

Edition

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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: 86220 The Round Table on an up train for London away from Cambridge at 14:05 on 24th January 1989.

Photo: Don Woodworth. (Article page 15).

Middle: Harrogate Peckett 2050/1944 at the Statfold Barn Railway on 12 September 2015.

Photo: Mike Walker. (Article page 4).

Bottom: 31112 accelerating a train westward on the avoiding loop north of Ely and headed for Peterborough and the Midlands on 19th December 1981.

Photo: Don Woodworth. (Article page 15).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

- Thursday 21 January **AN EVENING WITH OUR PRESIDENT** Sir William McAlpine
Sir William has agreed to talk about a range of topics, - including his adventures with two saloons and trips all over the UK; his private museum and collecting; and the work of The Railway Heritage Trust. Questions will be most welcome.
- Thursday 18 February **THE LMS PATRIOT PROJECT** Kevin West
Following the Society's Annual General Meeting, - Kevin who is the Chief Engineer for the Patriot Project, will give an engineering themed talk on the progress and future schedule of this new build construction which is making rapid progress towards its planned completion in 2018.
- Thursday 17 March **EASTLEIGH LOCOMOTIVE WORKS** Colin Boocock
Colin, a retired BR manager, last spoke to the Society in April 2014 on the subject of the Bulleid Pacifics. He returns to look at the works that was responsible for the transformation of those locomotives, among other things and where he spent many years.
- Thursday 21 April **THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM** Anthony Coulls
Anthony is the NRM's Senior Curator of Rail Vehicles and is based at Locomotion, Shildon. He is also Chairman of the National Traction Engine Trust (in his spare time ?). This young man is a great enthusiast and excellent speaker and tonight will give an insight into the work of the museum and its staff.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

By the time you read these notes we will be approaching Christmas but I'm writing them at the beginning of November as we still await the onslaught of winter to arrive. I'm pleased to say that I have managed to get out and about quite a bit during the late summer and autumn with visits to the Buses Festival at Gaydon (23 August), Great Dorset Steam Fair (4 September), Statfold Barn (12 September), West Somerset Gala and West of England Transport Collection at Winkleigh (3 and 4 October), Swanage Railway Gala (17 October) and the Watercress Line's Autumn Gala on 25 October. The Statfold trip was obviously as part of the Society visit which, thankfully, attracted a large number of members. We are deliberately reducing the number of visits we are planning but will try to choose destinations that will be popular with the membership.

I normally concentrate on lineside photography during my visits to preserved lines but the West Somerset and Watercress visits were such that I spent a lot of the time travelling on trains, which I find is really more relaxing than the constant need to find that perfect lineside spot, made ever more difficult now that these lines no longer issue photographic passes on a daily basis. It is somewhat ironic that the two days of train travel were also the sunniest ones, best suited to photography, whereas the linesiding days proved mostly dull. That's life isn't it !

At the Mid-Hants I had my first ever trip behind *Lord Nelson* and though I have seen it work on a few occasions I was quite amazed at the noise it made. At relatively low speeds it sounds as if it's racing along at high velocity. I understand this is all due to the positioning of the cranks (that's those under the engine, not on the train !) which results in eight exhaust beats for every revolution of the

wheels, whereas most four cylinder locos, just like two cylindered ones, make four beats per rev. It sounded rushed and though loud, rather indistinct and to my ears was not at all pleasant. I far prefer a good sharp chuff, like you get from a Hall or Black 5, and I suspect this is why I have never been much of a fan of locos like Garretts or Mallets, which also seem to shoosh along, certainly once they've gained a little momentum. This is a great shame because amongst the Mallets, or perhaps I should say more accurately "articulated locos", are some of the largest and most powerful engines ever built. As a lover of the American railroad scene I find the look of, say, a 2-8-8-2 at the head of a huge train to be an incredibly impressive sight but to my mind it's rather let down by that less than crisp exhaust beat.

Perhaps I will be able to reappraise my prejudice in a few years when that doyen of monster engines, a Union Pacific RR "Big Boy", may well be running again. As many of you will have read in the press, the UP Railroad has re-purchased one of these 4-8-8-4 locos, formerly plinthed at a museum in California for over 50 years, moved it to their workshops in Cheyenne and are now slowly restoring it to eventual working order. Although they have had the smaller (less huge ?) 4-6-6-4 "Challenger" in service for many years and I have resisted the urge to see that work, I think the draw of a Big Boy (maybe alongside the Challenger) could be irresistible, no matter what noises come out of its chimney.

I do hope you all have a chuffing good Christmas. All my very best wishes to you and your families.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBER

We are delighted to welcome another new member to the Society, Nigel Colverson who lives in Marlow.

The name may seem familiar to long-serving members which is because his late father, John, was a member for many years too so it's especially good to welcome a "second generation" member.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Our new season opened in September with a return visit by Paul Chancellor of Colour-Rail with a programme entitled "(Not So) Modern Traction" which looked at Diesel traction from the earliest day, focusing on the WR initially then, after the break, to other parts of the country. For many of us it was a surprisingly nostalgic evening.

In October our guest was the noted photographer and archivist Brian Stephenson who presented a programme on the GWR using images from his Rail Archive Stephenson collection. All the shots were pre-war and many from before the First War and the quality of the photographs taken on glass-plates was simply stunning.

The local theme continued in November when we welcomed Tom Painter, the Business Development Manager of Chiltern Railways who gave us an excellent potted history of the lines his company now operates over followed by a look at what Chiltern has achieved to date, including a detailed look at the Bicester - Oxford Link. He then went on to reveal some of their thinking for the future before opening himself up to some robust questioning.

We were particularly grateful to Tom for stepping at short notice after our planned speaker, Anthony Coulls of the NRM had to pull out. We are hopeful that Anthony will be able to come to us in April although at the time of writing, this is subject to final confirmation.

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.

If you are renewing by post please note that Peter has moved home recently. His new address is: 1 Chalklands, Bourne End, Bucks., SL8 5TQ. His phone number is unchanged.

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.

JULIAN HEARD

Julian Heard has indicated that he will not seek re-election to the committee at the forthcoming AGM. He retired recently and wants to keep his options open. He has served for many years in a variety of roles and we thank him for all his efforts.

This does, of course mean there will be a vacancy arising on the committee so if you willing to stand or wish to nominate someone (with their agreement!) please use the form which will be in the AGM pack.

