

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition
155
December 2016



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The White Maiden
Mr Sod - please meet Mr Murphy

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: MDRS Member John Tuck is in the driving seat as D6575 draws its train out of Minehead. 1st October 2016. Photo: Tim Edmonds. Article page 5.

Inset: What might have hauled the freight in the main picture before the Class 33s arrived. N 2-6-0 31830 awaits departutre at Padstow. Photo: Lens of Sutton. Article page 13.

Bottom: 34007 Wadebridge seen at Eastleigh in 1952. Photo: H F Wheeler collection. Article page 13.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

- Thursday 19 January **LYNTON & BARNSTAPLE: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE** Peter Miles
Peter Miles is the Chairman of the present day Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. Tonight he will takes us back to the original railway which closed in 1935 before reviewing the present recreated line and its exciting plans for the future.
- Thursday 16 February **SAFETY ON THE RAILWAYS** Keith Shepherd
Keith Shepherd is Her Majesty's Specialist Inspector of Railways and his presentation will follow the society's Annual General Meeting.
- Thursday 16 March **THE FASCINATION OF OLD PHOTOGRAPHS** Brian Stephenson
Brian Stephenson returns with another trawl through his archive collection featuring mostly railway subjects around the country but includes some shipping, trams, buses, road haulage and an occasional aircraft.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

In my last notes I alluded to "family problems" which were likely to take precedence over Society business for some time. For those of you who don't know already, both my parents-in-law died within six days of each other in August and this has resulted in a lot of activity for Gay and me, initially relating to the funerals and then many visits to their home in Hampshire's Meon Valley in order to clear it out and prepare it for sale, not to mention all the paperwork relating to probate. Consequently most of the beautiful summer and autumn, with its long periods of dry sunny weather, has largely been a write-off for me from a hobby point of view. I do hope that has not been the case for the rest of you and you've made the most of it.

I think the worst aspect of all this has been the necessity of clearing the house of possessions and I really have felt at times that we have been disposing of the very lives of the people involved. It has brought into sharp focus my thoughts about my own collection of "stuff" and a realisation of just how much of it there is. I'm sure I've written about this before but I have always found it much easier to talk about it rather than actually doing something and I'm sure I'm not alone in this. As enthusiasts, we are natural collectors of books, magazines, photographs, videos, DVDs, relics and general ephemera, which are all a valuable resource for our research and pleasure, even if we don't actually look at much of it very often. Unfortunately others may not agree at the value of this much-loved stuff and in due time the vast majority could simply be dumped. So maybe now is the time to make arrangements for it, before it's too late. I certainly wouldn't like my two "boys" to have to sort through my vast collection of, to them, "junk" at some time in the future and will be doing my best to thin it out considerably as soon as I can.

It is apparent that I'm not the only one de-cluttering, as the railways seem to be doing much the same and I read that there are now so many items of rolling stock surplus to requirements that there aren't enough places to store them all (in effect, a macrocosm of my garage). Frankly, it's

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amazing just how much investment is going into the railway system and I see the new Abellio Greater Anglia franchise has promised a further 1000+ brand-new vehicles, so someone had better get laying some new storage sidings for all the displaced units or we'll be in even more trouble. Whether much of the old equipment will ever see reuse is another matter, because often the cost of overhaul is so great it's just not worth it, as shown by the imminent scrapping of several of the original class 373 Eurostar sets at just about 25 years of age. So, just as one man's junk is another's valuable asset, we will have to wait and see who wants what.

Though missing out on a lot of the preservation scene latterly, I have done a little travelling and recently had my first look at the Nottingham tram system, which has obviously had lots of money invested in it and with which I was very impressed. It has two lines which essentially form a cross with its middle in the city centre and feature a mixture of dedicated tramway, street running and reuse of former railway line. I managed to cover the whole system in a few hours for the bargain price of £4 for a one-day ticket (unfortunately, you can't use your bus pass unless you live in Nottinghamshire). We also did a trip to see some of Gay's relations "up north" and spent a couple of days in Blackpool, a first visit for 20 years. Of course the tram system here has also had enormous investment in the form of modern, articulated, single deck trams, to meet accessibility requirements, but for me the whole character of the seafront has changed. Fortunately some of the traditional double-deckers were still at work in the evening on heritage illuminations tours but it wasn't quite the same as in the past.

Talking of illuminations, of course the Christmas season will soon be upon us, so may I wish all of you and your families a very happy Christmas and New Year and I hope to see you at our meeting in January.

All my very best

Tim Speechley
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SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Our new season opened in September with Andy Barr MBE, Head of Steam Operations at the London Transport Museum, bringing us up to date with the heritage operations on London's Underground and the challenges that they create.

In October our guest was Geoff Plumb who presented *That Was The Year: 1962*. Unsurprisingly, on this occasion Geoff had to rely on some photographs from others as he didn't get his own camera until his birthday that year. But it was nevertheless up to his usual outstanding quality and included a few bus and trolleybus shots which pleased many. We now look forward to presentations from Geoff moving forwards in time rather than back.

The archive theme continued in November when Mike Walker presented *Western Transition: A decade of Change 1955-1965* which was a tour of the Western Region during this turbulent time when steam gave way to Diesel and many branches closed.

This replaced the originally scheduled talk on Swindon Works by Canon Brian Arman who was unable to attend as he was recovering from a hip operation but he did make a "guest appearance" in Mike's programme. We hope to rebook Brian at a later date.

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.

The Society now has a new bank account with Lloyds which has a number of advantages over the previous account for both members and the treasurer. If you have on-line banking, you may make bank transfers to the Society.

The sort code is 30-95-36

The account no. is 62236160

If you wish to pay your subs by this method, please put "SUBS" and your name (including initial) - e.g. "SUBS-J.BLOGGS" - in the reference, and MDRS in the "Pay" box if required.. You could also set up a Standing Order to pay MDRS every 1st January which would be most convenient for both parties.

If you wish to pay for anything else by this method, please reference accordingly - e.g. "XMAS-J.BLOGGS" (Xmas) or "DON-J.BLOGGS" (Donation) or as advised. If you have any issues with the reference, please drop an e-mail to pd.robins@btopenworld.com advising of the payment.

Of course you may still pay by cash or cheque. Please note that **ONLY** cheques made out to "MDRS" or

"Marlow & District Railway Society" will be accepted by the bank.

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 send to Peter at:
1 Chalklands, Bourne End, Bucks., SL8 5TQ.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

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

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

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 19 Dec. | Branch AGM. |
| Mon 23 Jan. | Loco Hauled Passenger Trains in the Privatisation Era Geoff Brockett |
| Mon 27 Feb. | Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Roger Fagg |
| Mon 27 March | American Wanderings - Heading East
Gordon Davies |

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.

ALAN COSTELLO

We have recently discovered that one of our long-standing members, Alan Costello, passed away at the end of June last year. Alan had joined the society in its early years and retained his membership after taking early retirement from the Met Office and returning to his native Weymouth.

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ALL CHANGE AT MAIDENHEAD

This Christmas sees the biggest changes at Maidenhead since the singling of the double junction onto the branch and the abolition of the local signal box in October 1974.

The work scheduled to be carried out over the Christmas and New Year period will see the layout transformed to accommodate Crossrail trains which are scheduled to start running in December 2019. There will a basic off-peak service of four per hour, two of which will terminate at Maidenhead, the others continuing to Reading.

The main changes can be seen by comparing the two diagrams. The existing second connection onto the branch from the Up Relief will be removed leaving platform 5 as the only one giving access to the branch. A new line, called the Maidenhead Loop, will branch off the Up Relief west of the station and connect with the present Bay Line through platform 5. The London end of the Bay Line was relaid and realigned last year, allowing the speed to rise from 15mph to 50mph which will apply throughout the Maidenhead Loop.

