

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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Countdown to the end of BR Steam
By train to Westward Ho!

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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Front Cover Photographs

8F 48612 approaching Newton Heath from the north over St Mary's Road bridge, probably with coal empties. 6th June 1968. Photo Tim Edmonds.

See article page 13 for full image details.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.15 for 7.30pm

- Thursday 21 June **THE GOLDEN AGE OF SWINDON Pt 3 - THE COLLETT YEARS** Canon Brian Arman
The Rev. Canon Brian Arman returns with the third part of his detailed look at the story of Swindon Works, this time during the Collett era. This is our annual joint meeting with the RCTS.
- Thursday 19 July **STRICTLY FREIGHT ONLY - Part 2** Brian Ringer
Brian a former Freight Operations Manager at the Strategic Rail Authority continues with the second of his presentations of the freight business on Britain's Railways .
- Thursday 20 September **ANCIENT AND MODERN** Bob Sweet
Bob's presentation will deliver another excursion into his extensive archive of railway photographs, from "golden oldies", through to the present day, and includes unusual scenes from both UK and further afield.
- Thursday 18 October **EUROPEAN RAILWAYS BEFORE 1947** Brian Stephenson
Brian's presentation will feature images from the Rail Archive Stephenson and is described briefly as "lots of vintage views of Dutch, Belgian and French steam; pre war Swiss steam and Electric with a few Wartime views in France and Germany".

FORTHCOMING VISIT

- Saturday 4 August **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY** by car
A visit to the Great Central Railway has been arranged to coincide with a special event commemorating the end of steam on British Railways, and it is hoped that *70013 Oliver Cromwell* will be in service at the event, just as it was in the final days of BR Steam in 1968.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It has been a long time since I last wrote any notes and it was a great shame that the March edition of the *Donkey* failed to materialise. I have written elsewhere and spoken to you about the need for everyone to contribute to the running of the society and I hope that has had some positive effect. Obviously several articles have been written to allow this June edition to be produced but once again can I urge every one of you to think seriously about doing your bit and not leaving everything to a the very hard working few. For the continued survival of the *Donkey* it is essential Mike gets regular contributions from a lot of people, so do please help.

The last few months have been a sad time for the railway enthusiast fraternity with the death of R.H.N. "Dick" Hardy in February and then of our President, Sir William McAlpine, early in March. Much has been written in the national press about these fine men, who contributed so much to the preservation movement and many societies will miss them as figureheads. Sir William's visits to our MDRS meetings were few and far between but always notable and we were very fortunate he came to speak to us in January 2016, just after his 80th birthday, though I remember more fondly when he came to hear Andy Savage's talk about the work of the Railway Heritage Trust and perfectly happily sat amongst the ordinary members, especially so after Malcolm Margetts had got him a large whisky and soda.

On a happier note, I am pleased to report that our Vice-President, Mark Hopwood, has agreed to drop the "Vice" and become our President forthwith and I understand he has written a piece for this edition of the *Donkey*. Despite his extremely busy life, Mark has never failed to remember the society and is always doing things to help us. I'm sure Sir Peter Hendy would

never have come to talk to us were it not for Mark's persuasive arm twisting. It was an unexpected pleasure to see him at our May meeting with Adrian Shooter and I suspect Adrian's involvement with the Class 50's may have been quite a surprise to Mark, whose enthusiasm for these locos is well known.

Although we are now practically half way through the year, I seem to have done very little train-wise and as I write this am looking forward to our visit to the Gloucester-Warwickshire Gala. Otherwise planned trips seem to have been rather jinxed. Gay and I were booked on the *Mayday Caledonian*, a four day adventure using the Northern Belle set of carriages, only for Belmond to sell the rake to West Coast Railway Company who would not fulfil the booking for UK Railtours and the special had to be cancelled. In compensation, I bought tickets for the A1 Locomotive Trust's *Yorkshire Pullman*, which would have celebrated 10 years of *Tornado* with a run on 2 June from Kings Cross to Scarborough. Of course, *Tornado* failed on a special in mid-April and despite valiant efforts to repair her, was never going to be ready in time, so this tour was also cancelled. I suspect it may be Mrs S who is the problem, because I did manage a trip to Bristol with the British Pullman on 16 May but on that occasion I was travelling with three fellow enthusiasts with whom I have been friends for around 50 years. As always, it was an excellent day out in opulent luxury, with a guided tour of the *Great Britain* whilst in Bristol. I shall have to keep trying for Gay and me, as the only way I can get her on a train now is if it's a Pullman.

All my very best wishes to you all for a summer of railway activity.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY NEWS

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

As mentioned by Tim Speechley in Chairman's Notes, Mark Hopwood has graciously agreed to becoming our President, succeeding Sir William McAlpine and becoming only the second holder of the office, Sir William having been in post from the start. Mark introduces himself opposite.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

We are pleased to welcome two new members to the Society in recent months. Michael Earl joins us from Goring whilst Martin Stoolman is from Exeter but has strong family ties to Bourne End and, having recently retired as a GWR train manager, hopes to attend meetings on an irregular basis.

Sadly, we must also record the passing not only of Sir William but also Pip Burston who at the age of 94 was our oldest ever member when he passed away in February. Both had memorial services which were well attended by members.

NEW MEETING START TIME

Following the almost unanimous vote at the AGM, meetings will now start at 7.30pm rather than 8.00pm. The change takes place, in effect, from the June meeting which is our annual joint meeting with the RCTS.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The new year got off to a good start with a return visit by Geoff Plumb in January. Geoff's visits are always popular due to his excellent photography and commentary which this time focused on the year 1967.

In February we were delighted to welcome a high profile speaker in the shape of Sir Peter Hendy, the chairman of Network Rail. Peter began by outlining his career from driving London buses as a management trainee to his time as London's transport commissioner before going on to consider the challenges facing Network Rail. It was an extremely enjoyable evening and Sir Peter spoke in a surprisingly direct and often critical manner. Our thanks to our new President for arranging for Sir Peter to address us.

The locomotives built by the North British Locomotive Company were the subject of Ken Livermore's presentation at the March meeting. Ken, who is secretary of the NBL Preservation Group, took us through a photographic archive of those locomotives built both for the UK and export including the ill-fated attempts at Diesel traction.

Bill Davies returned in April for another of his On and Off the Footplate presentations although on this occasion it was more off than on.

Another leading industry figure, Adrian Shooter, was our guest in May. He started by looking back on his 50 year career, getting no further than the mid-70s, before looking at the ventures he's currently involved in, VivaRail and Vintage Trains.

VISITS

Our first visit of the year was to the GWSR's Cotswold Festival of Steam on 26th May and is covered in the following pages as is an unofficial visit made by a small party to Germany in late April.

The next planned outing is to the Great Central Railway on Saturday 4th August for the first weekend of their End of BR Steam Gala. Among the locomotives in operation will be 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* which hauled the "Fifteen Guinea Special" fifty years ago along with recently overhauled 73156 plus other guest locomotives yet to be announced and, hopefully, two more GCR-based locomotives fresh from overhaul.