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 especially now that Don Woodworth's *magnum opus* has come to an end, so please help!

I would also welcome any suggestions for items or features you would like to see in future issues of the *Marlow Donkey*.

RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

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

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Mon 21 Dec. | World Railways in an Era of Change - Chris Jackson, Editor, Railway Gazette. |
| Mon 25 Jan. | An introduction to Swiss Railways - Paul Rassenberger |
| Mon 22 Feb. | Trains, Trolleys & Museums in the Bay - Nigel Spate |
| Mon 21 March | Extensions to the Underground, Past, Present & Proposed - David Leboff and John Kirkup, both from TfL. |
| Mon 25 April | Five and Nine, the Brighton Line - Ron Hart. |
| Mon 23 May | Branch AGM |

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.

STATFOLD VISIT

Around twenty members attended the annual open day at the Statfold Barn Railway on 12th September and once again enjoyed a superb day of entertainment laid on by Graham Lee and his indefatigable team. The day started with leaden skies and drizzle but Graham obviously put in a call “upstairs” because the sun appeared by late morning and stayed for the rest of the day.

One of the great things about Statfold is that you can make repeated visits and there’s always something new. This year was no exception.



This year the main change was the opening of a second line creating a double line. The new line is set into the farm road like a tramway.

This allows trains to run parallel to each other than conventional double track working as demonstrated *Sragi Mill No.1* (Krauss 4045/1899) on the old line [Above] being pursued by *Saccharine* (John Fowler 13355/1914).

At present the new line ends just beyond Oak Tree Halt but there are plans to extend it out to the balloon loop at the far end of the Field Line.

As usual, goods trains were run throughout the day, in addition to the passenger trains, one of which is seen passing Oak Tree Halt [Above] behind *Harrogate* (Peckett 2050/1944).

As the day came to a close the fifteen locomotives that had been in action gathered for a photo-call outside the main station [Right] where we see former Penrhyn Quarries Sybil Mary (Hunslet 921/1906) and Statfold a similar locomotive built by the ‘new’ Hunslet company at Statfold (3903) in 2005. Beyond is Surrey County Council GP39 (Hudswell Clarke 1643/1930).

All photos: Mike Walker



A Train of Autumnal Events

Mike Walker looks back at recent local events



The Great Western Railway was reborn with the start of the new franchise on 21st September marked by an early morning photo-call at Paddington station where examples of the new green livery applied to 57605 *Totnes Castle*, 43187 and 166205 were on display. Whilst all of the *Night Riviera* equipment and the Turbos are going green, 43187 plus 43188 and set LA15 is the only HST planned to be so treated in view of their limited life on the Western.

It's not been a great year for main line steam to say the least and local operations have been no exception with several tantalising offerings failing to come to fruition due to a number of factors, not least Network Rail banning *Duchess of Sutherland* from the Western at very short notice for allegedly being "out of gauge".

One trip that did get to run was the Railway Touring Co.'s *Cotswold Venturer* from London Paddington to Worcester Shrub Hill on 26th September behind 34067 *Tangmere* seen passing Ruscombe Church.



David Buck's 61306 *Mayflower* only made its main line debut in February this year but since then it seems to have become omnipresent and quickly gaining a reputation as being one of the more reliable performers despite being involved in an "operational incident" at Reading.

On 10th October it was in charge of a Steam Dreams *Cathedrals Express* from Warminster to Ely - surely a unique pairing of end points - and was captured accelerating past Dolphin Junction following a water stop at Slough.

A week later *Mayflower* was out again on the 18th October when it worked the only steam special over the GW&GC Joint Line this year, another *Cathedrals Express* for Steam Dreams, this time running from London Paddington to Stratford-upon-Avon on a timing that recalled the Sunday Luncheon Trains run by BR from Marylebone in the late '80's and early '90's. In fact this was marketed as a Sunday lunch train.

The loco was in fine fettle once more as it climbed towards the Lee Road bridge on Saunderton Bank under disappointingly grey skies.



Chiltern Railways finally launched their much anticipated service to Oxford on 26th October although for now that means Oxford Parkway with a ride on a connecting bus to the city centre or main line station, a situation expected to continue until May at the earliest.

On the Sunday before the service started, 25th October, Chiltern operated a number of preview services to and from Marylebone two of which were loco-hauled and employed one of the Silver Trains hauled by 68014 which is seen resting at Oxford Parkway whilst operating the first of its two trips that day.

A commission from Hitachi led to me visiting North Pole Depot on 28th October which coincided with one of the pre-production 5-car bi-mode IEP units, 800002, being in attendance for a programme of depot commissioning trials.

Although my work didn't involve the train directly, the Hitachi team were kind enough to let me take an in-depth look at the train that will form the backbone of the Great Western fleet in future. Although impressive externally and in the cab, I found the passenger accommodation to be unwelcoming and uncomfortable. Perhaps it will improve...



THE D-TRAIN PROJECT

JOHN FOWLER looks at Viva Rail's plan to convert Underground trains for the main line.

On September 6th I was fortunate enough to obtain an invitation to visit Viva Rail at Long Marston to see the prototype D78 train. After a pleasant drive we arrived at Long Marston. Here we were met by Viva Rail staff and walked to their offices on site. After a cup of tea and some short presentations we were issued with our orange jackets and walked to the temporary platform on the MoD railway now used as Viva Rail's test track. Some of you may recall alighting there from a Hertfordshire rail tour a few years back.

Awaiting us was a single D78 coach numbered 230 001 which has been converted to diesel electric power by the provision of a couple of under floor Ford 200 hp Transit engines.

We boarded and took our seats, which in this vehicle is the original District line seating arrangement, with mostly longitudinal seating but the centre set of facing pairs.

First thoughts were how bright and spacious the interior seemed and how quiet it was with the engine ticking over. Then it was off round the test loop. My impressions were very favourable, a smooth quite start with a comfortable



The prototype D Train conversion awaits inspection at Long Marston.

Photo: John Fowler

ride. The Long Marston test track is not up to main line standards with a couple of rough patches, these were negotiated reasonably smoothly with no violent bouncing or swaying. We were given a couple of runs round so that we could check our first impressions. Mine were that it was remarkably quiet and a smoother more comfortable ride than it would have been in a 14X 'Pacer' on similar track.