West of the station, the Down Relief will be slewed for around ¼ mile towards the Up Main - some of this new track has actually been in place for around three years now! This will provide space between the Up and Down Relief lines to lay a new Turnback Line which will be long enough to accommodate a Class 345 Crossrail train and will be connected to both Relief Lines.

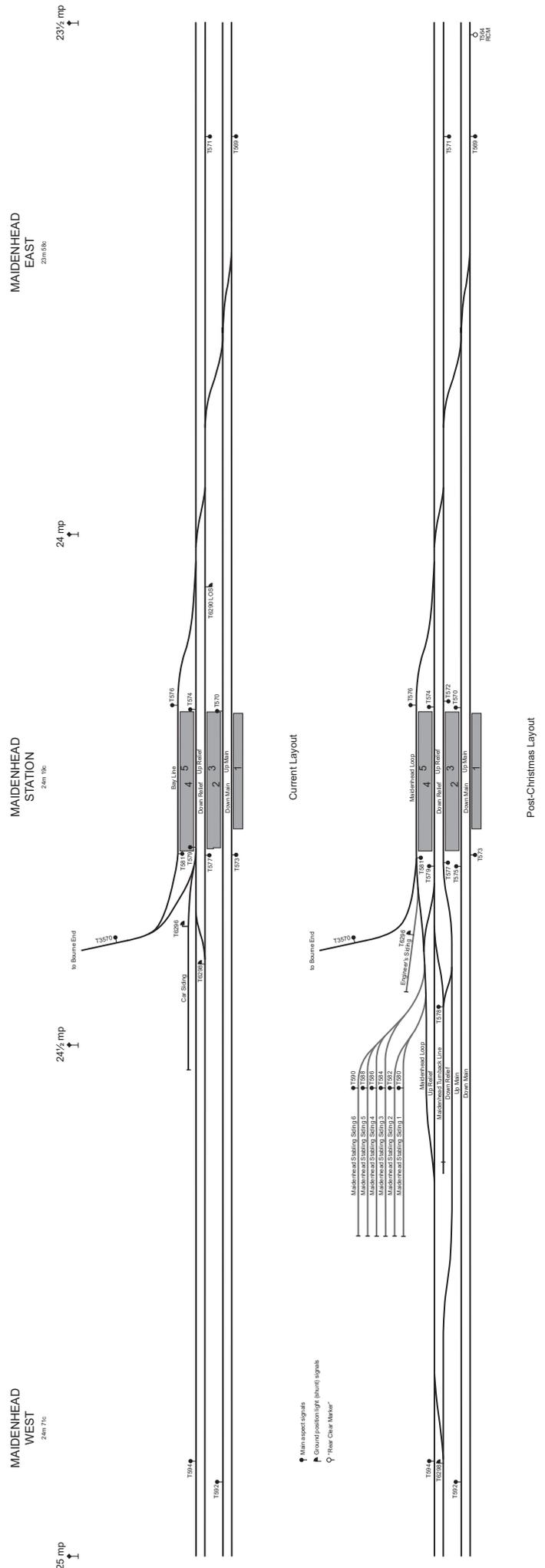
Crossrail trains terminating at Maidenhead will normally arrive on the DR at platform 3, discharge their passengers, then move into the Turnback Line where the driver will change ends. At the allotted time it can then run into platform 4 to pick up before starting off for London. Alternatively, Crossrail trains could arrive at platform 4 via the Maidenhead East crossovers as through trains to the branch do now. They will then be able to run either to the Turnback line or the stabling sidings. There is no connection between the Turnback Line and the Maidenhead Loop/platform 5.

The six Stabling Sidings will occupy the former goods yard site and will principally be used for overnight accommodation. Whilst the access pointwork will be installed at Christmas, the sidings themselves will follow later next year after the present project offices have been removed. The same applies to the Engineer's Siding which will occupy the present car park area.

The Up Relief and Maidenhead Loop will be signalled for bi-directional operation between Maidenhead East and West whilst there will be route along the Down Relief for shunt moves from Maidenhead West to platform 3 from where a main aspect route to the Up Main will be provided. In addition, provision will be made to reverse trains at Maidenhead on the main lines. From the west there will be a shunt move from platform 2 to the Down Main as far as a Rear Clear Marker (black triangle on a white disc) near the river bridge to allow reversal to platform 1. In the down direction, a train on the Down Main will be able to cross not just to the relief lines as now, but also access platform 2, a fixed red signal being provided at the country end. This will provide a far greater flexibility in operations when problems occur.

To facilitate this work, the Marlow branch and Relief Lines between Slough West and Ruscombe will be closed between 24th December and 2nd January with replacement buses serving the branch stations plus Burnham and Taplow.

Current plans call for the electrification to be completed between Airport Junction and Maidenhead by the spring allowing GWR to start limited electric services out to Maidenhead probably from the May timetable change. Through trains between Bourne End and Paddington will be withdrawn in December 2017.



A 33 for 60!

John Tuck

Nothing can stop us getting any older, and so the inevitable happened, I reached 60! The celebration was not quite as planned but that's another story. However the family presented me with a gift of a Diesel Experience Course on the West Somerset Railway. Though I'm a steam man at heart I'm not adverse to diesels as they were very much a part of my childhood as was steam, indeed living in Porstsmouth the sight of anything other than an EMU was always exciting. Amongst the diesels to be seen back then were 33s, Hymeks, Warships and Westerns. The Western Region fans among you will be pleased to know the Warships and the Westerns were always quite something of a catch. However my favourite was the Hymek, I think because of the design which looked and still looks very stylish.

So the day of the course arrived, I had to leave Susan to cope with the breakfasts and checking guests out at our North Devon Guest House so I could arrive at around 9:00, though Tim Edmonds had emailed me a copy of the working timetable for the Diesel Experience Course train which was later than the leaflet supplied 'Diesel Engineman Course' (note the subtle difference) with the ticket I still thought it best to arrive at the time requested.

I checked in at the Diesel & Electric Preservation Group (DEPG) mess room (Portakabin) at Williton to find I was one of four on the course, after sitting reading railway magazines and drinking tea we were taken to another Portakabin which served as the DEPG office, committee room and several other things, there we were given a safety briefing, also told we did not need the enriched cotton overalls we had purchased. I had my suspicions, I think someone had done a 'cut and paste' job from the steam course! We were then told that our timetable would be different today (thanks to Tim I had prior knowledge of this) due to a *Quantock Belle* charter working for the 6024 Society. However the route was a little more interesting than the standard working for this course.

We were told that we would be driving class 33 D6575 due to the fact these have dual controls for working on the Southern Region. Now as an ex. Southern man born and bred in Pompey this was more the suitable for the day, a 4TC set behind would have been even better. However we had to make do with a freight train, consisting of an eclectic collection of vehicles and about 142 tons if I remember correctly. Tim Edmonds has done some research as I did not make a note on the day, so the consist was this, not necessarily quite in this order:

1. GWR Toad brake van.
2. GWR Toad brake van.
3. GWR box van.
4. SR box van.
5. LMS 'Esso' tank wagon.
6. GWR box van.
7. BR ventilated goods van.
8. GWR Cone GPV
9. GWR Mink box van.
10. GWR bogie bolster wagon.
11. LMS brake van.



Obviously enjoying himself, John in the cab.

Photo: Tim Edmonds

The GWR bogie bolster wagon was carrying the supporting pillars of the water tower that formerly stood at Reading depot, one day these will be used to support the water tank again at Bishops Lydeard.