Once again, we intend to travel by shared cars and there will be opportunities to both ride and/or lineside. If you wish to join the party, please contact Brian Hopkinson at hopkinson005@gmail.com or 01628 298520.

Please support these outings and let the committee know if you have ideas for suitable venues for future visits.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MARCH?

Hopefully, you all noticed there was no *Marlow Donkey* in March this year, only the second time in forty years the quarterly publication date has been missed.

The reason, sadly, was that I simply had no material on hand from you, the members, and the only way an issue could have been made was if I wrote the whole thing myself which I had neither the time nor inclination to do.

The *Donkey* is not a commercial publication and can only survive if you, the members, are prepared to make the effort to contribute content. Following Tim's welcome "strong" words on the subject at the AGM several members came forward with offers to contribute with the result that I now have enough in the "pending" file to see out the remainder of the year but, predictably, several members who promised to contribute have yet to do so.

We all have a shared interest in railways and have our specialities. Most of us are now (sadly) of the age where we are retired and have a little more time on our hands so why not take time out and prepare a contribution? It can be anything rail (or even transport) related and could be anything from a simple photographic feature to an in-depth essay.

We have around seventy members so if each of you made a commitment to contribute just one article we would be overloaded for years to come. Please don't sit back and leave it to someone else or the small band of regular contributors - to whom I'm eternally grateful!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

The death of Sir William McAlpine was enormously sad for many reasons and our thoughts were with Judy and his family as they grieved for a husband and father. But many of us also feel it was a real loss to the wider railway industry. Sir William served, until his death, as an active member of my Great Western Railway Advisory Board helping us steer the modern day railway in the right direction in some challenging times and I shall miss his wise counsel.

However, it was his involvement in railway preservation which brought Sir William to the attention of rail enthusiasts across the U.K. and beyond whether it be his legendary involvement with 4472 or the more local developments at Fawley.

I've no doubt Sir William would not have wanted, after his memorial service, for us to dwell on his passing but to think towards the future. Accordingly, your Chairman and committee have thought through what this means for the wider M&DRS and asked me if I will step up from my role as Vice President and take up the role of President of the society. I immediately told Tim I would accept this kind offer and I thought I should commence my period as President by introducing myself and talking about a few issues of importance.

Firstly, I see being asked to undertake this role as a great honour and would like to formally register my thanks. My involvement with Marlow began in 1973 when I moved to Marlow as a young two year old from Whaley Bridge in Derbyshire. Sadly, we moved in a few months after the 1973 steam event to celebrate 100 years of the branch. My first encounter with a train, my grandparents advise, was stopping near Whaley Bridge station to watch a BRCW Class 104 DMU on a Buxton to Manchester local service. Slightly ironically, such vehicles, and maybe even the same vehicles, made a brief appearance on the Marlow branch through the late 1980s and early 1990s after Network SouthEast moved the Cricklewood DMU fleet for Gospel Oak to Barking to Old Oak Common depot.

My interest in railways in Marlow developed at an early age when I would visit the station and watch the DMUs arriving and departing. Such visits began to incorporate a complimentary trip to Bourne End, courtesy of the Slough guards who worked the route. After that, my trips gradually extended to Maidenhead where I was soon absorbed by the variety of traction to be found on the Great Western main line at the time. I started riding the weekday evening loco-hauled commuter trains to Twyford and back some weekday evenings while weekends often took me to Reading and, subsequently, beyond, as my interest in Class 50s increased.

While unthinkable today my trips on the branch increasingly became associated with my dispatching the train with "two" on the buzzer and also with me operating the ground frame at Bourne End in connection with the token and train staff.

During this period I discovered the M&DRS and, aged 14, initiated a constitutional crisis by asking to join at Junior rate - a category which was created at my request. I've remained a relatively loyal member since and, despite moving away, try to visit the club when I can.

When I joined the society in 1985, it was only seventeen years since the demise of mainline steam in 1968, yet that seemed a prehistoric era to me at the time. Here I am in 2018, some 33 years since I joined and the society remains in good shape and some events such as the end of steam and closure of the railway beyond Bourne End to High Wycombe are a long way back in history as today's railway radically changes and diverges further

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Mark Hopwood

from the traditional railway many of you recall and enjoy. My first meetings were held at The Chequers on Marlow High Street followed by many years at the Royal British Legion before the Marlow & District Railway Society took the radical step of leaving Marlow for Bourne End Community Centre.

Through much of the 1980s I attended the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe and, thanks to the 1970 line closure, my journey from Marlow was usually courtesy of an Amersham based Leyland Atlantean on routes 362/372. The

railway scene at High Wycombe then was limited but eccentric as GW semaphores and absolute block signalling were accompanied by a fleet of Bletchley Class 115 DMUs outbased at Marylebone, two loco-hauled passenger trains a day - usually Class 50s and a small selection of parcels/freight hauled by a variety of Classes 25, 31, 37, 45, 47 and 56. Some freight remains today but Chinnor cement works and Thame Oil terminal are both long gone.

Indeed I recall discussing the Class 37 hauled oil train from Ripple Lane to Thame when I worked at c2c while travelling in the cab with one of my East Ham drivers - "I used to drive those" he told me as he recalled his days as a Ripple Lane driver - freight drivers who seemed to have the whole of the SE of England on their Route card!

My own involvement in railways is, presently, dominated by my job - it's a great honour for me to lead GWR through a period of huge change as we get ready for an exciting future. Anyone who has stood at the west end of Maidenhead station recently will agree the scene has totally transformed with revised branch connections, electrification wires and the Crossrail sidings with Class 387s and 800s beginning to dominate the scene as Turbos and HSTs slowly fade away although, for now, the Marlow branch retains its Turbos.

Virtually all of us have spent the majority of our lives with High Speed Trains as a fundamentally important part of the railway scene at Maidenhead but the sad reality is, after 43 years of hard work, next year in 2019 will be the last for the trains in front line InterCity service through to Paddington.

The next stage of development on the Great Western will be about Heathrow Western/Southern Access, HS2 connectivity at Old Oak Common and much more no doubt - exciting times but we will move further and further away from the heritage railway many of us knew in steam and diesel days.

So thank you for asking me to be your President. I hope I can serve the society effectively and add some value without interfering in the role of the elected committee. While keeping the important attributes of the society that have served us well we all have a duty to think how we help the society be better prepared for a fast changing world. As I say to my team at GWR - proud of the past but fit for the future!



Passion: Mark and 50049 at Tring, 10th November 2007.

GIVE OUR REGARDS TO BROADWAY

Members Visit the Cotswold Festival of Steam



Eight members went to the Gloucestershire-Worcestershire Steam Railway's Cotswold Festival of Steam on Saturday 26th May arriving in conditions more reminiscent of November than late May, mist, drizzle and cold!

Most of the group chose to ride the trains but Peter Robins and Mike Walker elected to go linesiding starting at "Chicken Curve" where 2807 is seen lifting the 09:20 Cheltenham to Broadway away from Winchcombe. **Peter** decided the only way to deal with the conditions was to make a monochrome image [Above].