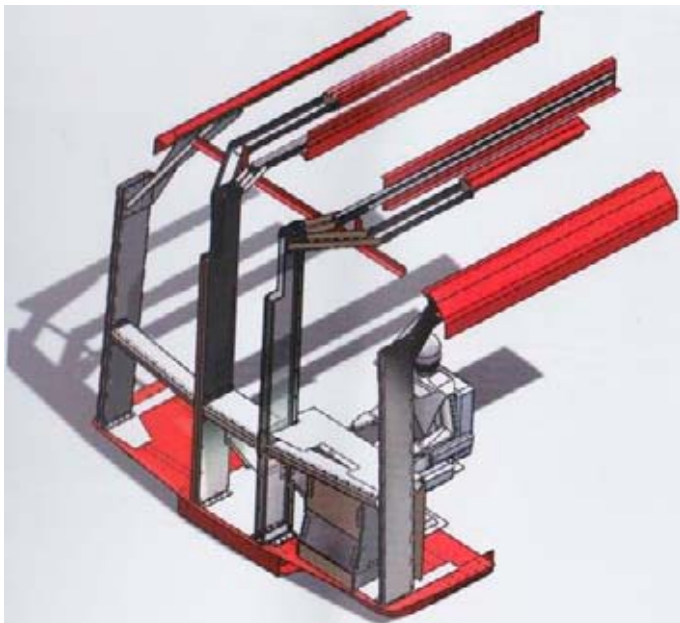
After our ride we walked over to the workshops where the conversion work was being carried out. Here we saw the proposed seats and toilet module for the centre coach of the Country unit.

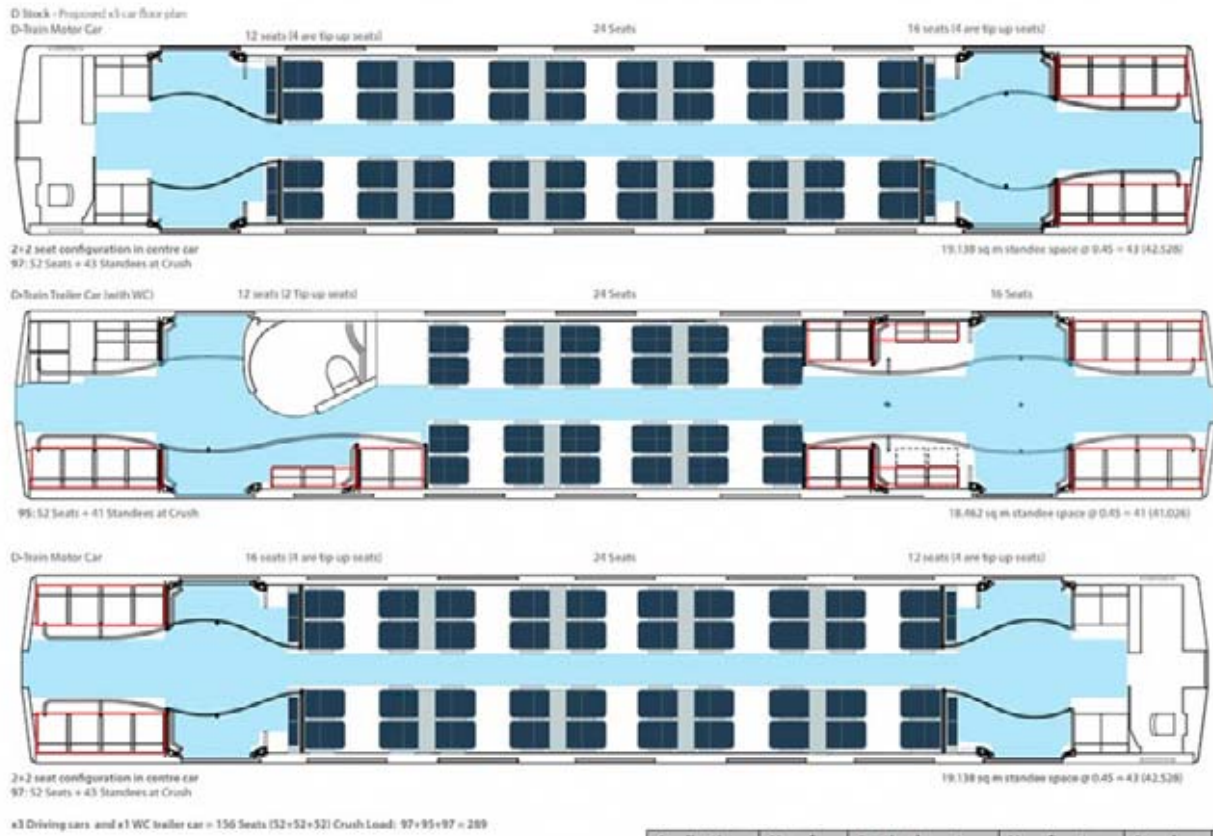
Much work has been needed to bring the D78 body and cab up to current main line crash-worthiness standards including the fitting of a safety cage in the cab (left, Viva Rail). The picture below left shows it undergoing crash testing, which it passed.

Photo: Viva Rail

Adrian Shooter, Chairman of Viva Rail (Below right), discusses the tests with a BBC reporter.

Photo: John Fowler





Proposed layouts for the Class 230 units. Viva Rail

Viva Rail are proposing three versions (see table) a 2/3 car commuter set with basically the original D78 seating, 4 doors per coach and no toilet. A 2/3 car commuter with extra transverse seats and only 2 doors per side, the 3 coach set with toilet and a 3 coach country unit with all 2+2 transverse seats and only 2 doors per coach plus toilet. One of the trickier conversions has been reducing the doors to 2 per coach Viva Rail have had to remove a door pillar which protruded into carriage and replace with a new beam to retain body strength and to give a smooth body side to fit seats across the old door opening.

They have also fitted the cab with a crash cage to prevent it collapsing if it is ever involved in a collision. To test this they ran a coach into a filled water tank. As you can see Adrian Shooter is proud to show to a reporter from the BBC how little distortion of the cab occurred. The dummy driver was unscathed.

Both the new transverse seats and toilet module are off the shelf items from existing suppliers, which reduces the costs.