We were split into pairs, one pair in the cab, the other pair rode in the guards van, yours truly was selected to drive first. A diesel is somewhat simpler than a steam locomotive, therefore easier to grasp and remember the order in which things need to be done and the order is important! The only controls we were allowed to use were the Train brake, Locomotive brake, Power (throttle) lever, horn and windscreen wiper switch, of course we had to keep a watch on the Speedometer and use the horn in the appropriate locations. The one that you were inclined to forget about was the dead mans foot pedal (in fact a pad that filled the whole foot recess, if you did not keep your feet on this we were not going to go anywhere.

So we set off from Williton at least 15 minutes late which was rather ironic as the cab banter from our instructors was very much a case of "we (diesel drivers) are much better at time keeping than the steam drivers!" No rivalry then!

On taking the controls I immediately began to enjoy the experience, to be honest I was not sure I would enjoy the experience. The view of the line from the cab was incredible, a completely different experience from viewing out of the window and travel at the '25mph' line speed felt quite comfortable. The control of the locomotive like anything that is older technology is very much a case of getting the feel of the responsiveness of the controls, of course these are affected by line gradient. On the whole I was quite impressed with the response of the 33, according to the instructors only the Hymek had a better response in terms of acceleration. There were a number of speed restrictions, some temporary due to subsidence, each speed restriction was managed in slightly different ways depending on topography and/or visibility if there was a vehicle crossing point. Sea Lane crossing is an ungated crossing just east of Dunster station which has very bad line of sight for the road in either direction, so this is approached and crossed at 5mph, constantly checking for any vehicle or pedestrian.

So I was on my way to Minehead, which was pretty exciting, I'm afraid I did not make a good mental note of progress, of course I should have known Mike Walker would ask me to write an article for *The Donkey*. Never mind I can now blame it on being 60!



With John at the controls, D6575 ambles through Dunster on its way to Minehead.

Photo: Tim Edmonds

John is in the driving seat as D6575 draws its train out of Minehead.

Photo: Tim Edmonds



It was a thrill to be driving into a large terminus station, one had to approach the automatic barrier Seaward Way crossing with great caution as the board denoting the trip switch activation for the barriers is quite close to the crossing itself, you also have a red light until the barrier activation takes place, evidently it does not always! So you have to be prepared to stop or given the green light and a visual check of the barriers you will need to apply enough power to get you into the station. But not to fast as someone has to hand the line token to the signaller or their deputy. As an aside the signaller or woman at Minehead is in charge of the line. Having handed over the token a little more power to get us into the loop adjacent to the main platform line. This would allow us to run round, unfortunately our instructors took the controls at this point. C'est la vie!

I was handed back the controls for departure from Minehead, it is at this point you become aware of how well you have 'parked' your train, in fact this is team work between the guard and the driver. The ideal is to stop with taught couplings (we had a mix of loose coupled and braked wagons) so there is no slack to pick up on departure which also means the guard and any others travelling in the guards van do not get thrown! Departure from Minehead was as approach but in reverse order, with a bit more confidence and some encouragement I really opened her up once we were across the crossing, yes this was enjoyable, and I could do this for a living. Trundling up the line experiencing managing the brake and the power with some high speed (25mph!) the inspector from the DoT? Had been around all week, it was rumoured that he had not booked out of his hotel, so we did have to watch the top speed.

Class 33 D6575 running round at Norton passing the ballast recycling depot.

Photo: John Tuck



D6575 accelerates to run round the train to go back to Bishops Lydeard for the final time.

Photo: John Tuck



You may have noticed I have not mentioned timings. Well on the WSR it's a case of: Timetable! What timetable? Of course being in the company of diesel drivers any delay was down to the steam men as previously mentioned, the fact that we left Williton at least 15 minutes late seemed to have escaped them!

So my turn at driving came to an end at Washford on the return journey, I took the secondman's seat, as this is dual control you have to look out for moving handles, especially where you place your coffee!

Though I was not driving the journey was still very interesting, especially recognising the photo spots used by the MDRS members earlier in the year. The person I was paired up a chap called Roger from Cannington then drove to Bishops Lydeard. On arrival into platform 1 we had a short time to use the facilities and obtain any additional refreshments from the café. Lunch and tea/coffee was included but one of the hot water flasks was not that efficient, so fresh from the café was appreciated. Before we left we had to transfer ourselves to the LMS Brake Van next to the loco, not sure why we could not do this later, especially as the driver had overshot, we therefore had to get permission to walk at track level to access the LMS Brake.

The pair doing the next section had a unique experience for this course as we continued to the Norton Fitzwarren triangle. Though were travelling in the brake van we enjoyed the experience, the duty guard was a very interesting character with quite a few stories including the following. Evidently this stretch of line is used for training purposes including the use of detonators, with an Army camp running alongside the line prior notice of detonator use is imperative for obvious reasons. There is also the benefit of any stock stored nearby is closely monitored as the camp is bristling with CCTV.

Upon reaching Allerford Junction we proceeded slowly to Norton platform on what I assume to be the running line (see map 10 at: <http://www.wsr.org.uk/rulemaps.htm>). Here the train was detached, the locomotive went forward to the WSR limit, then proceeded on the east side of the triangle, then up past the ballast recycling centre (the WSR are never short of ballast), for a few months there is no activity there due to infrastructure work ongoing in other areas but we were told that would change end of this/beginning of next year. We stood on the platform and watched as 33 D6575 ran to the WSR limit of working, then round the East side of the triangle, past the ballast recycling centre, up to Norton Road Bridge before coupling up to the train again. I did not ask who did the driving but I suspect it was our instructors as they do get a little bored on days like this and are itching to take the controls.

Having run up to Allerford Junction D6575 runs to couple up the train.

Photo: John Tuck

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Once D6575 was coupled up we rejoined the train, again travelling in the LMS Brake Van. Oh dear! Give me a GWR Toad any day, it was a far superior ride and now we had the odd shower to contend with as well as a drop in temperature! We had to wait for GWR 4575 Class 2-6-2T "small prairie" tank to run round, she had arrived from the Torbay and Dartmouth to take part in the Autumn Steam Gala, she was the main cause of delays today as she could just cope with the train, of course needed regular coaling and water.

Now I really start to loose the plot! So this is what being 60 means! Fortunately with a combination of the working timetable, meta data from my pictures and an email from my fellow driver stating who drove when I think I am able to make sense of the day!

I can not remember if we stopped at Bishops Lydeard (BL) but we did make a scheduled stop at Crowcombe Heathfield so the 14.20 ex-Minehead could pass with Odney Manor in charge running tender first. Once we had possession driver No. 4 took the controls and D6575 ran round the train so we could return to BL. Arriving back at BL at 15:44 according to the meta data from my camera, we ran into platform 1 and stopped in the correct place! 7828 *Odney Manor* was waiting to depart with the 16:10 departure to Minehead (the last of the day). So time to get that last cup of fresh tea from the café, browse the shop and museum before our departure, which was just under an hour later than the WTT for our train. By now the sun was shinning for the final run back to Williton.

Would I do it again, would I recommend the Diesel Experience Course? The answer is yes to both. There's another course where you get to drive the Hymek! Donations welcome!

D6575 was delivered new to Stewarts Lane Depot in November 1961, renumbered to 33057 in December 1973. Withdrawn on 13th February 1997, she was purchased as a source of spares for D6566 and delivered to the WSR in the autumn of 2005. After full restoration she entered service in January 2013.



Some Jewels from the Emerald Isle

JOHN SEARS visits the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum at Cultra, near Belfast, and looks at some of the exhibits.

