having been replaced in 1975.

Through 2011 and 2012 work really progressed rapidly. First engineers had to bring in huge quantities of material to build up the land for the new platforms and tracks (the station is actually on an embankment) then construction began. At the same time the buildings and canopies on the former island and Up Relief platforms were torn down leaving passengers with very meagre facilities. Most seemed resigned to the works which were actually carried out with remarkably little impact on day to day services. Anyone who's had the builders in knew what to expect! Construction was remarkably swift with the result that the five new platforms and the Transfer Deck were opened following another blockade over the Easter holiday in 2013 during which the necessary track alterations were done which included the new Low Level Line through the 1858 subway. Once open attention turned to rebuilding

*A view across the station from the multi-storey car park on 10th July 2012, around half way through the reconstruction of the station. Work is proceeding on the new platforms on the north side of the site in an area which required considerable filling after the demolition of the old Panel Signal Box - Reading station being built on an embankment. On the right of the picture the framework for the new north entrance has been erected and in the background the transfer deck is taking shape. Assembled on the north side of the site, it was pushed into position in a series of overnight possessions.*

*Photo: Mike Walker*



The station has its own state-of-the-art control room which handles communications with all staff, monitors every part of the station by CCTV and monitors train operations in the area with displays fed directly from the TVSC at Didcot.

Photo: Mike Walker



the remaining old platforms to bring them up to the new standard. Initially it was said the Transfer Deck would remain unobstructed for ease of movement for passengers but after Network Rail assumed direct management from FGW in 2014 a host of retail outlets have sprung up cluttering the deck!

The attention of the engineers now turned to the flyovers and new lines at the west end of the station. In preparation the new Reading Train Care Depot opened in mid-2013 replacing the former Lower and Upper Triangle depots - the former being demolished and the latter, in reduced form, handed over for the maintenance of track machinery.

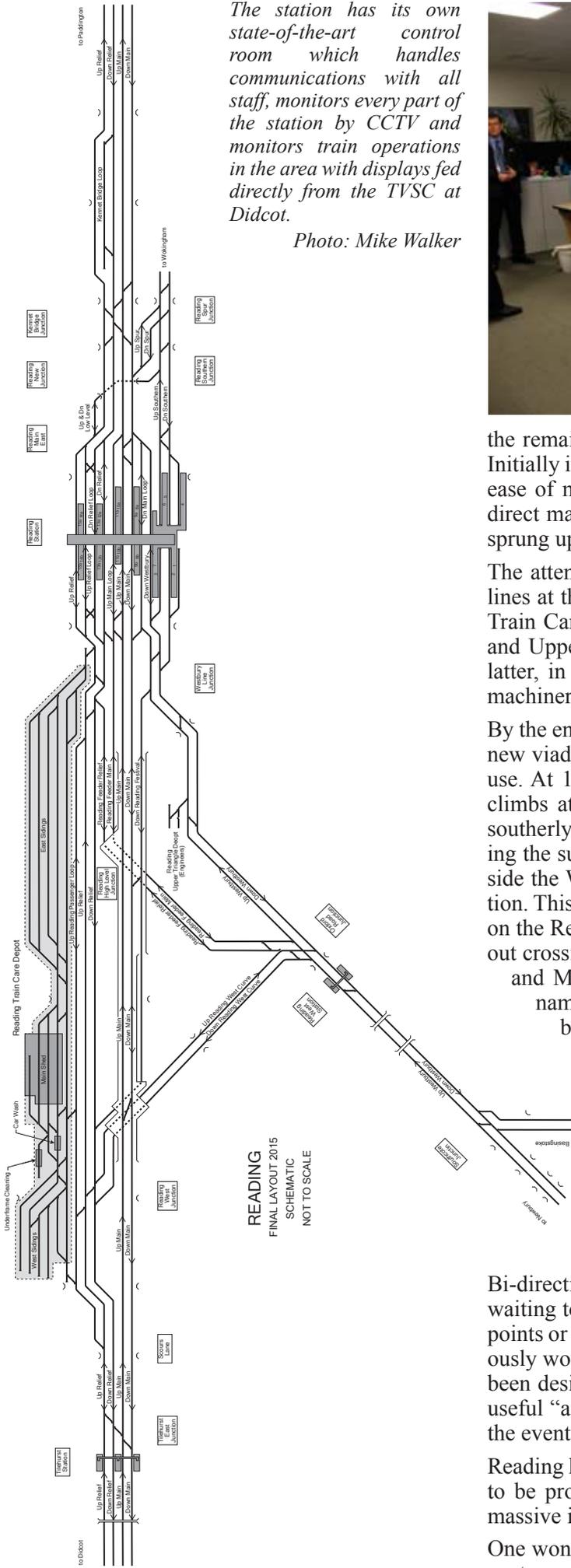
By the end of 2013 there was considerable progress to be seen on the new viaduct and by Christmas 2014 it was ready to be brought into use. At 1,850 yards in length it starts just west of the station and climbs at 1 in 93. There are three lines on this section, the most southerly being a new bi-directional Festival Line which, on reaching the summit descends again to pass under the Main Lines alongside the West Curve to join the Relief Lines at Reading West Junction. This allows Cross Country trains which have come from Didcot on the Relief lines to cross over to the west end bay platforms without crossing other lines. There are connections between the Festival and Main Lines at the summit of the viaduct at what has been named Reading High Level Junction. The Main Lines descend back to ground level at Wigmore Lane.