Probably the most innovative part of the conversions are the power packs. A Ford 5 cylinder Transit Diesel engine and a suitable generator have been packaged into a module which slides across the under frame and secured in position. See picture. All connections are quick release. It is suggested that the engine unit can be changed in 10 minutes from the trackside given suitable hard standing for the trolley lift. The only problem I see is that at present the module exhausts downwards to the track. Viva Rail suggests they have solution.

It is hoped that the first prototype will be ready for main-line testing and certification in December. It is an ambitious target, but Mr Shooter and his team think it's achievable.

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Application	No. of cars per unit	Seating layout	No. of seats per unit (+ tip-up seats)	Standees	WC	Doors per car side
City	2	Mostly longitudinal	88	106	No	4
	3		136	161		
Commuter	2	Mixed longitudinal & transverse 2+2	100 + 8	86	No	2
	3		156 + 12	131		
	3		150 + 10	127	Yes	
Country	3	Transverse 2+2	150 + 6	127	Yes	2

What do I think? I am not a rolling stock engineer so cannot comment on the engineering, however, both Roger Ford and Ian Walmsey writing in October's *Modern Railways* both thought the engineering was very good. My view is that it is an innovative use of old rolling stock to provide a viable replacement for 14X and 150 relatively quickly and far cheaper per unit than a new DMU. Hopefully the Treasury will see it that way.

I wish them well. My thanks to Viva Rail for a very interesting visit and use of their photos. Also Rail Future and Marlow and Maidenhead Passenger Association for the invitation and special thanks to Richard Porter (MMPA, MDRS) for driving me.



The fully enclosed engine/alternator units incorporating 5-cylinder Ford Transit diesel engines. Viva Rail

Multi-modal in Bergen

Tim Edmonds

A short break in Bergen from 3–8 September 2015 gave the opportunity to explore some of the local transport delights, both in their own right and as a means of seeing some of the normal tourist sights. Having arrived by air mid-morning on a Thursday, in just four-and-a-half days Veronica and I managed to travel by an amazing variety of modes of transport – rail, road and sea. After getting the Flybussen express bus from Flesland airport to the city, followed by half a day of local exploration on the Thursday, we did the full-day ‘Norway in a Nutshell’ tour on the Friday. This is an inclusive ticket covering the local Bergensbanen train from Bergen to Myrdal, then a ride on the Flåmsbana to Flåm for a boat trip through the Nærøyfjord to Gudvangen, continuing by road to Voss to pick up the return train to Bergen. For the last three days we used a Bergen Card, which cost 320NOK (about £25) and gave free use of local buses and the Bybanen (Bergen Light Railway) as well as discounts on many excursions, museums and other tourist attractions. It paid for itself on the first day. Our travels included the entire Bybanen, the funicular railway, local buses (including a trolleybus), local and regional trains, a steam railway, cable-car, the little electric ferry boat across the harbour and a fascinating half-day fjord cruise by catamaran. The accompanying pictures give a flavour of what we experienced.



The Fløibanen is a metre-gauge funicular linking the city centre to a viewpoint on Mount Fløyen. One car is blue and the other red; here the blue car is approaching the top station at Fløyen, on the roof of which is a model of the line which operates every fifteen minutes synchronised with the real thing.



Route 2 is the only remaining trolleybus route in Bergen, but with just eight vehicles available (two of them hybrids) it means that some services are operated by normal buses. We used this route to reach the Ulriksbanen cable car and after a normal ‘bendybus’ for the outward journey were fortunate to get a trolleybus for the return trip. Here a modern articulated Neoplan N6321 trolleybus heads into town along Kong Oscars Gate, near the railway station. The vehicle behind is the Ulriksbanen tourist shuttle-bus – the more expensive way to do it!



This is a view over Bergen station from the viewpoint on Mount Ulriken. The Bybanen can be seen passing to the left of the station and then bearing left to serve the central bus station. Lower left is the container depot. The road bridge is on the ‘Bergen by-pass’ which avoids the city centre by tunnelling through the mountain.

On my first exploration of Bergen station a late-running NSB (Norges Statsbaner) regional train from Oslo arrived and beefy diesel 8.707 emerged from the depot to take the ecs out and release the loco. I got chatting to the driver while he waited for the road and he told me enthusiastically



that his loco made a terrific noise. He was right, and proceeded to put on a great show! It is a class 8 Di Bo-Bo built, by Krupp/Siemens in 1996 and formerly used for main line freight traffic. GB Railfreight bought 12 of the 8 Di class from Cargonet in 2011 for use on the internal network at the SSI steel plant at Teesside, recently in the news due to its impending closure. It will be interesting to see what their fate is.



At Bergen station a class 69 EMU forms the 08:43 local service to Myrdal, where it will connect with the Flåmsbana. We travelled on this for our 'Norway in a nutshell' tour and it was thus fully-loaded with tourists – not the most comfortable of rides for a two-hour journey.



The 20km journey from Myrdal at 865m, down to Flåm at sea level, takes an hour and includes 1 in 18 gradients and www.mdrs.org.uk

numerous tunnels. Trains are worked top-and-tail by class El 18 Co-Cos, introduced in 1996 and built by ABB/SLM/Strømmen. This is a tourist line and the coaches have big windows to enable passengers to see the views. Some of the windows slide down half-open, and I timed my turn to grab one perfectly for when we approached the Berekvam passing loop. Here 18.2254 (18.2246 was at the back) enters from Myrdal while 18.2242 and 18.2259 wait.



The only wet weather experienced during the trip was while waiting at Voss for a very late-running train to Bergen (there had been a landslip). All trains were held up to varying extents – here the 15:59 Bergen – Oslo comes into view an hour late behind 8.2248. Voss is the terminating point for some local services from Bergen, hence the presence of two class 69 EMUs in the sidings.



The Bybanen opened in 2010 to Nesttun from a city terminus at Byparken, between the railway station and the old city. It is worked by five-section articulated units built by Stadler, two of which are seen here from the buffer stops at Byparken.

In 2013 the Bybanen was extended to Lagunen, where it serves a large shopping complex – one of many developments at the 20 stations along the route. Work is currently well advanced on an extension to Flesland Airport, adding a further seven stations and due to open in 2016. Unit 211 is seen here (*following page*) reversing on the stub of the extension, which enters a tunnel off picture to the left. A high proportion of the inner parts of the Bybanen involve street running, but most of the outer sections are on reserved track and include several tunnels.