County Donegal Railways' railcar no. 1

This pup started life in 1907, built by Alldays and Onions of Brummagem as an inspection car, open, with a transverse bench seat – presumably for the inspector – and a seat for the driver, all propelled by a 10 horse-power petrol engine. It was the first internal combustion rail vehicle in Ireland. By 1920 it had been given a “saloon” with six seats and a 22 hp engine, and in 1949 a replacement front-end brought a 36 hp engine. The body was eight foot five long, by an amazing three foot seven wide; judge for yourself by comparing its width with the track gauge. It was used from June 1926 on the Glenties branch, the ultimate in “long, thin” routes – even by 2011 Glenties' population was only 869. The line ran 24 miles from its junction with the main line at Stranorlar, opened in June 1895 and closed in 1952, kept alive since December 1947 by “spasmodic” loads of bog-ore and sheep. Part of the line is now occupied by the Fintown Railway, where another CDR railcar, no. 18 a Walker Brothers product, is propelled by a Simplex loco. Henry Forbes, the CDR's general manger from 1910 to 1943, liked the machine and in 1926 bought the two railcars the Derwent Valley were selling after only two years' use. He out-bid Col. Stephens, who wanted them for the East Kent, paying £480, plus £20 for carriage from York to Stranorlar. They were the precursors of a fleet that eventually totalled twenty, which total included one that rose from the firebox.

Clogher Valley Railway's railcar no. 1

Here's what was the Clogher Valley Railway's no. 1, masquerading as the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee's no. 10. Well, maybe “masquerading” is a bit unfair.... The Clogher Valley, a roadside railway that



linked Tynan in Co. Armagh and Maguiresbridge in Co. Fermanagh, like most railways in the 1930s was seeking for a cheaper way to provide services. They borrowed a railcar for a week from the pioneering CDR and were convinced. Ordered from Walker Brothers, Wigan, on the 4th. of July 1932 for a price of £1,950 delivered to Belfast, it was delivered and in service by early December the same year. The wonders of low-tech! It was the first articulated railcar, and had a 1,300 rpm 74 bhp six-cylinder Gardner diesel engine. It has 29 seats and weighs just under 12 tons, so no Siemens lard-butt. On the Clogher Valley it covered an average of 970 miles a week, which, assuming it went to church on Sundays, meant daily mileage equivalent to two return trips over the length of the line. Cost-effective. It operated the last revenue train on the line, on 31st. December, 1941, and then, in a truly appropriate deal, was sold to the County Donegal. It ran with them for another 18 years until their closure in 1959, by which time it had covered over one million miles.



County Donegal's Phoenix

Another transfer from the Clogher Valley to the County Donegal, and this time a conversion. It was built by Atkinson-Walker in Preston in late 1928, and delivered to the CVR in January 1929. It had a water-tube boiler and two vertical cylinders enclosed in its body, weighed twelve tons and was a disaster. In a month it was being described as "thoroughly unsatisfactory" and despite its makers going over and fitting a larger boiler they were asked in that November to remove the loco. Instead they went into liquidation and the "rail tractor" languished in the sheds at Aughnacloy until Henry Forbes, who was on the managing committee of the CVR, got permission to buy it for the CDR and convert it into a diesel. One 74 hp Gardner diesel and a bit of work, plus the technical expertise of the Great Northern's Dundalk works, made it into a shunting and light freight loco, which lasted until the County Donegal closed on the very last day of 1959, and helped even after that, powering some of the track-lifting trains.

CDR no. 2 Blanche

The County Donegal was one of those "plural" railway companies; in full it was the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee, run by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) and the Midland Railway, later the LMS. For once a committee did a very good job of things, helped by the remarkable Henry Forbes, who once, in 1922, ran after an IRA gang who held up a train. Forbes carried a revolver, which he'd fired at the gang – which was eight or nine strong! – and then chased them, catching and detaining one who was later tried. It seems very probable that Forbes was vital in



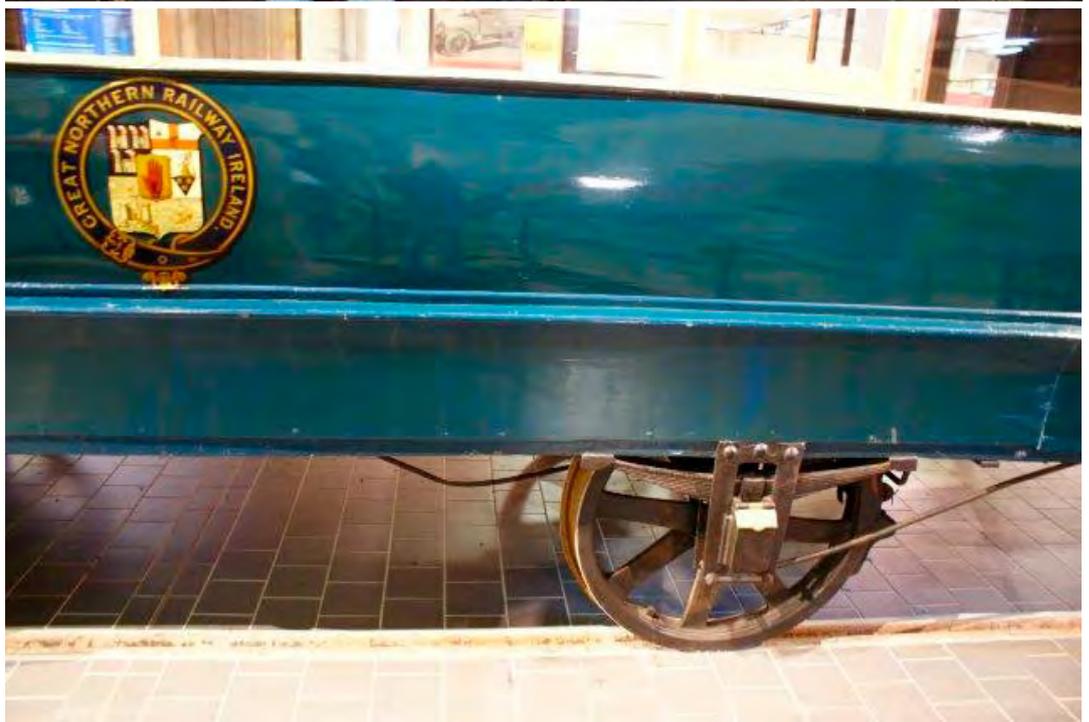
keeping the Donegal strong enough to survive World War II and last as long as it did. No. 2 is a class 5A loco, built in 1912 as number 2A *Stranorlar* by Nasmyth Wilson. They, in an earlier incarnation, had built the Great Western's first class of 0-6-0s, the Hercules Class of 1842. One of three, the loco had plenty of the latest technology, including Schmidt superheater, piston valves, mechanical lubricators for the cylinders and valves, pressure lubrication elsewhere, a variable blastpipe, smokebox ash ejectors and – amazingly – speed indicators. It is said that

it recorded at least 62 mph once in 1951 when the loco ran away with a 17-car freight. It piled up, but without loss of life, and one wagon ended up falling off an overbridge and shedding its load of sugar in the road. With 14,295 lb of tractive effort they were more powerful than a 14XX, but were 2-6-4Ts, with two cylinders 15½ x 21 inches, four-foot drivers and a working weight of nearly 50½ tons. They were 11' 1" to their chimney top, 7' 10" wide and almost 35 feet over their couplers.