The new Feeder Lines sweep through at ground level between Oxford Road Junction and the station. Both are bi-directionally signalled and the inner one, the Feeder Main, provides access to platforms 10 to 12 whilst the outer, Feeder Relief, feeds platforms 12 to 15. These plus the west end of the Festival Line will be brought into use at Easter along with another new line; the Up Reading Passenger Loop. This runs between Scours Lane and the station between the Up Relief and depot.

Bi-directional, it will allow up trains to by-pass any which may be waiting to take the West Curve and will invaluable in the event of a points or train failure in the Reading West Junction area which previously would bring the whole area to a stand. Not only has the layout been designed to eliminate conflicting movements but a number of useful “alternative” routings are available to keep things moving in the event of a train or equipment failure.

Reading has waited a long time for its new station and it now has one to be proud of and one which should be capable of handling the massive increases in traffic forecast for the coming years.

One wonders what the next Reading station will be like in the 22nd century...



# WITHOUT FIRE – BRITAIN'S INDUSTRIAL STEAM FINALE

**Tim Edmonds**

Fireless locomotives were never made in large numbers in Britain, which is perhaps surprising because they were generally simple, robust and cheap to run. The only builder to construct more than the occasional example was Andrew Barclay, which turned out its first in 1912 and its 114th and last in 1961. These machines have no firebox or boiler but use a reservoir, charged from an external source of steam and capable of providing several hours of light shunting work per charge. They could take advantage of existing sources of steam at industrial sites, enabling them to be brought into use quickly and cheaply. The complete lack of a fire risk also made them an attractive proposition to industries involved in the processing of inflammable materials such as paper, oil, gas, explosives and other chemicals. It was at such a place, the Glaxochem factory at Ulverston in Cumbria, that a fireless type survived until 1991 to become the last regularly working industrial steam locomotive in Britain. During a holiday in the Lake District, and with advance permission obtained from the company, Veronica and I visited the Ulverston factory on a rather grey Thursday 30 June 1983 to inspect and photograph the works shunter.

The locomotive here was an example of the standard Andrew Barclay 0-4-0F, built in 1949 (works number 2268) with 3ft driving wheels and weighing 21 tons. This had been delivered new to Ulverston on 7 September 1949 and spent its entire working life there. As was conventional practice with fireless locomotives, in the absence of a firebox the cylinders were positioned underneath the cab at the rear to give better weight distribution. Exhaust steam was emitted from a pipe behind the cab, there being no need for a chimney. The locomotive was painted blue, with rather lurid orange buffer beams and the motion and builder's plate picked out in red. A British Transport Commission registration plate for running on BR track was still on the cabside, but painted over in blue. The name 'Glaxo', painted in large white letters on the sides of the steam reservoir, has been assumed by many to be the loco's name but is more likely to have been an indication of ownership (Glaxochem was then part of the Glaxo pharmaceutical group, now GlaxoSmithKline). There was no shed and although exposed to the weather the whole year round the loco appeared to be in good external condition.

In 1983 the only traffic was occasional incoming tankers of caustic soda, typically requiring two or three shunts a week, and whenever the locomotive was needed it was brought into use by charging it from the factory's own steam pipes. The normal shunt load was two tank wagons,



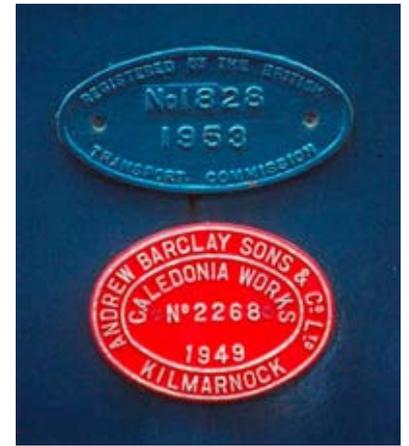
*Above: Glaxo's 0-4-0F at the charging point in the Ulverston factory on 30th June 1983. Note the bell at the front of the cab.*