Lighting conditions were generally difficult for photographing the Bybanen due to the shadows from the surrounding buildings. Of course when I found perfect lighting at Nonneseter, adjacent to the main line station, while about to catch a train on the Sunday morning, there was only a half-hourly service and nothing was due! However, this was on a section of street running so I made do with a passing Flybussen.

The Sunday morning train was part of a journey to reach the Gamle Vossebanen (GVB), a heritage operation using 18km of former main line that was made redundant by the opening of the Ulriken (7,660m) and the Arnanipa (2,177m) tunnels in 1964. The 09:59 train from Bergen got to Arna at 10:09 and connected with the 10:18 bus, arriving beside Garnes station at 10:23 – a quick and easy journey. Garnes is the HQ of the GVB, whose only steam loco is ex-NSB class 18c 4-6-0 255 (Hamar 84/1913). This is matched with an attractive set of timber-panelled coaches, including a spisevogn (dining car). Here 255 is being prepared outside the shed.

The GVB has three vintage diesel shunters. Here Skd 206.33 (Thune 393/1938) is about to draw the stock out of Garnes station to enable 255 to run round its train. Note the spectacular setting beside Sørfjord.





The GVB operates on Sundays only from mid-May to Mid-September, with departures at 11:30 and 14:30. The route is a scenic one with a section alongside Sørfjord, followed by a climb over the hills past some small lakes to terminate at a desolate single platform at Midttun on the edge of the south Bergen suburbs. We took the 14:30 to the old Arna station and walked from there to the new one to return to Bergen. Here 255 is seen leaving Arna for Midttun.

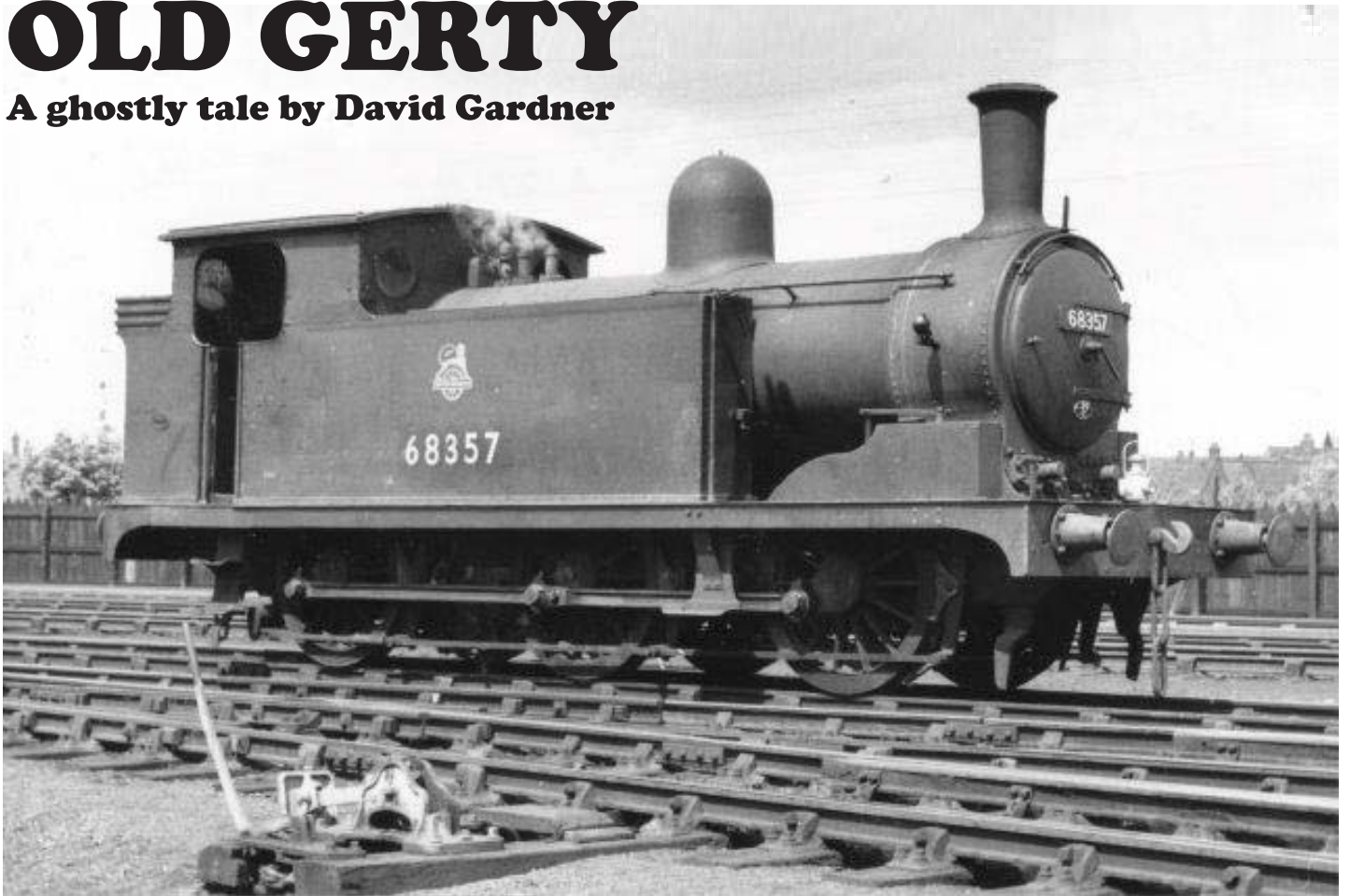


Further disruption on the Bergensbanen meant that instead of our planned local train from Arna to Bergen we returned on the 08:25 regional service from Oslo, running 40 minutes late and seen here emerging from Arnanipa tunnel behind 18.2244. Arna has a frequent service of trains shuttling to and from Bergen and the terminating service

on the right was driven by the diesel driver I had befriended a few days earlier. He greeted me by saying "I guess you've been visiting the steam railway...". Capacity on the long, single-track Ulriken tunnel has been reached and a second bore is under construction. This will involve the rebuilding of the 1964 Arna station.

OLD GERTY

A ghostly tale by David Gardner



J73 Class 68357, a sister engine to 'Old Gerty', taken at Selby in May 1953.