Meanwhile, **Brian Hopkinson** made it to the recently reopened Broadway in time to record 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* waiting to depart with the 10:20 to Cheltenham [Right].

After an unscheduled pub lunch, the weather started to improve as **Peter Robins** caught 7820 *Dinmore Manor* and 7903 *Foremarke Hall* teaming up with the 13:40 Cheltenham Racecourse to Broadway approaching Dixton Bridge as they leave Gotherington [Below].



By mid-afternoon the sun finally decided to come out and play in time for **Mike Walker** to record 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* passing Hayles Abbey Halt with the 14:25 Broadway to Cheltenham Racecourse.

The halt was opened last June on the site of the original opened by the GWR in September 1928 which closed with the other stations on the Cheltenham to Honeybourne line in March 1960. Trains didn't call during the event.

In the background can just be seen the plume of the Stanway Fountain in the grounds of Stanway House. Opened in 2004 at 300 feet it is the tallest fountain in Britain and the tallest gravity fountain in the world.



The extension from Laverton to Broadway brings with it additional photographic opportunities including this one for southbound trains from the road bridge carrying the lane into the village of Stanton.

Mike Walker used it to record US Army S160 2-8-0 5197, built by Lima in 1943 and visiting from the Churnet Valley, heading the 16:05 Broadway to Cheltenham Racecourse with 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S N Co.* on the rear. Until the station and signalling at Broadway is complete, trains are top-and-tailed between Toddington and Broadway.

The gloss black finish and polished stainless steel characters on the S160 are hardly authentic!

The penultimate northbound train of the day was the 17:04 Cheltenham Racecourse to Toddington headed by 7820 *Dinmore Manor* piloting 6023 *King Edward II* visiting from Didcot. **Peter Robins** caught the pair arriving at Winchcombe.

The weather aside, it was an excellent day with the intensive service running pretty close to time all day and with most trains fully loaded.

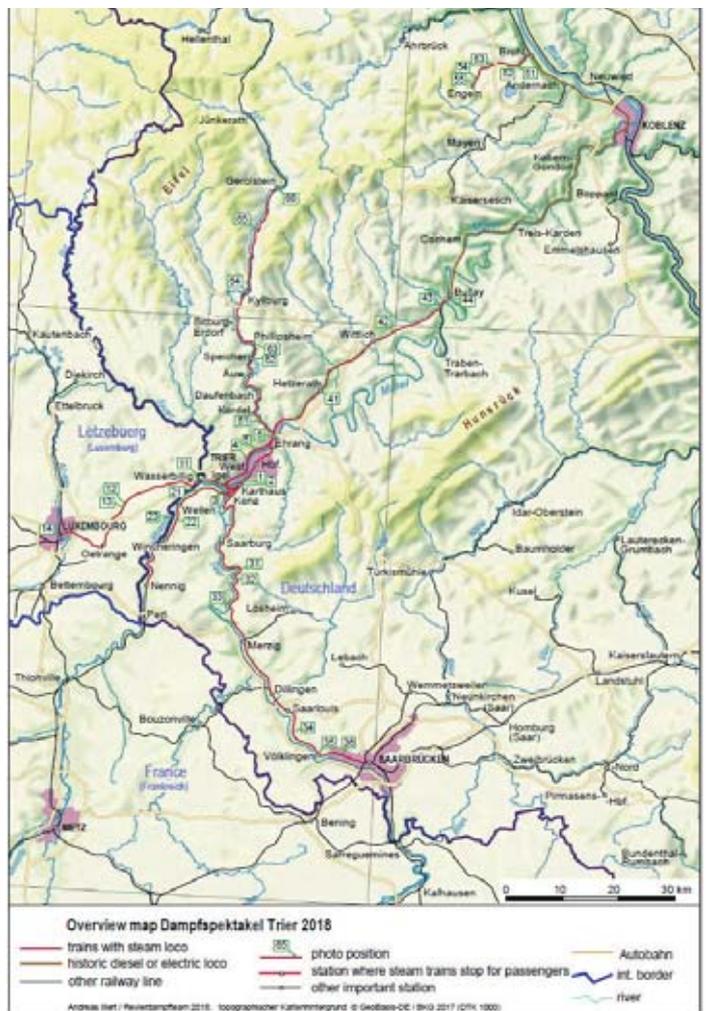
The Society's next outing of this type is to the Great Central Railway's End of Steam gala on Saturday 4th August marking the 50th anniversary of the end of BR steam operations. Hopefully, the weather will be kind *all* day and the trip will be better supported by the members.



Dampfspektakel 2018



On Friday 27th April, the day before Dampfspektakel began, DB Pacific 01.202 makes its way to Trier near Serrig on the line from Saarbrücken.
 Photo: Chris Waite



Dampfspektakel 2018 was the title given to a four-day extravaganza of main line steam which took place around Trier, Germany, at the end of April. This was the sixth such event, the most recent having been in 2010, also centred on Trier and 2014, Neustadt. Each event brings locomotives from across the country and beyond, sponsored largely by the state of Rheinland-Pfalz which recognises the substantial interest such events create and the visitors they bring - and their money! It is estimated the event cost over €500,000 to stage.

These events have evolved out of the popular Plandampfs which started in the final days of East Germany and saw regular service trains turned over to steam traction. Today, with increasing speeds and frequency of modern trains this is no longer viable but during a Dampfspektakel extra, steam-hauled trains are run making calls at local stations and available for riding at will with a pass which can be purchased at local stations for as little as €7.50. A pass for the entire network for all four days only cost €190 or less than a typical ticket for a British steam special.

No less than nine steam locomotives took part supported by a number of vintage or classic Diesel and electric locomotives working on trains of stock from the same era including 6-wheelers.

Four members of the Society attended, Chris Waite went by train with some of his friends on the preceding Wednesday, hiring a car on arrival in Trier, whilst Gordon Rippington, Peter Robins and your editor piled into the latter's car.

The event ran from Saturday 28th April to Tuesday 1st May with services from Trier to Gerolstein, Wittlich, Bullay, Saarbrücken, Nennig and Luxembourg (see map). With the exception of Monday, a similar timetable operated daily although the locomotive allocations changed. Germany celebrates May Day on the actual day so Tuesday was public holiday whereas Monday was, in theory, a working day although many appear to have taken it off, so a reduced service was run.

Here is a selection of members' photographs of the event.



Of the lines used during Dampfspektakel only that to Gerolstein remains unelectrified and, for the most part, unmodernised with a number of gothic tunnel portals and station buildings mirroring several schlosses or castles along the valley the line follows.

The “main group” spent the most of Friday on this scenic line, meeting up with Chris and many other British visitors on the curve at Burg Ramstein in the afternoon. indeed, it often seemed there were as many Brits in attendance as the Germans and other nations combined.

On Friday morning 78.468, a 4-6-4T built by Henschel in 1923, emerged from one such tunnel at Kyllburg working train DPE 61934, the 08:45 Trier Hbf to Gerolstein, unexpectedly running bunker first.