*Below: Keith Fawcett attaches the steam pipe from the factory's system to charge the loco.*

*All photos: Tim Edmonds*



although three or four empties could be handled on a full charge of steam. On the day of our visit there was no work to be done but the staff, Messrs Simpson and Fawcett, were so keen to demonstrate their machine in action that they charged the reservoir specially for us. To do this they bolted a flexible line from the factory steam supply onto



*The fireless loco posed on the sliding bridge over the Ulverston Canal. When operational, the railway bridge could be moved sideways into a dock at the side of the canal, enabling craft to proceed.*

an inlet valve on the front left hand side of the loco. There were valves on both sides but the left valve was used because of the location of the charging point and the orientation of the locomotive. Steam was admitted until the pressure in the reservoir reached 125psi, the nominal maximum being 160psi. The minimum required for the loco to move at all was about 40psi. When working within the factory area the loco had to cross parts of the internal system of paths and roadways and so was provided with a warning bell on the front of the cab – steam was precious, so a whistle made no sense. However, the level of background noise within the works environment was such that the bell could not easily be heard. To overcome this problem the loco was fitted with a compressed-air hooter at the beginning of 1982.

The connection from BR was via the remaining half-mile stub of the Conishead Priory branch, closed to passengers as long ago as 1916. This left the former Furness Railway main line at Plumpton Junction, just west of the Leven viaduct, and had been planned as the first part of an alternative main line to Barrow avoiding Lindal bank. The plan never reached fruition and the portion which was built became an insignificant backwater as a passenger route, the main traffic being freight generated by the North Lonsdale Ironworks. After the ironworks was closed the Glaxochem factory was built on the site and replaced it as the sole source of traffic on the branch. The line's only notable engineering feature was a sliding bridge over the Ulverston Canal which could be moved aside to allow water traffic to pass. In 1983 the canal was derelict, but the bridge still survived just outside the factory and the loco was posed there for me to photograph.

The future of steam rail power looked relatively secure in 1983. Glaxochem was keen to retain the rail link but it was not worth their investing in new motive power when what they had did the job perfectly well and used a cheap and readily-available source of power. Subsequent events changed this situation and were to bring about dieselisation. On 15th May 1989 Glaxochem acquired the whole remaining branch from BR and, although it could perform light shunting around the works, the fireless loco was not capable of working the line from Plumpton Junction. To

do this job the company leased 0-6-0DE shunter 08678, withdrawn from Tinsley depot the previous year. Initially the diesel could not be used inside the factory because of fire risk from its electrical equipment, so for internal shunting steam power continued as before. The end came in 1991 when 08678 was adapted able to take over all duties and, almost unnoticed, regular steam working on Britain's industrial railways was over.

Latterly BR's wagonload 'Speedlink' services from Carnforth called in to deliver full tanks and remove empties, but the removal of the crossover between the main lines at Plumpton created operational difficulties. The condition of the canal bridge also caused concern. Glaxochem eventually gave up rail transport and put the dangerous chemicals on the roads instead, so the Plumpton Junction – Glaxo Sidings line was officially closed on 19 March 2000. Fortunately the fireless locomotive was donated to Steamtown Carnforth for preservation. It is still located at Carnforth, but unfortunately is not currently on public display. The Ulverston Canal bridge was derelict for many years but is now grade 2 listed and is a rare survivor of its type, although you can still see an operational one at Keadby in Lincolnshire.

*The fireless loco moves towards the charging point through the cluttered environment of the factory. Note the exhaust steam pipe behind the cab.*



# A PASSION FOR RAILWAYS

My Personal Journey by Phil Searle



“How did you get interested in Railways?” It’s a question I get asked from time to time and one I also ask myself. I spoke to our Editor recently and I suggested that it could be an idea for inclusion in the Donkey. He was prepared to give it a try. Potentially, with a membership of 50 people or so, we could get quite a few articles out of this. On another level it would be interesting to hear how past events and experiences kept the interest alive, and bring the story up to the present day.

One thing is sure, that each enthusiast has a different slant on the hobby, and a trawl through the membership would show interest from local to European, to International, the past scene, the present, modelling, railwayana collecting, or any combination of the above.