The Fintona tram car

The Great Northern was an inclusive sort of railway, in that it used steam, diesel, electricity and actual horse power to haul its trains. One of its precursors, the Londonderry and Enniskillen, set off to link its endpoints; in April 1847 it opened from Londonderry to Strabane, by September 1852 it was in Omagh, and in the following June it was at Fintona. Then there was a bit of a re-think, and Fintona was left as a terminus, with the route on to Enniskillen diverging to the south west only 55 chains out of town. The company was quite content that Dromore Road, the next station south, was about three miles from town, so quite why it decided Fintona (“Fint nuh”) deserved better is a puzzle. Enniskillen was reached in August 1854. In another four and half years a through route existed between Londonderry and Dundalk, and thence to Dublin. So, despite being almost twelve years in the completion as a through route, still as quick as the planning to dual the A5 from Londonderry to Ballygawley, where the old Clogher Valley station building hides beneath its pebble-dashing next to the bus park and ride. The powers that be decided in July 2007 to go ahead with the scheme. Your scribe visited an exhibition of its route in Ballygawley in March 2016. Work has yet to start. Three years’ time is a current guess.....

But back in 1853 the railway company decided that its short new branch would be best served by true horse-power. And so it was, for 104 years until closure in October 1957. Here’s a rather under-scale replica Dick – all the line’s horses, regardless of sex, were called Dick – leading the luggage wagon, and the tram car; third class on the top, in the open, and second and first classes downstairs in the saloon. In this formation they’re heading from the town station to Fintona Junction. Despite the fact that to drive the train the driver had to stand in the wagon, and couldn’t operate the tram’s brakes, this was how they did it in that



direction. The lie of the land suggests it was uphill to the Junction, so who needed brakes anyway, and there was no need for any shunting if the wagon remained at one end. Besides the car would be nearest the buffer stop in Fintona. You’ll note the lightweight brake, and the lightweight springs – and the sumptuous blue of the Great Northern’s railcar livery. Steam locomotion was allowed to move the freight. The terminus was right on Main Street, where a gap in the building line marks the spot, but there’s very little trace on the ground of the branch or, in this area, its main line. The village name signs though have quite a decent front three-quarters silhouette of Dick and tramcar.

Portstewart tram engine no. 2

Here's another Ulster roadside tramway, or rather its second (of three) locomotive. This ran on the line that linked the Portrush branch to the seaside resort of Portstewart. After another Nimby landowner refused to allow the Belfast Ballymena Coleraine and Portrush Junction Railway closer than 1½ miles, it was 1880, 25 years after Portrush got its railway, that an Order in Council was granted by the Lord Lieutenant – a useful legal short-cut for local lines – for a tramway. It opened two years later, with one Kitson standard tramway 0-4-0T (cost new: £650), one open-top double deck tramcar, one single deck toast rack car, and one four-wheel luggage van. No. 2, an identical Kitson product arrived a year later. Five years of bankruptcy ended in 1897 when the Belfast & Northern Counties Railway coughed up £2,100. By 1925, owners LM&SR decided the track renewals were an expense too far, and the last tram ran on 30th. January 1926. It was substituted; the first roadside tramway in Ireland, and the first narrow gauge line to close.



Great Southern 800 Maedb

Yet another plural railway: the Great Southern Railways was formed in January 1925 by merging the Midland Great Western, Great Southern & Western, Dublin & South Eastern and Cork Bandon & South Coast. In the 14 years to 1939 they built only 59 steam locomotives and then stopped building them altogether. Number 800 *Maedb* was built in 1939 at Inchicore Works, the first of three Queen Class locos. Originally more were planned, one to be named *Deirdre*; perhaps in this case cancellation wasn't such a bad thing? She's a three cylinder (18½ x 28 inches) 84 ton 4-6-0, designed to work the heavy trains on the Dublin to Cork route. An impressive machine,

with a gorgeous name plate. The queen herself was also impressive, if she existed; it seems there is some doubt. She reigned for sixty years, over Connaught, that part of western Ireland that includes Galway, Ballina and Sligo, around the change from BC to AD, or BCE to CE as the revisionists now require. Her name is pronounced "meeve" as the English version Maeve nearly shows.

The pictures were taken in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum in Cultra on the Bangor branch, which has made life difficult for snappers by rather crowding the rail exhibits, and using a lot of bright spot lights!

THE WHITE MAIDEN

David Gardner



T9 4-4-0 30715 rides the turntable at Padstow. Photo M L Boakes

The year was 1950 and although it was now 2½ years since the nation's railways system had been taken into public ownership little had changed. This was particularly the case of the North Cornwall line of the Southern Region of British Railways; when after leaving school at 15 Adam Treffry started work on the first Monday of September as a junior porter at the station a short distance away from his home on the edge of Bodmin Moor. The station buildings and signal box were still painted in Green and Cream and many of the carriages carried a livery of olive or Malachite green although more and more were being turned out in the crimson and cream of B.R. Locomotives too, despite appearing uncared for could be seen with the 'Southern' on the side tanks or tenders albeit with an increase of 30000 added to their numbers. Most were painted in plain black apart from Bulleid Light Pacifics which were in lined green and appeared at first only in the summer months. Adam's favourite locos were the T9s which were soon turned out in lined black livery as were 'N' class 2-6-0s and some of the tank engines. Adam found his work colleagues helpful and friendly, particularly Billy Mawgan who was a fellow porter, Jed Petherick, one of the signalmen and regular loco crew Jake Blisland and Fred Bray. All lived in the town which was over a mile away. Mr Trevithick was the station master but as he also covered other smaller stations along the line, was often not seen for several hours each day. He was quite elderly and originally started work on the L.S.W.R. before the Great War. Whilst Adam was happy working as a porter he really wanted to be a signalman and would often go into the box in quieter moments and there were plenty of those particularly once

the summer traffic had ceased. Jed told him about 'The White Maiden' the ghost of a young and beautiful woman who had died in tragic circumstances. Apparently the lady in question was engaged to be married to a Merchant Naval Officer and she had even got her wedding dress and veil. The year was 1915 and before they were due to be wed the girl's sweetheart received a telegram to take a train to Liverpool where he was to take over the duties of a fellow officer who had been taken ill. There were tearful goodbyes but the young man said he would soon be home again and he and his love would then be married. As fate would have it the ship he sailed on was the RMS Lusitania which left Liverpool on 17th April on what was the 201st Transatlantic Voyage arriving in New York on 24th April. The liner's return voyage started on 1st May but one day from arrival in Liverpool the Lusitania was torpedoed on 7th May 1915 by a German U-boat with great loss of life including the young officer.

His fiancée was understandably devastated and could not be consoled though after a while she seemed calmer. With the summer gone the long darker nights returned. It was on such a night that dressed in her wedding clothes the young woman walked from her parent's cottage on the moor to an isolated section of the railway line and laid her head on the track. Not long after a goods train came along and in the dark and foggy gloom the crew of the engine unable to see much ahead ran over and decapitated the poor wretch. It was the guard who saw and notified the signalman about the tragedy. It's said that her headless ghost haunts the moor and area she died in on the anniversary of her death.

Jed finished off by saying, 'not that I've ever seen her or any other ghost for that matter, but why don't you have a word with Mr Trevithick, he knew the couple all those years ago'. Time went by but when a vacancy came up with the imminent retirement of signalman Robert Cada, Adam asked the Station Master about taking over from Mr Cada. An interview was arranged with Mr Trevithick who saw no reason why Adam shouldn't become the second signalman once Rob Cada retired following a period of training. Once the formalities were over, Adam asked Mr Trevithick about the tragic lovers. The old man was a bit hesitant at first then said, 'I thought your parents might have told you about them, after all the young man was your uncle, though he was the eldest in the family and your father only a boy at the time.' Adam questioned his parents about his long deceased uncle and they confirmed that he had died on the Lusitania but would not speak of the young woman, perhaps because of the shame of her taking her own life. He was however shown a photograph of his uncle which showed a remarkable resemblance to himself. After a few weeks Adam was offered the job of signalman which he willingly accepted. He had to be trained and tested for rules etc. but passed with no real problems. On the following Monday morning Adam took over the signal box for the first time on his own.