One loco not officially part of the Dampfspektakel line-up was DB Pacific 001.150-2 (Henschel 22698/1935) seen rounding the curve below one of the castles, Burg Ramstein with its support coach heading for Gerolstein having worked a special from Mönchengladbach to Trier.



52.8195-1, built by Maschinenbau und Bahnbedarf Aktiengesellschaft in 1943, rounds the curve at Burg Ramstein with train DPE 61940, the 16:14 from Trier Hbf to Gerolstein.

Known as Kriegsloks, a wartime design equivalent of our WDs, Class 52s were a common sight across Germany, those in the 8xxx series would be strangers to this part of the network as they were examples reboilered by the Deutsche Reichsbahn, the former East German railways.

Three photos: Mike Walker





Pacifics features prominently in Dampfspektakel. A 3-cylinder version, 01.1075, built by Berliner Maschinenbau in 1939, catches a patch of sunshine as it approaches Witlingen with DPE 61953, the 10:08 from Trier Hbf to Saarbrücken.

Photo: Chris Waite

Representing the 2-cylinder version, 01.202, built by Henschel in 1937, rounds the curve at Birresborn with train DPE 61936, the 11:18 from Trier Hbf to Gerolstein. It was a welcome sight to see this locomotive in action as it had been involved in an incident at Trier the previous day.

Photo: Gordon Rippington

Later in the day, DR 52.8195-1 exploded out of Kyllburg Tunnel [Bottom left] with train DPE 61938, the 14:18 Trier Hbf to Gerolstein.

Photo: Mike Walker

The departure from the station stop at Kyllburg [Bottom right] was equally volcanic!

Photo: Gordon Rippington



With Monday a “working day” main line steam operations were scaled back. However, a special train was run on the metre gauge Brohltalbahn which climbs out of the Rheine valley from Brohl, north of Koblenz. The line runs a tourist train but also still operates freight service serving a quarry near the upper end whose product it transports to a mixed gauge yard on the quayside at Brohl for loading into barges.

For Dampfspektakel a special train was run using every available piece of rolling stock and headed by 0-4+4-0T 11sm (Humboldt 348/1906) seen climbing across the 120m Tönisstein Viaduct.

A special electric train ran from Trier to convey passengers.

Photo: Mike Walker



Meanwhile, Chris and his friends concentrated on the lines south of Trier for the day. This was the one occasion when the weather turned out as forecast - i.e. dull virtually all day.

At Beckingen has a new station adjacent to the old, which is no longer used and was set back from the line. They thought the platform of the old station would be better for photography, but PC Plod had other ideas, so they ended up standing much closer to the line on the platform of the new station to catch 3-cylinder Pacific 03.1070 (Borsig 1940) on DPE 61950, the 11:37 Saarbrücken to Trier Hbf.

Chris must have been unlucky to be moved on as, in general, there seemed to be little sign of “authority”.

Chris’s group spent some time on Friday on the bridge at Taben, but saw only EMUs in sunshine. So they decided that it would be a good place for 01.1075 on Monday working DPE 61953, the 10:08 from Trier Hbf to Saarbrücken. Had Friday's weather conditions prevailed they'd have been right, but on Monday afternoon, it was gloomy with the wind in the wrong quarter.

This location was one of those highlighted in the excellent brochure published on line by the organisers and free to download. What they couldn't organise was the sun shining at the right moment

Two photos: Chris Waite





At the start of the final day, Gordon, Peter and I started back on the Gerolstein line before moving to the Saar valley. DR 52.8195-1 passing Betradaburg Castle as it heads south from Mürtenbach with train DPE 61933, the 09:25 from Gerolstein to Trier Hbf with the sun almost fully out.

Photo: Peter Robins

Meanwhile, Chris having got to Oberbillig, decided to see how far he could get in the Nennig direction and found a not too bad spot at Wellen. Predictably, he stood in sun for 20 minutes before unrebuilt DR 52.1360 (Borsig 15457/1943) arrived with a Nennig to Trier and Wittlich train, but of course the sun went in when the train came!

Photo: Chris Waite



An international flavour was added by running two round trips daily (except Monday) between Trier and Luxembourg using CFL (Luxembourg Railways) 5119, a 2-10-0 built by Wiener Lokomotivfabrik Floridsdorf in 1949 and very similar to a Class 52.

Here it crosses the bridge over the River Sauer at Wasserbillig which marks the international boundary with the 18:17 Trier Hbf to Luxembourg service on Tuesday afternoon.

Photo: Chris Waite

Pacific 01.1075 again, this time in the rural setting of Kanzem with train DPE 61952, the 13:37 Saarbrücken to Trier and Wittlich. Once again the sun was being uncooperative, appearing only between trains or when modern electrics passed.

Note how this busy main line is completely unfenced - typical of the majority of the German network - and how unobtrusive the overhead catenary is. Even the country lane is remarkably free from potholes!

Photo: Chris Waite



Steam was supported by a number of classic Diesel and electric locomotives including V200 Diesel-hydraulic V200.033 which is seen pulling away from Korbel with train DPE 61938, the 14:18 from Trier Hbf to Gerolstein on Saturday, deputising for 01.202 which had been involved in an incident at Trier . It appears someone stumbled as 01.202 was backing onto its train and was dragged under the tender, receiving serious injuries. The steam crew were stood down and the “Warship” substituted, much to the chagrin of many – but not your editor!

Built by Krauss-Maffei in 1956, these locomotives were adapted to form the basis of the Swindon D800 series Warships.

Photo: Mike Walker

Another classic item of “modern traction” was 103.113-7, one of 149 10,000hp Co-Co locomotives built between 1965 and 1973 primarily for use on the former Trans European Express network.

This example, now part of the DB museum fleet, evokes memories of those services as it passes Trier West on Tuesday with train TEE 91341, the 07:41 from Koblenz Hbf to Trier Hbf with an appropriately matched train.

Although TEE trains were usually longer, many were formed of portions so short trains such as this were fairly commonplace.

Photo: Chris Waite





COUNTDOWN TO THE END OF BR STEAM

by Tim Edmonds

Ten years ago I contributed an article to the *Marlow Donkey* about my experiences during the last week of normal BR steam in 1968. Now that the 50th anniversary of the end of steam has come around I look back to a few trips I made to see working steam in the twelve months preceding that sad event. School reduced the opportunities and other commitments – including a Geography field trip – ruled out the Easter break. Money for travel was a constraint, but I am ever-grateful to my father for subsidising and encouraging my photography. Altogether I managed four trips to steamy North West England in that count-down year – a summer holiday, a half-term long weekend, a day with a spotting coach party and a day on my own.

In August 1967 I went on a cycling tour with my father from our home in Cambridgeshire to Lancashire and Yorkshire via the Peak District. Although we did some other sightseeing, steam action was a major objective but alas, things did not quite turn out as planned. Staying at B&Bs and Youth Hostels our route took us through the East Midlands, pausing at Westhouses (16G), where five Jinties (used at nearby Williamthorpe Colliery) and ex Low Moor Fairburn 2-6-4T 42233 were slumbering in the shed. The latter had a note chalked on its side tank reading “Not to be scrapped – retain for preservation”, but this did not stop it from meeting its demise at Cohen’s, Kettering, a few weeks later. Our first live BR steam was in pouring rain at a dismal Buxton (9L) where 8F 48456 was on shed in steam but most locos were dumped, including 2-6-0s 46480 and 46484 and Austerity 0-6-0ST 68006 – used on the Cromford & High Peak line until a few months earlier. We did not linger long.