My journey might well have started at an early age, as apparently my Grandmother used to push me in the push-chair up to the railway bridge by the Horlicks factory in Slough. I think the next bit which was a go on the swings in Salt Hill rec was the part that appealed the most. However I was always fascinated by the sound of wagon buffers hitting one another as we walked back home to Waterbeach Road, Slough, along the cinder track adjacent to the sidings at Salt Hill.

Moving on a few years, and now living in Burnham, I have not very fond memories of the expresses ripping through Burnham as we waited for my Mother’s parents to arrive on the stopper on the long journey from South Wales. Apparently I used to hide under Mum’s coat, so clearly not much enthusiasm.

*Phil’s first colour photograph was this portrait of 7819 Hinton Manor resting outside the shed at Aberystwyth in August 1964. Both locomotive and shed survive, the latter now being used by the Vale of Rheidol Railway.*

My parents came from Pontllanfraith in South Wales, and my grandparents lived in a big house overlooking the Sirhowy Valley line which ran between Newport and Nantybwhc (which is where the Heads of the Valleys Road now passes through today). I have vague memories of watching the coal trains trundle past from my viewpoint in the upstairs bedroom window, during a few holidays there in the 1950s.

A generation before, that had been my Mother’s room and she remembers counting coal trucks from her sick bed which were mostly branded Tredegar.

I travelled on the Autotrain from the High Level Station to Newport with Grandmother a couple of times, which would have been with a 64XX tank, 6430 was a regular on that line and is still with us today. Grandpa was a plate-layer on the low level (GWR) line and I remember Grandfather taking me up to Bird in Hand Junction one afternoon to introduce me to his cronies in the PW gang, before the three of us walked back home. I still have his GWR PW whistle.

I guess most of us had a train set at one time or another. I was given a tinplate Hornby set, which had the No 1 tank loco, two coaches and a circle of track. I have a grainy photo of myself sat on the floor with this train set, which

was probably dismantled or swapped for some inferior toy. A few years later the Trix Twin layout arrived for Christmas, this lasted a bit longer than the first, but what I really wanted was a Hornby Dublo 3 rail layout as per my friend's. I had the catalogue and nearly wore it out by the time my Hornby set arrived on Christmas Day 1962. Alas it was 2 rail, my father said the shopkeeper advised against 3 rail as it was being phased out. I still have the little Southern Railway tank loco, but today I have a 3 rail layout with quite a bit of stock!

Did any of you take the Meccano Magazine? I did, and what a great read it was. Articles could cover almost anything from basic Meccano construction to civil engineering and aircraft.

I soon discovered the section by RAH Weight, Railway notes which was to become the most interesting read in the magazine. After a year or so I signed up for a subscription to Railway Magazine, which I took right up to the early 70s and which I subscribe to again today. Anyway this is jumping the gun a bit, as I was introduced to train spotting by a couple of kids in my class. Rob, who I still see occasionally, was from Acton, and he was no stranger to Old Oak and Willesden sheds. I bought myself the 62/63 Western Region Locomotives courtesy of Ian Allan and cycled over to a vantage point overlooking the engine shed at Slough. This was after my first solo visit to the Dentist on the Bath Road, so had an hour or so to myself.

Perched on the top of the rickety fence overlooked by Slough College I spotted 9405 and 6128, the first ever train numbers. I was hooked. Other spotter's books cover-

ing diesels, multiple units, other regions all at 2/3d each followed until replaced by the first combined volume. This was a must, as prior to this; I wondered where I could underline Crab 42812 which I saw clanking through Slough on a down empty mineral train a few weeks later.

Money was always in short supply in those days and cycling to various railway venues was essential to see more variety, like at Reading where the Southern shed although officially closed always housed one or two Southern or Standard BR Locos and we did cycle to Southall a few times, but mostly toured the London sheds with a Red Rover bus ticket. A couple of holidays at Borth on the Cambrian line in the mid-60s gave me the chance to ride behind 7828 *Odney Manor* to Machynlleth and bunk round Aberystwyth depot where I took my first colour photo ever of 7819 *Hinton Manor* (now in the collection of the 7819 Society).

The little VoR engines I photographed in their own shed, now long demolished.

Gloucester Horton Road depot was amazing, one Sunday afternoon in August 1964 we were driving back from South Wales in the family Cortina, I bunked round the shed. It housed many of the 14XX tanks which were used

*The changing of the guard. Ageing 2-6-2T 6143 and freshly overhauled D3754 engaged in shunting duties in Slough yard as seen from the Stoke Poges Lane bridge. One wonders which is assisting which. 5042 Winchester Castle is in the background reduced to lowly duties.*





on the Chalford Autos, and the little 03 shunters which serviced the dock traffic. Mum, Dad & Sister waited in the car outside the shed entrance until I had finished.