The traffic was light, for the summer season had passed, but he enjoyed operating the box, meeting engine crews when he handed over the single line token and busying himself with polishing lever handles in slack periods as well as tidying up the inside of the signal box.

There were only two shifts for the signalmen, earlies and lates as the box was closed down overnight, so while Adam worked early turns, Jed Petherick was on lates and vice versa. Adam enjoyed the work both in busy times and slack, Billy Mawgan would often come for a chat and at least once a week Mr Trevithick popped into the box to check that all was well.

Adam had been doing the job for over a year when he was given notice of a special train that was coming along the line and Adam's signal box as with those either side, were to remain open until after the train had passed. Normally the box would be closed around 11pm but on this particular night it was past mid-night when the sound of 1-2-2 bells for an E code freight came through. After responding to this code Adam pulled off the signals to clear and out of the murky fog came the loud bark of an 'N' class engine with its train of sheeted opens on its way to Padstow Quay. Tokens were exchanged then Adam sent the train entering



34007 Wadebridge, seen here at Eastleigh in 1952, was an Exmouth Junction locomotive and often worked on the North Cornwall line. Photo: H F Wheeler collection

section bell code and set back the signals to danger. The 3-3-5 bell code came through from the following box then after sending the closing of box code Adam filled in the last bit of the register for the day before checking all was well, extinguished the oil lights then locked up the signal box and made his way along the track to his moorland home. The fog by this time was quite thick but this did not worry Adam as he knew his way blindfolded. Suddenly, he saw coming towards him the figure of a woman dressed from head to toe in white, then realised it was the ghost of the White Maiden. As she approached her arms came out as if to embrace him and he noticed there was no face to the figure. Without any further hesitation Adam turned round and ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the signal box and locked himself in. The spectre however, came on and began to climb the stairs of the box. What Adam did not know was that there are no walls or locked doors for a ghost. The scream that Adam made would have chilled the blood of anyone capable of hearing it, but there was no one to hear it. When Jed Petherick opened up the box early in the morning he found the twisted figure of Adam Treffry dead on the floor, his face distorted in fear. Apparently, Adam looked so like his long dead uncle that the female ghost mistook him for her intended and had come to take him with her exactly 40 years from the anniversary of her death. She got her wish. Jed was in a real state, not only had he found his young colleague and friend dead but he blamed himself for ever having said anything about the ghost.

Somehow he managed to keep up with his work but Mr Trevithick kept a close eye on him for several days afterwards. Then one day while he was talking to Jed the Station Master said 'Of course I did see her, the ghost I mean. It was a while after she had died and I'd been to visit her parents. I was on my way back home when this figure of a young woman came alongside me. Only it wasn't real it was her ghost all dressed in white she was, like she was going to her wedding. Then as quick as she came she disappeared. It really shook me up and I never told a soul, not until now Jed. In fact you are the first person I have ever spoken about it.'

The two men looked at each other sympathetically.

He didn't deserve to die, Jed said. No he didn't replied the old man, no he didn't he repeated. Mr Trevithick then turned to leave the signal box, but as he did so, Jed noticed there were tears in his eyes. Eventually, things got back to normal and a new signalman took over Adam's job, but the ghost of the White Maiden was never seen again.



N 2-6-0 31830 awaits departure at Padstow with a crew member rushing to board the loco. Photo: Lens of Sutton

Mr. Sod – Please Meet Mr. Murphy

DON WOODWORTH finds the frustrations of our hobby cross the Atlantic.



When I first came to the UK in 1971, it did not take me long to learn about the infamous Mr. Sod, namesake of Sod's Law, during my initial railfanning (gricing) expeditions. It soon occurred to me that Mr. Sod had an American cousin named Mr. Murphy, namesake of the infamous Murphy's Law on my side of the Atlantic.

The basic tenet of Sod's/Murphy's Law is simple – If Something Can Go Wrong, It Will.

I do not believe that there is a railfan (gricer) living who has not experienced the baneful effect of this law or one of its corollaries. Had I not had the presence of mind to record the details of the tens of thousands of photographs that I have taken over time (and I mostly have), I would have long ago forgotten the details of many of them. The same cannot be said for some of the shots that I've missed – the ugly details were not recorded and in some cases I'm sure the ozone still crackles blue with words of which my mother would not have approved. I'm certain that many of you reading this article have shared the same experience. One tends to remember the pain of what was missed.

Raifanning (gricing) is pretty much the same all over the world – as modified by local conditions. One usually sets out with the hope of decent weather and a specific objective in mind. I found there to be an interesting contrast between the States and the UK. Generally speaking, I found the frequency of trains in the UK to be generally incredible – but the weather often pretty dodgy. In the States, the opposite was often true – save for selected areas near major cities, frequency (usually lack thereof) could be a major problem – though I often enjoyed better weather in which to wait for the train that never came. In the case of both countries, in the 1970s and 1980s, the variety of equipment and scenes was incredibly rich. As time passed and my friend Mike Walker asked me to write this article, I think the railway scene has become incredibly more boring in the States – and perhaps somewhat the opposite in the UK.

Valmeyer, Illinois. Here is a prime example of the dreadful "blind eye" effect. It tends to happen when the sun is in position to perfectly illuminate a traditional three-quarters "wedgie" view of an on-coming train – usually the Holy Grail situation for a gricer. But at about 100 to 150 feet out, when the locomotive hits the perfect spot where the shutter should be snapped, the combined angle of the cab window on a wide-cab diesel unit and that of the sun creates an ugly "blind eye" flash that destroys the effect of what would otherwise be a wonderful photograph. The scenery was perfect, the fall leaves were perfect. The "blind eye" effect on the lead Union Pacific RR SD70 5004 was not! Notice the perfectly clean right-of-way. All of the junk that I picked up some time prior to taking this photo came home with me to be properly recycled.

All photos by the author.

Over the years, it has never ceased to astound me on how incredibly difficult it sometimes is to photograph a train. After all, they only go back and forth on a fixed and predictable route. They usually do not jump off the tracks to attack gricers. You would think trains would have some respect and offer greater cooperation for those of us who go to such great lengths to photograph them. But oh, those inanimate hunks of sheet metal just don't give gricers any respect.

Contrasting the US with the UK

I was posted in the UK from 1971-1974 and 1978-82 with the occasional visit in between those dates and four or five visits subsequent to 1982 to visit my now deceased friend Dave Theobald of St. Ives, Cambs, and other British friends with whom I've maintained contact. During the years in which I was posted to the UK, British Rail generally maintained a pretty blah image of deep green or deep blue rolling stock set off with yellow ends for safety purposes. I'm sure it was economical to paint and maintain such color schemes but they generally weren't something to set one's heart pounding.



Bethnal Green, London. *I wish I could have spent a sunny morning at Bethnal Green in days of steam. Devotees of God's Wonderful Railway may not realize it but trains departing from Liverpool Street Station for East Anglia face a very stiff climb from a standing start as they leave the station and they don't surmount the worst of the grade until Bethnal Green. Diesel locomotives get a pretty good workout as well but there is little clag to show for the effort. Electric traction is pretty useless as, moving or standing still, there is very little to suggest horsepower at work. That said, I still like electric traction as I grew up in one of the few areas of the United States where it was (and still is) common in (former) New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad territory. Hence, the more wire in the sky, the happier I am. Here, we have a Class 47, likely with a Norwich train, dusting the catenary with a bit of clag as it tops the bank and starts to stretch its legs on the mainline to the principal city of Norfolk.*

By contrast, the number of main line railway companies in the States had not yet finally been reduced from the 160 or so major systems I knew as a young man to the five basic systems that exist in 2016, so there was still a wide range of color schemes and interesting equipment still to be photographed. The basic problem was that the United States was just so very large that it often became a major logistical chore to explore new areas whereas much smaller Britain was much more suited to hunting down the fascinating little nooks and crannies of individualism that lurked within the overall BR system.