Heading north to Yorkshire took us past the Woodhead line at Torside, where we saw trains hauled by both EM1 and EM2 classes of DC electrics, but we found steam again the next day with 8F 48471 on a westbound coal train at Eastwood, near Todmorden. Cycling beside the railway over Copy Pit (there were no trains to see) we reached Rose Grove (10F) which was duly bunked and revealed standard 4MT 4-6-0 75034 plus plenty of Black 5s and 8Fs in steam. During a B&B stop near to the Blackburn – Hellifield line at Clitheroe we could hear some steam action overnight and the next morning were rewarded with a southbound goods passing behind Black 5 45241, plus light engine movements by Black 5 45215 and Ivatt Mogul 43046. Our route on to Carnforth was via minor roads over the

8F 48471 heads up the 1 in 182 gradient from Hebden Bridge to Todmorden with a loaded coal train on 15th August 1967.

Photo: Bernard Edmonds

Trough of Bowland but, when descending the 1 in 6 hill into Quernmore, my father came off his bike on a bend and fractured a collar-bone. Thanks to the kindness of a passing van driver we managed to reach first the Royal Lancaster Infirmary Casualty Department and then our Carnforth B&B, but this accident meant we never fulfilled our plans to continue to Settle, Skipton and York. The following day, while we sorted out how to get home, I found time to bunk Carnforth (10A) which was full of operational and withdrawn locos including Britannias 70011 *Hotspur* and 70014 *Iron Duke* in steam. The former left on a northbound train of vans that evening. The next day we headed for home via the WCML to Bletchley and then to Old North Road on the Cambridge line. The one bright spot in all this? We were steam-hauled from Carnforth to Preston (I think it was a Black 5 – my notes don’t say – but I did have two bikes and a father in a sling to cope with...).

As compensation for the truncated holiday, my father funded an October half-term long weekend trip, staying at the same B&B in Carnforth, provided I took my younger sister Mary with me. I’m not sure if this was to keep me in order or to get her out of the house! We travelled north on Friday 27th October from Old North Road via Bletchley, a journey that ceased to be possible when the line closed ten weeks later. There was time for a good look round Carnforth shed that evening where I noted 51 steam locos of seven different classes. The end of steam working over Shap was drawing close, so on the Saturday we took the all-stations DMU to Shap (another service about to be withdrawn) and spent the day walking close to the line back to Tebay. The weather was kind and there were four northbound steam-hauled goods trains (two Black 5s, an 8F and a Britannia) and four southbound (two Brits and two Black 5s) plus a 9F 92218 light engine. Standard 4MTs 75026 and 75037 were on banking duty. Three of the northbound goods were banked, with the 8F not needing assistance, but a passenger train hauled by a class 40 had 75026 pushing at the back. As a bonus, in the middle of the day when we were at Scout Green A4 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley* ascended with the RCTS *The Borders Limited* special from Nottingham to Carlisle (yes, there were other photographers

about, but not many!). Of course this was before the M6 reached Shap, so between trains the only noises were the birds and the wind. It was less busy in the afternoon but as we reached Greenholme, near the foot of the bank, Britannia 70051 came to a halt at Tebay with a goods train, awaiting assistance. 75026 duly appeared from the shed yard and we were treated to a memorable visual and audible feast as the two standard locos got a lengthy train under way. By now it was late afternoon and there was no local train to get us back to Carnforth. We had time for a look round Tebay shed (12E) which contained 4MTs 75032, 75033 and 750339, Black 5 44848 and the 9F seen on Shap earlier, then caught the bus to Kendal where we picked up the branch train from Windermere. It was a memorable day.

Sunday included a bus trip to Windermere and another look round Carnforth shed. I had two objectives for the return on Monday – steam haulage and a trip over the Settle & Carlisle line. We achieved these by taking the 08:35 Barrow – Lancaster train from Carnforth, which was booked for Black 5 haulage, to connect with a northbound Carlisle service. It turned out to be my last ever steam-hauled journey on a regular BR passenger service and 45390 did the honours. From Carlisle we travelled S&C to Leeds and on to Bedford via a change at Leicester.

My next chance to see real steam was a Manchester shed-bash by coach from Cambridge on 1st March 1968 with a local railway society. This ran on a Sunday, to maximise the expected locos on shed for the spotters. As is the nature of these things it involved long journeys sandwiching a fairly rapid succession of shed visits with Black 5s and 8Fs being the staple fare. Stockport Edgeley (9B) and Heaton Mersey (9F) had plenty of both on offer, with the former appearing to be busier. The electric depots at Reddish (9C) and Longsight (9A) followed before we reached the large and busy steam shed at Newton Heath (9D), noting sorry-looking Britannia 70023, formerly *Venus*, in the



This is my father's photo of me photographing 45241 approaching the closed (but later reopened) passenger station at Clitheroe with a mixed goods train on 16th August 1967.

Photo: Bernard Edmonds

lines of dumped locos. On to Patricroft (9H) where some variety was expected since it was home to a rapidly declining fleet of Standard 5MT 4-6-0s, including the last remaining examples with Caprotti valve-gear. None of the latter appeared to be serviceable but there was still plenty of evidence of active steam. Last stop was Trafford Park (9E) which was due to close the next week and contained only a handful of steam locos and Type 2 diesels.

One of the problems of Sunday shed-bashes is that you rarely have the opportunity to photograph working trains, so I made the effort to try and put that right. I spent the Whitsun half-term visiting my older sister at Hull University, where she was a first-year student. The only steam locos in Hull were at Draper's Yard, where several Black 5s were being cut up, but I came home the long way via Manchester. Arriving at Victoria I took a local train to Dean Lane, the nearest station to Newton Heath shed. The shed yard and the adjacent area offered opportunities for linesiding and I was rewarded by four steam-hauled goods trains before I had to retrace my tracks to Victoria. There 73069, by then the last active Standard 5MT, passed tender-first on a goods before I moved on to Piccadilly and headed for home. I chose to return to Bedford on the Midland main line via Chinley, Matlock and Derby – a last chance to use the route through the Peak District which was to close at the end of June. That was it, apart from the last week – you'll find the story in '*Donkey 122*, available to download from the society's website.



Taken from the shed yard at Rose Grove, Black Five 44697 heads towards Blackburn with a westbound train of vans on 16th August 1967.

All black & white photos: Tim Edmonds



Without its Hotspur nameplates, 70011 prepares to leave Carnforth with an evening northbound train of vans on 17th August 1967.

A busy scene at Shap summit, with Brush Type 4 D1948 taking a south-bound passenger train on the main line while Black Five 45331 waits in the up loop with a goods. The down loop is also occupied and a north-bound train is signalled through. 28th October 1967.