Photo: Roger Carpenter

It was Jim Lawrence's last day at the old firm and in the last 40 years he had had many a hard day struggling to climb the ladder of success. When he started the job all those years ago he had only been a junior draftsman, but here he was on the eve of his retirement the head of the department and well thought of by his colleagues.

It was late and everyone else had gone, but Jim had stayed on to collect his thoughts. There had been a retirement presentation and a few nibbles of course. Luckily he wasn't given a clock to watch his time slip away. In fact the gift was one he really appreciated, several volumes of the History of British Railways, but Jim resisted the temptation to start reading now. He would wait until he got home. It had been a long day and he felt weary, so he rested back in his seat and started to drift into the past.

Jim had been a bright boy passing his 11 plus and going to Grammar School. His parents and teachers wanted him to take 'A' levels and go onto University, but Jim wanted none of that. Ever since he could remember, all he wanted to do was work on the railway to fire and drive steam locomotives. Then 49 years ago to the day he had walked along the path to the loco depot and reported to the shed foreman.

Jock Patterson was a kindly man and a close neighbour of the Lawrence family. He had tried to dissuade Jim. "You will have to start as a cleaner and it's a dirty job, the hours are inhuman and it could be years before you get to fire let alone drive the engines". "Then there's all them qualifications you got from Grammar School; wouldn't you prefer an office job?" "No, Mr Patterson" came Jim's reply, "I don't want to work in an office, I want to work here, and it doesn't matter about how long it takes. I'll work hard and

I'll soon pick things up." Jock knew he was beaten. "Alright then lad let's get you fitted up with some overalls then we can get you started." After that Jim was introduced to the other lads some of whom he knew from his loco spotting trips. One of these called Terry was assigned to look after Jim and show him what the job entailed. They got some cotton waste from the stores and headed off to clean one of the engines in the shed. "This is 'Old Gerty' and she's a bit ancient" said Terry, "and you should watch yourself as she's got a mind of her own," he continued. A couple of weeks later Jim was about to discover just what Terry had meant about 'Old Gerty'.

He was working nights preparing engines for the morning, Terry was out in the yard dropping fires, so Jim was alone and it felt cold and eerie in the shed. He had got down from the footplate and gone round to the front to open the smoke box door to clean out ash when he felt a movement behind but before he was able to react there was a terrific bang and the loco he was working on shot forward. Jim was covered in ash and soot from the smoke box and was lucky not to have been thrown from the engine. The crashing sound and screeching of locked brakes was enough to bring Terry running and he climbed onto 'Old Gerty' and pulled the lever into mid-gear, then screwed down the brake which brought both engines to a halt. After helping Jim down from the front of the other engine and taking him to the washroom where he left him to get cleaned up, Terry returned to sort out 'Old Gerty' and slowly reversed her to the rear of the shed. The other loco could stay where it was for now. He then went back to see how Jim was.

Jim soon learnt to regard 'Old Gerty' with a great deal of respect for she did have a habit of moving of her own accord. Many of the drivers said it was a prank caused by another cleaner, but if this was the case no one was ever caught tampering with the engine or even seen anywhere nearby. Since most accidents happened at night who could say if someone was creeping about in the dark with mischief in mind. Jim worked his way through the ranks and was soon firing locos, first on shunting duties, then local goods and passenger trains. Once he became a passed fireman he was often called up to drive when the regular man was unavailable. He even drove 'Old Gerty', finding her a little temperamental at times but if coaxed gently she was fine; well almost.

After a few years Jim was working on long distance freight and express passenger trains, both firing and driving, and he loved every minute of it. Things were changing on the railway, however, with steam giving way to diesels. Jim was informed that he would be made up to a driver but only when the diesels took over in his area. He went out as a second man on some of the DMUs and even a class 4 Peak but it wasn't for him and he decided to regretfully leave the railway. His last job was driving 'Old Gerty' to the works where she was to be scrapped.

After nine years devoted service as a cleaner, fireman and yes, a driver, he sadly walked away from the shed. His 'O' levels stood him in good stead and he started the following week as a draftsman. He met his future wife at his new employment and they had a happy though childless life together, but sadly after 20 years together Jim's wife Christine died having picked up a bug of some sort. She just faded away and doctors were unable to diagnose the true cause. Jim was at first totally lost without his wife but as time went by he took up his old interest in railways, going for long journeys, visiting steam museums and even witnessing steam hauled specials. It was good he thought to see such spectacles but not the same as it was.

Then one day he decided to return to see if the old engine shed was still there. Having moved away from his home town when he took up his new job he had rarely revisited the place so one Saturday he caught the train to his birth place and walked along the lane and old path to where the

depot had been. To his amazement the shed was still there and what's more it was complete and untouched by time. As he walked up to the foreman's office he was met by Jock Patterson. "We've fired her up for you Jim so just get changed into your overalls and Terry will fire for you." "I don't understand." Jim blurted out. "Never mind" said Jock, "just get yourself ready."

There in the shed was 'Old Gerty' and Terry looking out of the cab. Jim found his overalls still on the peg he'd left them on all those years ago. He climbed up onto the 'Old Gerty's' cab and after checking that all was well, opened the regulator and drove the engine out of the shed and yard and onto the mainline. Everything was fine to start with and 'Old Gerty' behaved herself but the old engine had never forgotten it was Jim who drove her to the breakers yard. 'Old Gerty' started bucking and speeding up and despite all his efforts Jim had lost all control of the loco. He looked for help from Terry but his companion had disappeared. Suddenly, there was a signal at red but try as he might Jim couldn't bring 'Old Gerty' to a stop or even slow her down. He would have jumped clear but that went against everything he had been taught and in any case the engine was going too fast. Then without warning 'Old Gerty' swung into a siding and proceeded up to and demolished the buffer stop.

When they found Jim he was lying at the bottom of an embankment, the destroyed buffer stop above him. But of 'Old Gerty' there was no trace and nobody would believe the story Jim related. True he was wearing overalls when they took him to hospital, but they found his day clothes hanging on a nail in the otherwise derelict remains of the old engine shed. Jim could never work out just what actually happened that day. It seemed so real and to this day he couldn't believe anything otherwise.

Aroused from his reminiscences by the sound of the door he turned to look at Geoff, one of his former team. "Hello, Jim, thought you would have gone long ago. Can I give you a lift?" Jim was pleased at the offer as he had never owned a car and trying to struggle with all those volumes would have nigh on crippled him. "Yes thank you very much Geoff." said Jim. "That's extremely kind of you."