Ian Allan Rail Tours to BR works followed and visits to various sheds in South Wales. One highlight of those times was a trip from Pontllanfraith Low Level to Pontypool Road via Crumlin Viaduct. Stock at that time was Collett or and Hawksworth compartment stock, the trip outwards was with 6690 (I own the smoke box number plate) and 6115 back, the only time I travelled behind a tanner oner outside preservation.

Saturday May 9th 1964 saw me at the coal stage at Slough, it was evening time and 5054 *Earl of Ducie* was doing some amazing speed into London on the last leg of that trip. I was on my own with not a soul to share the WOW factor.

Steam on the Western mainly ended on December 31st 1965 and that was it for me or so I thought. I visited Taplow goods shed for the first GWS open day there, and photographed 7808 *Cookham Manor* bringing in a special.

Coming forward to September 1967 and I'm on a north-bound train from Euston to Grange over Sands whence a coach was to take us onward to Lakeside. I was one of four ICI Paints Division 1st Year apprentices who would have to endure two weeks of what would now be termed team building and general toughening up. On the way up I noted a lot of steam activity mainly from Crewe onwards. A4 60026 *Miles Beevor*, without tender was outside Crewe Works, and we had a decrepit but wonderful 70011 *Hotspur* to bring us back to Lancaster Castle station two weeks later where we changed over to a blue electric loco.

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*On 1st June 1964 Castle 7015 steamed into Southall shed (81C) towing three withdrawn sisters 5060, 5070 and 5071 from Old Oak Common to await their fate. Before being stripped of their nameplates they were Carn Brea Castle, Earl of Berkeley, Sir Daniel Gooch and Spitfire respectively. That's yours truly in school raincoat on the left but I regret the photographer's name has been lost in the mists of time.*

I had been brought back into the fold I guess after that. Many visits to fledgling preserved railways over the following years and, something my wife enjoys nowadays, a dining experience on the main line, and we have been on quite a few.

We both enjoy walking closed line and cycling along them, having only been doing that seriously for about 5 years. We have cycled all the Peak District ex-railway routes, the Camel Trail, all the Dean Forest routes and recently the S&D out of Bath. We both cycled through the two tunnels out of Bath one day last year, and later on the same day I did them again solo, but this time a bit faster, very exhilarating I can tell you.

We are both Life member of the GWS and the Swanage Railway (best of both) and I have been known to help out at Antiquary at Didcot on a few occasions. As well as having the Hornby 3 rail, I also dabble in modelling the sixties BR era, but that is a work in progress as the old layout is to be scrapped and a great Last Project born.

I hope these recollections can go a little way to explain why I was and still am a railway fan (I hate the word Anorak) and would be interested in what other members can come up with on this theme.

The Marlow Donkey

A trio of Up trains approaching Gerrards Cross. First, 5927 Guild Hall [Right] has charge of a Class D express mixed goods followed by 'Black Five' 44679 with a parcels train [Below left] and finally BR Standard 5MT 73071 plodding along with a coal train [Below right] which is signalled into the Up Platform Loop line. The date isn't recorded but it must have been before 6th January 1964 when Gerrards Cross closed to goods traffic.



I have been partly responsible I suppose for getting the two children involved in this pastime, Robert is a garden railway R/C steam narrow gauge buff and my daughter takes my granddaughter to preserved railways and they camped within 5 metres of the Welsh Highland at Waunfawr last summer (in glorious sunshine). The journey continues.

We also spent a few days with them at Waunfawr; we have a camper van which is our preferred way of touring. We walked up to Snowdon summit and got overtaken by the diesel and coach as it neared the summit.

We took the Caledonian sleeper to Inverness a couple to times in 2010, I found it to be a very enjoyable experience although my quality of sleep left a bit to be desired.

What of the future, who knows? Maybe a trip behind the *Big Boy* in 5 or 6 years time. The week before writing this article, we were camping near Lacock, in Wiltshire, where Cranford was filmed, photographing a Class 150 at Bradford on Avon station on a Gloucester working, and a trip to Steam in Swindon on the way home.

Happy Days.