Having been released from Shap summit loop, 45331 heads south, while 8F 48077 heads a mixed goods up the bank unaided.

At the bottom of Shap bank, Britannia 70051 Firth of Forth waits for banking assistance with a lengthy goods train. The banking engine, 75026 is brewing up in Tebay shed yard.



75026 provides beefy assistance to 70051 as they start the ascent of Shap. This was a sight and sound to remember!

45390 has just arrived at Lancaster Castle with the 08:35 from Barrow-in-Furness, on which I had travelled from Carnforth – my last trip behind steam on a regular BR service train. 30th October 1967.





Morning at Stockport Edgeley – this is the fug of a busy working steam shed with its complement of Black 5s and 8Fs on 3rd March 1968.

Access to Newton Heath shed opened up various photographic possibilities of the adjacent Manchester – Rochdale line from the yard. Here 8F 48620 is passing with a coal train on 6th June 1968.





Seen from the site of the closed Newton Heath station, Black 5 44845 heads north past the signal box with the shed in the left background on 6th June 1968.



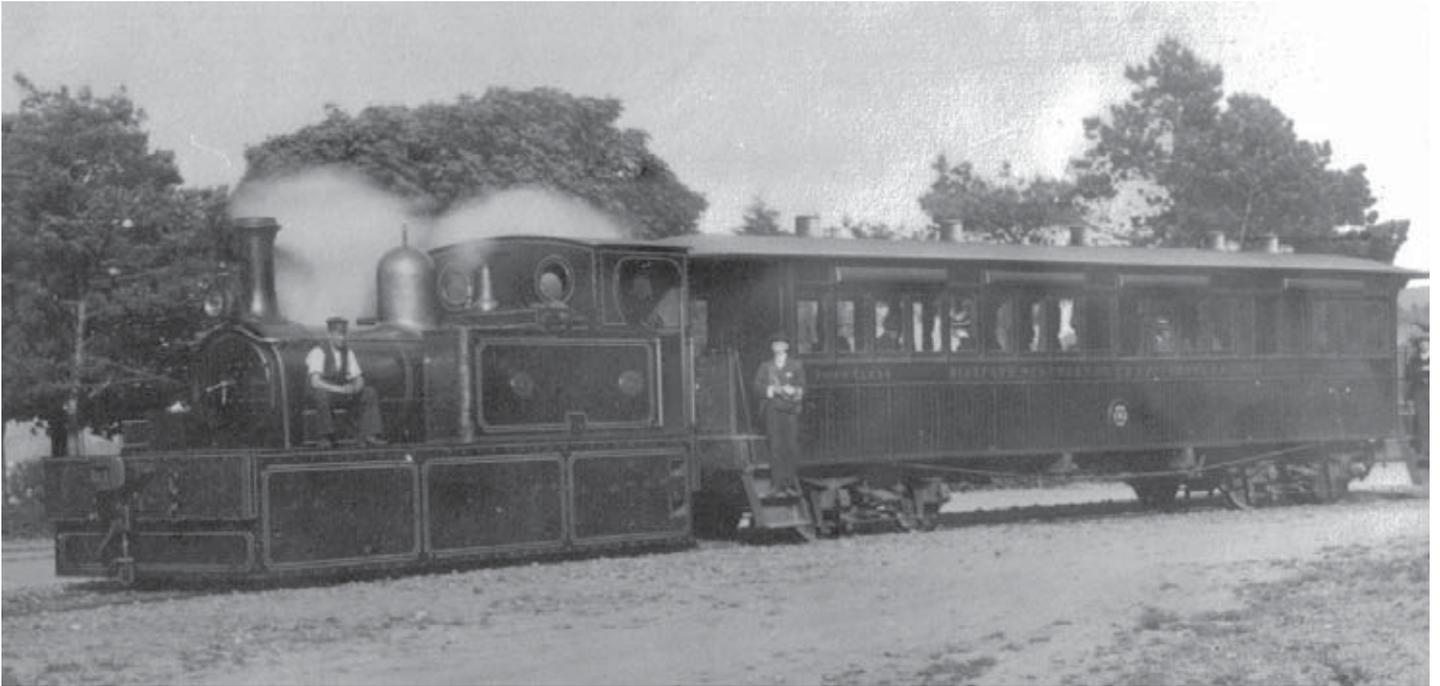
8F 48612 approaching Newton Heath from the north over St Mary's Road bridge, probably with coal empties. 6th June 1968.



Finally, a snatch shot of the last standard 5MT in service as 73069 heads tender-first past Manchester Victoria towards Miles Platting on 6th June 1968.

By train to Westward Ho!

Mike Walker



BWH&W No.2 Kingsley together with one of the brake 3rd coach posed at Bideford soon after the opening.

Among the fascinations of British railway history are those small lines which existed up and down the country in the shadow of the big main line companies and usually eking out an existence in relative obscurity. One such, and extremely short-lived, was the **Bideford, Westward Ho! & Appledore Railway** in North Devon.

Bideford, like its neighbour Barnstaple, had been a major port until the middle of the 19th century. But the coming of larger steam powered iron ships unable to navigate the Rivers Torridge and Taw combined with the coming of the railways (The LSWR arrived at Bideford in 1855) put an end to most of that activity.

Charles Kingsley's novel *Westward Ho!*, set partly in Bideford, was published in 1855 and sparked public interest in this corner of the country so a decade later enterprising developers decided to build a new resort nearby on the Atlantic coast and call it Westward Ho! - the only place name, and therefore railway name, in the UK to incorporate an exclamation mark.

The new community initially failed to develop as hoped and so thoughts turned to the building of a railway. The first scheme, dating from 1860, proposed a line from the LSWR crossing the Torridge and continuing to Northam, Appledore, Clovelly, Hartland and Bude but was not brought to fruition neither was a less ambitious proposal of 1866 to build a line to Appledore with a branch to Westward Ho!

Finally the Bideford, Westward Ho! & Appledore Railway was incorporated on 21st May 1896 and soon passed to the British Electric Traction Co. BET came to control most of the non-municipally owned tramways in the country but there was never any question of the BWH&AR being an electric line. It was originally conceived as a steam worked 3' gauge line but was actually built to standard gauge.

The initial section opened on 24th April 1901 and ran from Bideford Quay to Northam, 5 miles 45 chains. The railway took a somewhat circuitous route compared to local roads by which the distance from Bideford to both Northam and Westward Ho! was around two miles. From the outset the railway was competing with several established horse-bus services but probably benefited from providing a more comfortable ride. In its first year it carried 110,647 passengers.

The final section from Northam to Appledore, 2 miles 34 chains, wasn't opened until 1st May 1908. From this time the railway came under a Light Railway Order which reduced some of the requirements for signalling, level crossings and fencing. The locomotives gaining "cow catchers" instead.

Another early view of the railway shows one of the Hunslet locomotives standing at Westward Ho! on its way back to Bideford.