With that they both left, turning off the lights as they went.



G5 Class 0-4-4T 67305 awaiting the "right away" at Darlington station on a September day in 1957. Could Jim Lawrence have fired this engine?

Photo: Lens of Sutton

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

Part 9 Post UK Postings.

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 concludes 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.



Subsequently to my two postings in the UK, periods of temporary duty while I remained active in the USAF, business travel as a post-military career, and holiday travel brought me back to the UK many times. One of these visits took me back to my old squadron at RAF Mildenhall, which I must confess gave me a sense of unholy glee to visit as a full colonel. All of the visits involved seeing my great friend Dave Theobald and every trip involved some sort of gricing expedition. I will include here a random smattering of some of the things Dave and I managed to do – some near to Cambridge and others a distance away.

I was a “bird colonel” by the time I came to visit Dave in 1989. “Bird colonel” or “chicken colonel” is USAF slang for a full colonel, whose shoulder insignia is a silver eagle. The RAF equivalent would be a Group Captain.

All Things Great and Small

My family and I quite enjoyed James Harriot’s wonderful television series “All Creatures Great and Small.” We correspondingly enjoyed the large county of Yorkshire and its wide variety of scenery – and of railway equipment! In broad keeping with the theme of great and small, here are a few relevant photos.

Slightly Pushing the Bounds of East Anglia - Just Because I Like Them

Before concluding with a narrative and photos of what most recently brought me to the UK, I’d like to (semi) conclude with a small selection of the comfortably normal and the slightly quirky that so much endear the UK and its wonderful railway system to me.



The south end of the platform at Ipswich was always a great place to watch trains. One never knew what might come booming out of the tunnel. In this case it was 55007 Pinza northbound at 11:01 on 12th September 1981 on a Deltic Anglian railway tour sponsored by the Nene Valley Railway.

All photos by Don Woodworth



This photo falls under the Department of Delightfully Quirky. It would seem on the surface that there must have been a simpler way to construct a signal at this location at Bedford St. Johns Station, but the DofDQ decreed that something more interesting had to be installed. Here, units M50391 and M56149 pass the signal on the gloom afternoon of 5th February 1972. The signal is now long gone and the track arrangement here totally modified with the electrification scheme that was brought to Bedford sometime after my departure from the UK.

I am a very keen stamp collector as well as a railway enthusiast. As a youngster, my Dad had a good friend who worked as a Railway Post Office clerk on mail trains that ran between Boston, Massachusetts and Washington, DC. The RPO system was a part of the United States Post Office. While this was pretty neat, I don't think anything we have in the United States compares to the notion of the Royal Mail. Sadly, since my time in the UK, the British government has seen fit to do away with TPOs, the equivalent to RPOs in the States, but mail by rail was great while it lasted. In this photo, we have a splendidly turned out EMU 9004 (68004) at London Bridge Station on 23rd January 1989.

The new order has come to town. I was most fortunate to have Dave Theobald send me periodic care packages of railway magazines after I returned to the States. Mike Page has thoughtfully kept up this tradition, which I greatly appreciate. Thus, I was fascinated to follow the peregrinations of the 80s series AC electric locomotives as they were cascaded from service on the WCML and put into service on the London – Norwich line and later on the Liverpool Street – Cambridge services. I counted myself fortunate to get this shot of 86220 The Round Table moving an up train for London away from Cambridge at 14:05 on 24th January 1989.



I must tell a little story on my friend Mike Walker. Here, BR Western Region Class 52 diesel-hydraulic 1012 Western Firebrand is seen at Paddington Station on 12th June 1972. This locomotive began its official life by being outshopped at Swindon on 17th November 1962 and was scrapped there in April of 1979 – a brief life of only 17 years for a diesel locomotive. Mike has assured me that this is a cracking shot, as the locomotive's livery is sound and not peeling off in patches as it was wont to do if applied incorrectly to the machine's stressed outer skin. But I digress.

On several trips to the States on gricing expeditions, whilst the majority of us in our party would sometimes think of doing Chinese or Mexican cuisine for an evening meal at the end of a day's gricing, we would invariably end up at a "meat & potatoes" type of place for dinner because brother Mike did not fancy foreign food. As there is an American food chain specializing in steaks of which Mike is so fond, I later suggested to him that the Western Region might have renamed one of their locomotives "Western Sizzler."

(I get no respect! - Ed.)

I have somewhat slighted Class 31 locomotives because, to my American eyes, they look to me rather like a loaf of bread. To ensure that lovers of Class 31s do not feel slighted, I include an additional image of 31112 taken on the afternoon of 19th December 1981 when I was out Deltic hunting. In a picture-perfect setting, 31112 is accelerating a train westward on the avoiding loop north of Ely and headed for Peterborough and the Midlands.



My Finest and Saddest Railway Journeys.

By the time I left the UK in July 1982, I had become best of friends with Dave Theobald. I had also become good friends with some of the other fellows with whom we often traveled, especially with Mike Page of Cambridge and Mike Walker of Little Marlow, Bucks. Dave and I kept in touch and visited back and forth for nearly 40 more years until his untimely death in Eritrea in 2010.

I learned the sad news from his wife Barbara whose call woke me from a sound sleep and whose distressed tone of voice immediately told me that there was something terribly wrong. We talked for a bit and then she said she had to ring off in order to call some other family members with the news of his death. From that instant, there was never any question that I would be traveling to the UK for Dave's funeral.

Due to the complications of repatriating Dave's remains from Africa, it was some time before Barbara was able to provide a funeral date. When she did, I made immediate plans to fly to Heathrow. My friend Mike Walker (bless him!) met me there on the morning of 17th February 2010 and got me to my digs at High Wycombe (with an obligatory bit of gricing at Taplow, Bucks en route!).

On the way in from the airport, Mike hinted at something he had planned that would put a bit of silver into the otherwise gloomy cloud that had brought me to the UK. I knew Mike had a lot of connections, so as we took the train into Marylebone Station on a rather gloomy morning of 19th February I had visions of a footplate ride through the Chunnel or something equally cosmic.