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

*I like to discover what's left of our railway heritage as well as watching and travelling on trains. Our V Dub couldn't get much closer to the old goods shed at New Radnor (the power supply transformer being inside) the site owner opened the building up for me and the old hand cranked crane was photographed. The last repair date is still clearly seen on its side in faded paint and yes the building was still in GWR light and dark stone. The station building was being renovated for use as a holiday let and the goods shed would also be converted for similar use with the crane covered with a Perspex panel! The last goods train left New Radnor Station on 31st December 1951.*



# A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

## Part 6 The Perks of Rank

### 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.



### HST trip to Newcastle

The C5 Galaxy had come into the USAF inventory as the Air Force's largest cargo aircraft by the time of my second posting to RAF Mildenhall in 1978. One of my British civil servants best described the aircraft when the first one arrived at Mildenhall. His comment "Oh my Gawd, it's the aluminium overcast" broke up the entire work area. One of my staff was a keen aircraft spotter and it didn't take long for the bush telegraph to put out the word that C5s were operating routinely through Mildenhall.

Interest was so great that I was asked to make a presentation on the C5 and the general subject of military airlift, doing the first one for the Royal Aeronautical Society at Cambridge. It must have made people happy because I was soon getting invitations to speak from as far away as Preston, Lancs. In the course of one of my presentations, a BR official from the Norwich asked if I might be able to lay on a tour of RAF Mildenhall (and hopefully a C5) for a party of officers from his staff. I said I'd be delighted and proceeded to set up something special (you know where this is leading, don't you!).

Needless to say, my BR guests were quite pleased and, upon the ritual exchange of business cards at the end of their visit, they kindly asked if there was anything they could do for me in exchange. Well, in fact, there was!

HSTs were still fairly new to the UK at the time and wondered if it would be allowed if I could have a footplate ride on one of them. The wheels of bureaucracy turned and I soon had a first class return ticket from Cambridge to London, where I was to meet a BR official on the platform at Kings Cross on the morning of 15th February 1982 to be put aboard the down *Flying Scotsman*. They were concerned that I might not enjoy going all the way to Newcastle but, truth be known, I'd have cheerfully gone all the way to Edinburgh.

By this time, I was dressing more like a Brit than a Yank, so the staff at Kings Cross were mildly perplexed to hear a Yank accent coming from a young man who looked reasonably convincing as a Brit. They ushered me onto the lead power car and introduced me to the driver and his second man – both very nice gentlemen. The second man

*My chariot to the north. Would that it had been an A4 or a Deltic – but who was I to quibble at such a wonderful opportunity! We were away spot on at 10:00 and ran non-stop all the way to Newcastle, arriving at exactly 1259 and ½ hours. Our drivers smoothly changed positions at York as we proceeded through this great station without stopping.*

*At Kings Cross at the appointed time on the morning of 15th February 1982 I was met (L to R) by Inspector Clem Britton, Driver Ernie Groom, and one other gentleman whom I cannot remember on the platform next to HST 253056. After introductions, I boarded the power unit and we were soon away.*



dragged out a camp chair from I don't know where and offered me his seat opposite the driver along with a cup of tea. This was going to be a lovely trip!

The one minor snag was both the driver and his second man were Geordies with accents to match. I frequently apologized as I asked them to repeat things a second or third time because their accent was so different from what I'd become accustomed to in East Anglia. I should add that, on a later trip to Geordie Land in August of 1997 with my good friend Dave Theobald, Dave told me not to feel so badly when we were out on an evening in Durham as he couldn't understand the accent either!

At any rate, we were away from Kings Cross at 10:00 on the dot and had a wonderful race to the north. It was a treat passing Hitchin and seeing the speed limit signs at



*Views from the cab. I knew we were going somewhere as I heard the muffled roar of the Paxman Valenta prime mover behind the driver's compartment. We slowly picked our way through the points at the north end of Kings Cross station, meeting an unidentified up HST framed by Gasworks Tunnel [Above left].*

*One of the great joys of riding out of Kings Cross on the footplate of an HST is seeing the 125 mph sign at Knebworth [Above right] and knowing that, as opposed to seeing it perhaps from the cab of some bug box, one was actually going to do 125 mph! The weather in London was a bit gloomy that morning, but looking at the horizon ahead, it was about to pick up in conjunction with our speed!*

*[Even today, 125mph is not achieved on the ECML before Welwyn North, 23 miles 15 chains from Kings Cross. Compare that with the GWML where 125mph is permitted a mere 4½ miles from Paddington. - Ed]*

*It is 174.25 miles from Kings Cross to the Selby Swing Bridge at Selby, Yorkshire [Below left]. I had seen this interesting bridge from the train before, so I resolved to shoot it from my HST. The location is one of many that I'd have like to have gone back to at a later date in order to photograph a train passing through the bridge but, alas, this can no longer be done as, with the advent of electrification, the ECML was re-routed west of Selby and around the coal fields in that area.*

*Here is another driver's eye view that the average member of the public does not get to see – the approach to York from the south with the great York Minster dominating the background [Below right]. York is one of my favorite British cities – small enough to be enjoyed without being overwhelmed by size; a city wall upon which one can walk around the circumference of the city; York Minster; and – ta dah! – the absolutely splendid National Railway Museum.*



trackside authorizing a speed of 100 mph – with more to come. It was an even greater treat to watch the driver advance the throttle even farther and watch the speed climb to 125 mph. This was the fastest I'd ever traveled on land. It was unbelievable when meeting an HST moving in the opposite direction to think our closing speed was 250 mph!! After a brief stop under the wonderful train shed at York, we were too soon in Newcastle.