Since the time of my final posting in the UK in 1982, many things have been somewhat turned upside down. The break-up and privatisation of BR has produced a host of new operators, equipment, and wonderful color schemes. Because passenger service is so intense in the UK (especially compared to the greater part of the States), many wonderful examples of station architecture remain. The general disappearance of locomotive-hauled trains in lieu of diesel and electric multiple units (jocularly referred to by my late friend and BR engine driver Bill Last as "bug boxes") has made the photography scene perhaps a bit more boring but the many new color schemes definitely brighten up the world – especially on the many dull days that one often experiences in the UK. But, despite the weather, many wonderful photographic sites remain and the sameness of the modern "bug boxes" can be offset by the historical richness of the UK.

US mainline railways have eliminated as many passenger stations, freight (goods) stations, interlocking towers (signal boxes), and shops as possible – all in the name of reducing taxable infrastructure. This increasingly leaves bridges at the most interesting line-side structures to photograph – and I'm sure our railroads would eliminate these large maintenance-intensive structures if they could find a way to do it (I understand that levitating freight trains are under development!). Modern locomotives built by General Electric and General Motors (now Progress Rail Locomotive, Inc.) increasingly look the same and, when bought in the huge numbers used by America's five largest railways, tend to cover the nation with might seem to be a huge amalgam of Class 24, Class 25, and Class 26 diesels. One cannot tell the players without The Contemporary Diesel Spotters Guide by Marre-Withers (US) or a trusty Ian Allan Rail Guide (UK).

I tend increasingly to try and find interesting bridges upon which to photograph trains and put some variety in my photos. With an often paucity of trains, this often means long waits in a given location before something finally comes along. This poses a problem in a post 9/11 world where, in probably one out of three outings, I often meet a (to date) friendly policeman who wants to know what I'm doing. No problems yet, as I make a serious effort not to trespass on railway property – but it is still disconcerting to have a police officer appear and ask questions. With the rise of Islamic terrorism in Europe, accounts received from my British friends suggest that many of the concerns that motivate our police also motivate the authorities in the UK – with the attendant aggro when gricers try to lawfully pursue their hobby.

Enter the Cousins Murphy and Sod

With the foregoing background, let's discuss some of the many corollaries of Murphy's/Sod's law: Any railfan/griker that I know usually begins an outing with the hope of bright sunshine and lots of trains to photograph. Messrs. Murphy and Sod are consummate professionals in ruining this scenario. Some situations are common to both the US and the UK; others tend to be a bit more country specific. The code at the start of each bullet indicates where the "law" most often applies. Read on all who have experienced their baneful ministrations!!

- US/UK. You will indeed have blizzing sun except for the 1/500th second you need it. If there's a single cloud lurking about, it will obscure the sun at the critical moment.
- US/UK. Perfect setting – until some idiot wanders into it at the last minute.
- US/UK. Perfect location – until an official or landowner appears out of nowhere and invites you to leave – just as the train you wanted to shoot is approaching.
- US/UK. Gricer's Rights. You're out to photograph a special excursion train and have set up in a choice location. Under the generally understood proposition that "He whose first anchors the photo line," other railfans respect your location and either cluster about you or carefully seek alternatives that do not place themselves in your carefully chosen view – except for the occasional dolt lacking the common sense or courtesy to understand what's going on and places themselves obtrusively into the view. Stun gun anyone?



- US/UK. Perfect location – until the first shadow of the day falls directly upon the critical spot at which you want to snap your shot.
- US/UK. You're just ahead of the train and looking for a place to park – but there isn't one; or you find a spot and get to trackside about two seconds too late; you take a wrong turning at the last minute, or in your haste you put one wheel into a ditch.
- US/UK. You're perfectly set up for the master shot – but you discover you've forgotten to cock the shutter at the very instant you want to trip it.
- US/UK. You get the perfect master shot – but learn as you trip the shutter that it was set at a 60th of a second instead of the desired 500th of a second.
- US/UK. Perfect location, but some bird brain fowls it up! Some readers may know of Alfred Hitchcock's classic horror movie "The Birds." Strangely enough, even regular birds can fowl up a well-planned photo (sick pun intended!). I can think of at least one occasion, when shooting from a cliff, that a hawk flying below me cruised into my viewfinder just as I was going to trip the shutter. On other occasions, an approaching train has spooked pigeons, sparrows, and the occasional pheasant which flew up and into my photo at just the wrong moment. My country for a cat!!
- US/UK. Parochialism – it's not my favorite railroad. How many neat things did I miss during my early gricing years? Just like devotees of the Great Western Ry. sometimes disparage the LNER, so did I in my earlier years ignore wonderful things in my own back garden (such as the wonderful variety of 3rd-rail electric locomotives operated by the nearby New York Central Railroad) in favor of photographing my beloved New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. Alas, neither of these companies now exist and their equipment I so much admired has

Mendota, Illinois. *One of my favorite lighting conditions occurs usually on an overcast day when the sun sinks low enough in the west to get below the prevailing cloud deck and act as a spotlight to brilliantly illuminate foreground objects against a still dark background. I suspect this condition may occur a bit more frequently in the UK than it does in the States but I love it when it happens. On the occasion of this photograph, I was en route to a railway photography symposium at Lake Forest College in the well-heeled suburb of the same name some 20 miles north of the great city of Chicago. I hate driving in major metropolitan areas, so I'd planned my journey to include an overnight in the small town of Mendota so that I could drive on and arrive in Chicago-land in early afternoon and avoid any possible rush-hour traffic problems. It can still snow in early April in northern Illinois. I was hoping to avoid this problem and to perhaps get a few photos in Mendota before driving on to Lake Forest the next day. The late afternoon cloud deck did not look promising though hope was offered by the occasional 15 second burst of sunshine caused by a thinning of the cloud deck. After freezing on the platform of the Amtrak station in Mendota for the better part of an hour, I finally caught a break in the last 30 minutes of the day before the sun sank below the horizon, resulting in this beautifully lit photo of two Burlington Northern Santa Fe units awaiting a call to duty on the Mendota local the next day.*

mostly become razor blades. As I've aged, I've become a lot more ecumenical in what I photograph as one never knows how long something will continue in operation. Just in my own town, after nearly 150 years of operation, the CSX system closed its main line between East St. Louis, Illinois and Cincinnati, Ohio on 7th August 2015 bringing all railroad operations to an end. The closure is supposed to be "temporary" – but I'm not holding my breath. I'm glad that I shot the entire length of this line while I had the opportunity.