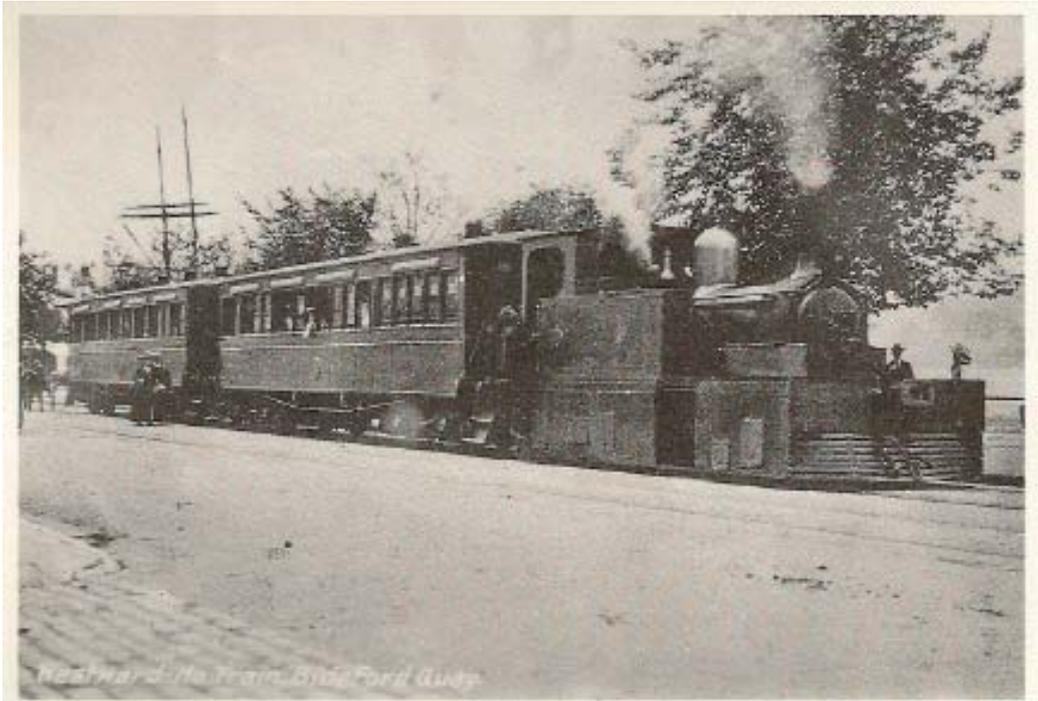


The route described.

The railway started at The Quay in Bideford on the west bank of the River Torridge and physically separate from the LSWR across the river. Heading initially north it turned sharply left in front of a memorial to Charles Kingsley then slightly to the right at the first stop, Strand Road Halt, 0m 32c. There were no facilities here.

The line now ceased street running and headed north west past the loco and carriage sheds at Pill to reach two more Halts, The Lane at 0m 55c and Causeway Crossing at 0m 66c. Both had rudimentary facilities and level crossings but the latter boasted the line's largest signal box.

The route was now roughly westwards passing the Raleigh Plantation on the right. Next came Kenwith Castle Halt, 1m 75c. Again there were no facilities apart from a level crossing. From here the line climbed at 1 in 47 through a cutting which brought it to Abbotsham Road station, 2m 50c. Here



BWH&W No.3 Torridge faced east whereas the other two locomotives both faced west. It is seen here at the Bideford Quay terminal after the fitting of "cow catchers" to the buffer beams and attached to a train formed of one composite and on brake 3rd vehicle.



An extract from at 1 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1919 showing the route of the BWH&AR highlighted in yellow. The LSWR Bideford station was east of the river at the bottom right hand corner.

there was a passing loop, two platforms and a signal box-cum- ticket office.

The line now continued towards the coast where it swung left on an embankment before entering a short cutting followed by Cornborough Halt, 3m 30c. This windswept halt, close to the cliff's edge lacked any form of facility for passengers.

The coast was followed as the line turned eastwards once more to arrive at Westward Ho!, 4m 33c. Being the principal intermediate station it had a passing loop with two platforms, an 8-lever signal box, a waiting room, refreshment room, bookstall, level crossing gates at both ends of the station and a Concert Hall called the Station Hall. Around 300 yards beyond the station, a short siding served the local gas works - one of the few freight facilities on the line.

Continuing roughly eastwards the line paralleled the south edge of the Northam Burrows Golf Links passing another small halt, Beach Road, at 5m 01c. It had no platform or shelter just level crossing gates and even those were removed in 1905.

Northam, the early terminal, was at 5m 45c and originally had a run round loop, signal box and small goods yard but all were removed when the line was extended leaving just a single platform.

The alignment was now north east towards Appledore. Roughly half way along this section was Richmond Road Halt which had a simple platform next to the level crossing.

Entering the community of Appledore there was one final Halt at Lovers Lane with a simple platform before the line turned south east to reach the terminal in the shadow of the parish church. Appledore station, 7½ miles from Bideford, had a single platform with waiting room and ticket office; run round loop, goods siding, 10-lever signal box and an engine shed with water tower and coal store. Trains took around 30 minutes to cover the journey and in 1910 there were 10 trains each way.

Locomotives and stock.

Three 2-4-2 tank locomotives were built for the BWH&AR by Hunslet (Works nos. 713 - 715) and numbered 1 - 3 and named *Grenville*, *Kingsley* and *Torrige* respectively. Weighing 27 tons they had 3'3" driving wheels, 12" x 18" cyls and with a boiler pressure of 140 psi, developed 6,978 lbs of tractive effort. In deference to the street running in Bideford, they were equipped with tramway style skirts and were painted dark green, lined out and with polished domes. After the downgrading to light railway status "cow catchers" were fitted at both ends

Unusually for a standard gauge line, central buffers

were used in conjunction with drawhooks and screw link couplings.

Passenger stock comprised six bogie vehicles supplied by the Bristol Carriage & Wagon Co. Two were 60' long, one a 3rd the other a brake 3rd, whilst the others were 45' long 1st/3rd class composites. All were what we today term as "open" and had open end verandas with steps down to track level, all the stations and halts having either one foot high platforms or none at all. All the coaches were lit by acetylene and finished in varnished teak with the name spelt out below the windows and the arms of Bideford in a medallion below.