I didn't really have any time for photography upon arrival at Newcastle because I was met on the platform by the station manager, who very generously escorted me to the station hotel for a complimentary luncheon. One of the drivers on the down train kindly shared some tea and biscuits with me en route but, by the time we reached Newcastle, my stomach was making enquiries as to whether my throat had been cut and I thought that lunch was a wonderful idea. Lunch was too soon over and I was

away south again on a Class 254 powered by E43158 and E43106. The trip back to London was a bit anti-climactic after the novelty of the morning's down trip. Suffice it to say, in February the evening draws in quickly and it was dark by the time I reached London. Time for a bit of photography at the station, a bite of dinner, and an electric bug box (BR Set #312.722) back to Cambridge and home.

At the time of my HST trip, the early model C5s were notorious for having mechanical malfunctions when they landed – particularly if they were shut down for 12 hours while a crew was in crew rest. My friends and subordinates at Mildenhall thus though I'd gone slightly barmy when they observed me grinning during the following week whenever a C5 landed – little realizing that I hadn't gone nuts but that I was merely savoring the pleasure of my HST trip.



## Class 47 Namings.

Through the courtesy of the BR officials I'd previously hosted at RAF Mildenhall, I had the privilege of attending a naming ceremony at March station on 28th September 1981 in honor of Driver Benjamin Gimbert, GC and his fireman, James Nightall, GC.

Stratford Works turned out two immaculate Class 47s for the occasion - Class 47577 to be named for Driver Gimbert and 47579 to be named for Fireman Nightall. The name plates were placed in honor of courageous action of these two men who on 2nd June 1944 removed a burning wagon laden with explosives from their train at Soham and moved it clear of the station to prevent an explosion that would have devastated the village. They did this fully knowing of their danger. Driver Gimbert survived the ensuing explosion. Fireman Nightall was killed by the blast.

It was fitting that the weather was splendid on the day of the naming ceremony – perfect for the families of the two men being honored, Mr. Clement Freud, MP, Isle of Ely, Mr. Gordon Clarke, Division Manager, British Rail Eastern Region, other civic dignitaries, and school children who attended the ceremony. It was touching to see Mrs. Violet Gimbert, the widow of Driver Gimbert who had died several years earlier, unveil the nameplate on the locomotive named for her husband.

## Last Trip Behind a Deltic.

The Deltics were fading fast toward the end of my second posting in England in 1982. I'd had a day out in the Hull, Leeds, and Sheffield area on 11th November 1981 to ride some new trackage and was on my way back to Ely well after dark. On the homeward leg of my trip, I rode some Eastern Region 'bug boxes' from Sheffield to Retford, where I was to change to a London up train to take me on to Peterborough and a trusty set of "bug boxes" back to Ely.

I expected my connection would have Class 47 hauled train, so I was more than pleasantly surprised when the main line train I joined at Retford was headed by a Deltic – 55016 *Gordon Highlander*. As I knew the Deltics were an endangered species by then, I elected to ride in the vestibule of the carriage nearest the locomotive (rather than finding myself a seat) in order to enjoy the sound of the locomotive as it progressively accelerated us out of Retford, Newark, and Grantham. As it turned out, I ended up joining an English gricer who had been riding in the

*Freshly turned out Class 47s 47577 and 47579 approach the platform where naming ceremonies are to be carried on at March, Cambs. on 28th September 1981. Note that the name plates on each locomotive are papered over at this point. Interestingly, the names that were applied to these two Class 47s were later applied to other, newer locomotives some years after I had left the UK.*

*The locomotives were brought up separately for the naming ceremonies. Here, 47577, soon to be named Benjamin Gimbert, G.C., is seen moving into position along the platform. Mr. Gordon Clarke, Division Manager, British Rail Eastern Region (Norwich) OBE, made opening remarks to a considerable assemblage of guests, including the MP for the Isle of Ely, surviving family members of Mr. Gimbert and Mr. Nightall, contingents of children from the local schools, a group of RAF cadets, a USAF military color guard, and the base commander from either RAF Mildenhall or RAF Lakenheath (I can't remember which at this late date but I do recall he was rather bemused to see me there in my uniform and was undoubtedly wondering what I was doing taking pictures!).*