- US/UK. The Greatorex Effect. There sometimes tends to be a person in one's circle of friends who has an uncanny ability to adversely affect a gricing expedition. In the UK, this would be my friend Peter Greatorex, well-known to your editor and I'm sure many members of the Marlow & District Railway Society, who with the twitch of an eyebrow can summon up clouds from a cloudless sky; cause a points failure by simply glaring at them, and cause schedule meltdowns by simply raising his forefinger.
- US/UK. You're following a train and trying to get ahead of it to set up for another shot but can't get past the queue of gricers pacing the train to shoot video.
- US/UK (more the US). You've waited at a spot for several hours and the locals begin to wonder if you're a terrorist. A friendly policeman shows up to make polite inquiries – usually as the belated train you were awaiting finally comes into view.
- US/UK (more the US). Reflections – the baleful “blind eye” effect. The windscreens on modern US diesels are so situated that, just as a locomotive approaches the perfect spot for a photo (particularly on sunny days), the windscreen is suddenly transformed into a mirror that records with exceptionally ugly effect in the final photograph. In time, one learns to plan for this unhappy occasion. I've also had this happen when photographing Class 47s but the effect seems to be more common with modern wide-cab US diesels.
- US/UK (more the US). One waits hours for a train to appear. One's countenance brightens when the bright headlight of an approaching train finally appears on the horizon. One's outlook plummets when it is discovered that the nose door on the wide-cab locomotive is open (ugly!!); the locomotive is filthy or its paint is peeling; or (increasingly) graffiti “artists” have loused up a perfectly good paint scheme with this misguided and misbegotten “art.” I waited four hours for this!!??
- UK. Sunday Workings. I soon learned that traveling by train in the UK was a tenuous proposition as one could never totally rely on time keeping due to work in progress on the permanent way. On the plus side, it was often

Windsor Castle, Berkshire. *I had an Aunt who lived in Marchwood near Southampton, Hants. during the time I was posted to the UK. My wife and I would often travel south from East Anglia to visit. Being allergic to driving in London, I would always give the city a wide berth on our trips south, usually working in a few sites of historical interest along the way. One such occasion saw us driving along the A332 just west of Windsor when I spied a train on the line serving Windsor & Eaton Central Station. I had timed my trip in hopes of seeing a train but wasn't overly optimistic as the sun had been (mostly) in and out for the better part of the day. On this day, I think Mr. Sod must have been on holiday because, not only did the sun pop out at the required moment, but there was a rainbow in the background. Shots like this don't occur often but, when they do, they cancel out at least 10 or 15 duff shots caused by Mr. Sod.*

possible to see unusual workings that would have not likely happened under normal circumstances – such as Deltics and HSTs avoiding blockages on the ECML by running through Cambridge and Ely.

- US (mostly). Waiting several hours for a train to show – only to see it in your wing mirror just after you've left your spot. I often invoke the “5-minute rule.” If I've been at a spot for three or four hours and a train hasn't yet appeared, I pick a time by which I will cut my loses and leave – and then add an extra five minutes to it. Once in a great while, this last ditch bit of optimism actually yields a train. More often than not, though, it just means that I've gotten to read a few more pages of War and Peace.
- US (mostly). I generally found things to be tidier track-side in the UK rather than the States – maybe not in stations (slobs will be slobs no matter what the country) – but I generally found things line-side to be tidier and better manicured. That may be partially because it is a bit more difficult to access the line-side in Britain than in the States where things are usually a bit more open. For this reason, when I arrive at a line-side location in the States where I wish to take photographs, I will usually take a bit of time to pick up any trash that I can reasonably access in the interest of having a nicer looking photo if/when a train



Belle Dock Freight. *Being in the forces, it was always a wrench when I came home on leave to try and balance family commitments with my desire to do some gricing. This was especially so in the fall of 1967 when I returned fully intact from a tour of duty in Vietnam and was home in Connecticut visiting my family. I have had a life-long interest in my beloved New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad and had gone to the city of New Haven (about 15 miles from home) to do a bit of photography en route to my grandmother's house. One of my very favorite types of photographic situations is street running. It is an absolute treat to catch a freight (goods) train sharing the street with traffic and watching the autos scatter like pigeons as a train trundles along the road. In this case, Mr. Murphy definitely had to be on an extended holiday as I was incredulous to see a train making its way back from the industrial Belle Dock area of the city of New Haven, likely with a cargo of heating oil for the homes of Connecticut. I quickly dropped anchor to grab this wonderful shot of one of the New Haven's ubiquitous Alco switchers (shunters) muscling a cut of tank cars along one of the major thoroughfares of the city.*

finally materializes. For the same reason, I carry a pair of secateurs and a pair of lopping shears with me, plus a small bow saw, to remove any minor bits of vegetation that might otherwise spoil a nice shot. Hence, one can imagine the frustration when on breezy days when all the tidying up has been done, an overlooked piece of newspaper or a plastic grocery bag floats into view at exactly the wrong time.

- US. The nicer the weather, the fewer the trains.
- US. New to an area? Be assured that while you are seeking the best photo location(s), the train(s) that you want to photograph will pass and traffic on the line will dry up just after you've gotten things sorted out.
- US. The farther that one is from home, the higher the chance that when a train finally does appear, it will not be coming from the desired direction. I may take a photo anyway since I've gone to the trouble to get in place but these "kamikaze" shots are rarely satisfactory with the train coming out of the sun.

Making Lemonade from Lemons.

Did I leave anything out? Maybe one or two items but, for the most part, anyone who has done anything approaching serious railway photography will have experienced a significant number of these situations.

Wide angle, zoom, and telephoto lenses help to alleviate the effect of Sod's/Murphy's Law and their corollaries. Telephotos allow one to crop out extraneous things that might otherwise spoil a shot or to get the train in a small pool of light that the gathering shadows have not yet obliterated. A wide angle lens may allow one to salvage a "kamikaze" shot by obtaining a reasonable broadside view – perhaps not the originally desired traditional $\frac{3}{4}$ view "wedgie" but at least something viewable – by minimizing the otherwise darkened nose of the approaching train.

At least in international US/UK gricing, one's accent can sometimes be helpful. My daughter, when she was little, pronounced accent as "accident." Indeed, it is often the happy accident of one's accent that can serve one well when gricing.

A British accent probably won't help one when in an area where they shouldn't be in the UK. However, a British accent in the States could sometimes lubricate the gears of officialdom and get one out of a tight spot or into a forbidden spot. For a Brit driving in the western United States, the situation approaches motoring heaven. As compared to the density of traffic in the UK, there is virtually none in

our Midwestern and western states. It became a standing joke that, when visiting the States, my late friend Dave Theobald would have at least one encounter with the police because of his heavy foot – and – that his wonderful ability to go into a Dickensian Uriah Heep routine would get him off with a bollocking but not a speeding ticket and fine. A British accent would often get us into areas otherwise inaccessible to American gricers. In such situations, I would coach my British friends in advance and then keep my mouth shut so as not to blow our cover. Dave's accent also got us a lovely tour of the Union Pacific (formerly Southern Pacific) Railroad yards near New Orleans, Louisiana from a railroad policeman who became very friendly when he learned that we were not trouble makers but visitors from afar.

Conversely, my American accent often stood me in good stead in the UK – used with creative stupidity if I'd tried something a tad silly like bunking a small locomotive depot or to better account in visiting places that might have been accessible to British gricers only with considerable difficulty – a visit to a signal box, a visit to the BR research works at Derby, a footplate ride on a Class 47 Cambridge to London return, emus beneath the River Mersey, and a footplate ride on an HST London to Newcastle return.

Conclusion

I suspect that one of the reasons that gricers often become so chuffed about a particularly good photo is that they have consciously or unconsciously overcome the baleful effects of Sods Law to obtain a good result. Sometimes this is as a result of dumb luck but, more often, it is as a result of careful planning in trying to engineer out all of the corollaries that Messrs. Sod & Murphy constantly have lurking in the weeds in order to ultimately triumph with a master shot. So the next time you see a gricer doing a happy hop after nailing a really good photo, don't take it as a sign that they have gone bonkers. Rather, take it as a sign that they have conquered all the obstacles that Sod & Murphy, Ltd. have placed in their way and triumphed to produce an award-winning photo!