When we arrived at Marylebone, I noted 67014 *Thomas Telford* at the end of the platform and wandered up to take a photo as it was a type new to me since I'd last been in the UK and also because it was a rare locomotive-hauled train in what had become a nation of "bug boxes," Mike, noticing my interest, nonchalantly asked if I were interested in the locomotive - to which I of course said "Yes". Unable to suppress a grin any longer, he then told me to climb aboard the driving trailer at the other end of the platform because Mr. Telford was going to take us on a trip. This was even better than Thomas the Tank Engine! Dave would have approved!!



We were indeed going on a trip – all the way to Wrexham courtesy of the late-lamented Wrexham & Shropshire (the public name of the Wrexham, Marylebone & Shropshire Railway Co.). This was made possible through the kindness of Mr. Mark Edlington, Operations Manager for the W&S, who accompanied Mike and me on the footplate for the duration of our journey. We rode the footplate all the way to Wrexham, hit the platform there for a short break, and were very quickly back on board for the return journey to London. The very short turnaround was occasioned by a tight slot time coming into London which, if we did not hit it on time, cost the W&S a significant performance penalty. If memory is correct, Wolverhampton is where we shifted from the locomotive to a first class carriage where we enjoyed a lovely dinner courtesy of the company.

The dinner was doubly lovely as I had envisioned the possibility of arriving late back in London (there had been a massive signals failure at the London end of the line that morning which occurred sometime after we were safely outside of the city and headed west) and also the possibility of having to grab a cold sandwich or something of the kind during a hurried journey over to Victoria Station for a trip to visit relatives living near Salisbury. Everything worked out well however and I arrived at Salisbury spot on time.

The up trip to London on the following Sunday was a different matter due to the dreaded "E" word – engineering works dictated a transfer to a coach at Basingstoke to shuttle us to Guildford we joined another train for the onward journey into London for a reasonably on-time arrival. Not wanting to drag a suitcase on the Tube, I enjoyed the luxury of a taxi ride with a very friendly driver to Liverpool Street where I boarded a train to Cambridge for a trip I genuinely wished I hadn't have had to make.

Arriving on a gloomy evening that befit my mood, I was soon met at my hotel by my friend Mike Page, who very kindly looked after me for the duration of my stay in Cambridge. We traveled together the next day to Dave's funeral and the wake following, where I was privileged to deliver one of the remembrances in Dave's memory.

Don in front of Wrexham & Shropshire driving trailer 82305 at Marylebone Station, London, on the morning of 19th February 2010 (locomotive 67014 Thomas Telford was at the station end of the train) just prior to departure for Wrexham. The facial fur has since vanished, a victim to my son's tender sensibilities regarding his wedding celebration in September 2011.

I was genuinely impressed by the smoothness of the right-of-way as we barreled along but I think the thing that most surprised me was the little decal with letters reading "DB" in the corner of the cab. I was astounded to learn that this indicated that the train set upon which I was riding was the property of Deutsche Bahn Schenker Rail UK! The European Union is great, but this was carrying things too far!!



Mike helped to take the sting out of things a bit with a lovely gricing trip to Tamworth, Staffs on the day following the funeral. On an overcast 23rd February, punctuated with occasional flecks of snow, we had an interesting time doing some photography at this interesting location where the busy Derby-Birmingham line crosses over the even busier West Coast Main Line. Some local gricers on the platform kindly shared information with us that Class 37 37576 was to pass by around 15:15 on an up empty stock working to position for a rail tour out of London. Sure enough, it flew by at 15:25, but the gathering gloom and the dark burgundy color of the train was too much for the speed of the film that I had available. I got a shot, but not worth showing here.

Mike and I had a pleasant drive back to St. Ives, where we planned to visit Dave's widow Barbara. We stopped at a cozy pub near the A1 to thaw out with a hot coffee before proceeding onward. I'd seen this pub many time myself while motoring on the A1 but had never had occasion to stop. I'd forgotten how cozy a pub with a coal fire could be on a cold, miserable day. Little did we know that the time spent at the pub could have been put to better use when we unexpectedly encountered major traffic congestion on the A1123 outside of St. Ives that delayed us for over 45 minutes in reaching Barbara's home. Thank goodness for cell phones! We did indeed have a pleasant dinner and evening once we reached the confines of Canberra Drive.

I will end this on a happy note. Dave & Barbara Theobald had visited Donna and me in O'Fallon, Illinois in December of 2010. During the visit, Dave mentioned to me that he would like me to do a presentation to the Cambridge Railway Circle on my travels in Britain the next time I came to the UK rather than doing one of my usual presentations on things American. I allowed that I'd be happy to do this but, in truth, I think I would have felt like the village vicar giving a presentation before the Archbishop of Canterbury had I done so.

Mike Page and I spent some time on Tamworth station on a dull 23rd February 2010. Earlier in the afternoon when the murk was a tad brighter, I was able to get a shot of a Virgin Pendolino passing at 14:57 on an up train to London. I had not seen these sleek trains before and I quite liked the bright colors on the nose – particularly nice on a gloomy day. I don't know what British gricers call these trains but, if pressed for a nickname myself, I'd likely call them Fast Flying Caterpillars.

(There are several - mostly unprintable! Ed.)

What you are reading now began as what I thought would be a short article but has morphed into something much longer which, with photos included, has reached the length of a presentation that I might give before the CRC. So Dave, if you're able to read this in heaven, you will see (courtesy of our good friends Mikes Page & Walker) the serialized version of what I should like to have been able to present when you were still with us.

THE END

Our mutual and much missed friend, Dave Theobald on an unusually sunny Ribbleshead station on 11th September 2000.



TESTING TIMES AT BICESTER



The run up to the opening of the Bicester - Oxford line on 26th October saw much activity in testing and training. On 6th October Network Rail test train 1Q05, topped and tailed by DRS 37605 and 37604, stands on the new chord between Bicester Gavray Junction and Bicester South Junction, awaiting a path south to return to Old Oak Common HSTD. 68013 is passing northbound with DVT 82303 on the rear of 1R15, the 08:45 from Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street whilst an unidentified Class 165 is southbound with 1H30, the 09:06

from Banbury to Marylebone.

Two days later, 165021 had arrived into Bicester C.O.D. Reception Sidings a few minutes earlier with the 5T12 training run and is alongside 66114 waiting to depart with 6A48, the 12:20 to Didcot Yard whilst 168329 is just arriving into the sidings at the far end, this working was another training trip, 5Y09 from Oxford Parkway.

Both photos: Geoff Plumb