*Mrs. Violet Gimbert, widow of Driver Benjamin Gimbert, seen just after she had unveiled the name plate on 47577 commemorating the heroic deed of her late husband and his fireman James Nightall.*

*The same ceremony was then repeated by relatives of fireman Nightall. BR definitely ran a first class operation that afternoon!*



vestibule of the lead coach from farther north, enjoying the sound of its twin Napier prime movers.

We both debarked at Peterborough and he proceeded to break out a tripod to take a few night shots of our Deltic. When finished, he generously offered me the use of his tripod, the result being the photo of 55016 shared here. Click, click. We banged off night shots that showed the unusual exhaust pattern of our racehorse locomotive as it

The Marlow Donkey



*Class 55 55016 Gordon Highlander awaits the guard's signal at Peterborough at 20:14 on the evening of 11th November 1981. The Vee-shape of its distinctive exhaust plumes can be clearly seen in the still night air.*

panted, waiting to be released to the main line again. We both savored the roar of the locomotive as it accelerated its train into the night for London.

My onward trip to March behind 37.418, and then a set of "bug boxes" onward to Ely, was anticlimactic to say the least. When I later learned of the last official Deltic run on 2nd January 1982, I was totally pleased that I spent the evening of 11th November 1981 standing in a carriage vestibule for the 46 minutes it took *Gordon Highlander* to eat up the distance between Retford and Peterborough.

### **Donald III and Parkeston Quay.**

My son, Donald A. Woodworth III, was named after myself and his paternal grandfather. He was only 6 months old when we returned to the UK in 1978 but, after he'd become old enough to safely take about with me, I would sometimes bring him on short railway expeditions. I guess there was a vague hope that he would end up enjoying trains as much as his Dad but, alas, that was never to happen.

That said, we did have a few good outings when he was about four years old. One was a photographic gricing trip to Santon Downham in the Thetford Warren on 24th October 1971 where we spent a pleasant afternoon photographing trains and looking at wildlife between trains. One bit of wildlife that was a bit wilder than we'd like to have seen was an adder sunning itself near a tuft of grass closer to our photo location than I'd have liked. St. Patrick should have made a side trip to East Anglia!

Our best trip, however, was Bury St. Edmunds to Parkeston Quay and return on 12th September 1981. The trip out was on some "bug boxes" from Bury St. Edmunds to Ipswich, then a short jaunt behind 47577 to Manningtree, and then another set of trusty "bug boxes" to the Quay. Our return trip was a lot more fun as we had a locomotive-hauled boat train headed to the Midlands behind Class 37107.

The "37" was waiting at the Quay to take its train back to Bury St. Edmunds and points beyond. As we had a bit of time before departure, I posed my son in front of the loco for a photo. The kindly driver noticed what was going on and could tell by our accents that we weren't exactly native to the area. A pleasant chat ensued during the course of which we were invited onto the footplate.

Never one to say no, I jumped at the opportunity (it was my first opportunity to be aboard a British locomotive) and we climbed aboard. The resultant photo is of my son "driving" the locomotive. Obviously overcome with emotion, he slept all the way back to Bury St. Edmunds while his Dad took notes and enjoyed the ride. Fast forward many years. Despite my best efforts, I turned out to be a failure as a father. My son never developed the interest in railways that I enjoy – though he certainly did inherit my love of travel.

*To be continued...*

*A 3 year 10 month old Donald A. Woodworth III at the controls of BR Class 37 37107 on 12th September 1981 at Parkeston Quay. We had a compartment to ourselves in a Mark I carriage, so my son, overcome with the excitement of being an engine driver, slept the majority of the way back to Bury St. Edmunds.*



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

## EARLY SOCIETY SUMMER OUTINGS



One of the first summer outings was on 15th July 1979, just two years after founding, to Whipsnade and Leighton Buzzard. At the latter Ernie Dove, Roger Bowen and Stan Verrinder take a close interest in Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST *Pixie*.

Both photos: Mike Walker

The 8th July 1984 outing was to the Great Central where members including Alan Wheeler, Martin Sherwood and Terry Dearling (in hat) watch D9523 recouple onto its train at Rothley. That's Pete Greatorex turning his back on us at the left next to Bob Hatfield from Fawley. No steam that day due to fire risk!