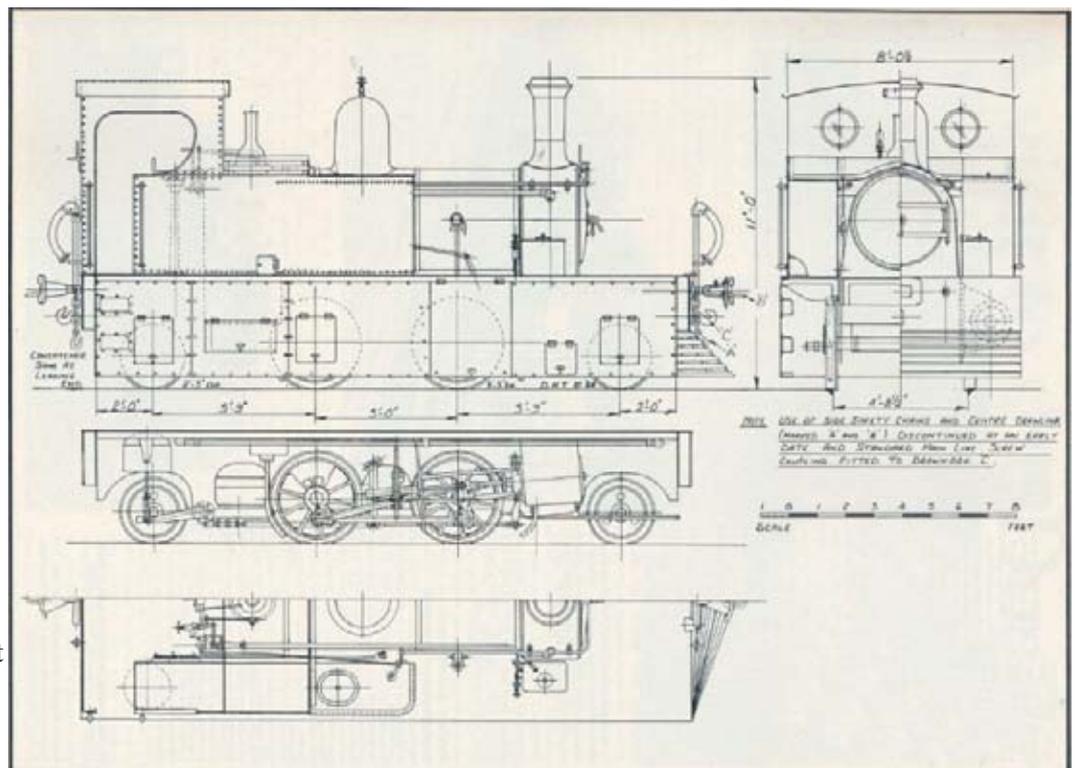
With limited goods service due to the line's isolation, there were only four open wagons, two vans and a brake van which could be used either for passenger or goods trains.

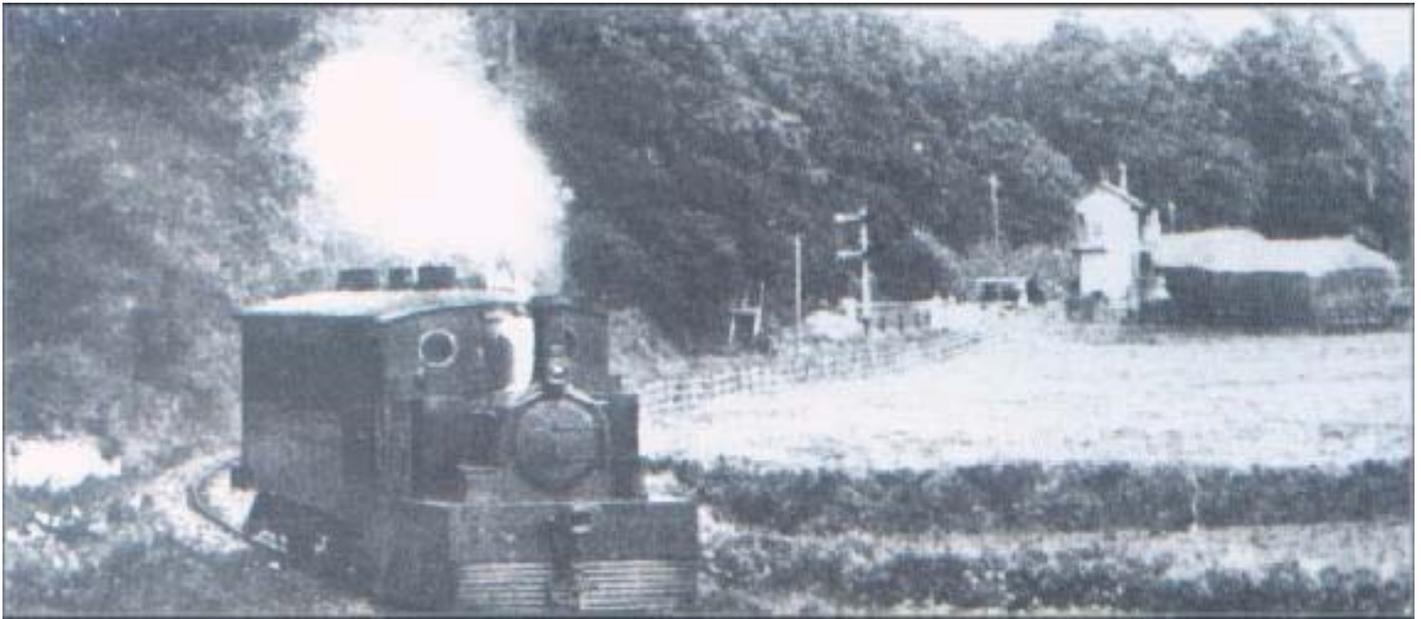
Decline and demise.

As mentioned, when the line opened there was already competition from horse buses over the much shorter roads between the three communities and not long after the opening motor buses started to appear presenting an even greater threat. By 1916 the railway had introduced its own motor buses running from Bideford to Hartland (after it became clear the railway's hoped for expansion wouldn't happen) and to Appledore where it was effectively in competition with itself as well as other operators.

As a result, operations became marginal and the line started to struggle. Early in 1917 the railway became one of a handful to be requisitioned by the Ministry of Munitions to supply material for the war effort and the last trains ran on 28th March. The locos were all removed by the MoM, *Grenville* and *Torrige* were loaded onto the captured German freighter *Gotterdammerung* for duty in France, but the ship was torpedoed off the north Cornwall Coast and sank. The wreck was discovered in 2001. *Kingsley* served at Pembury until 1937 when it was scrapped.

An auction in 1921 saw the passenger cars and wagons sold for various non-railway uses and the loco and carriage





A train bound for Appledore heads away from Causeway Crossing Halt. The signal box was the largest such structure on the line but was not a block post it merely controlled the crossing gates by a wheel.

After closure, one of the line's three locomotives makes its way across the River Torridge on temporary tracks laid across the ancient granite road bridge to reach the LSWR station at East-the-Water. All stock was delivered or removed in this way.

sheds were occupied by Hardy-Colwills, the principal local bus operator until they were taken over by National in 1928. Becoming Southern National the following year they moved to new premises in Bideford but the carriage shed still stands and was used until recently by Heard's Coaches. Meanwhile, SN used Westward Ho! station as a bus terminal for many years with the signal box there becoming a snack bar. Today the site is a car park.

On the ground, few other traces of the line remain, the trackbed in both Bideford and Appledore has been turned into roads whilst the portion between Westward Ho! and Cornborough now forms part of the South West Coastal Path. That said, a study of Google Earth and comparing it with the map accompanying this article will reveal that much of the short-lived railway's course can still be determined, a century after closure.

From the late 1920's Westward Ho! station served as a bus station. Around 1960, Southern National 1898, a 1956 Bristol 'Lodekka' lays over before returning to Ilfracombe on route 101. Today, the site is a municipal car park as the buses continue to Appledore.



THEN AND NOW: WEST WYCOMBE

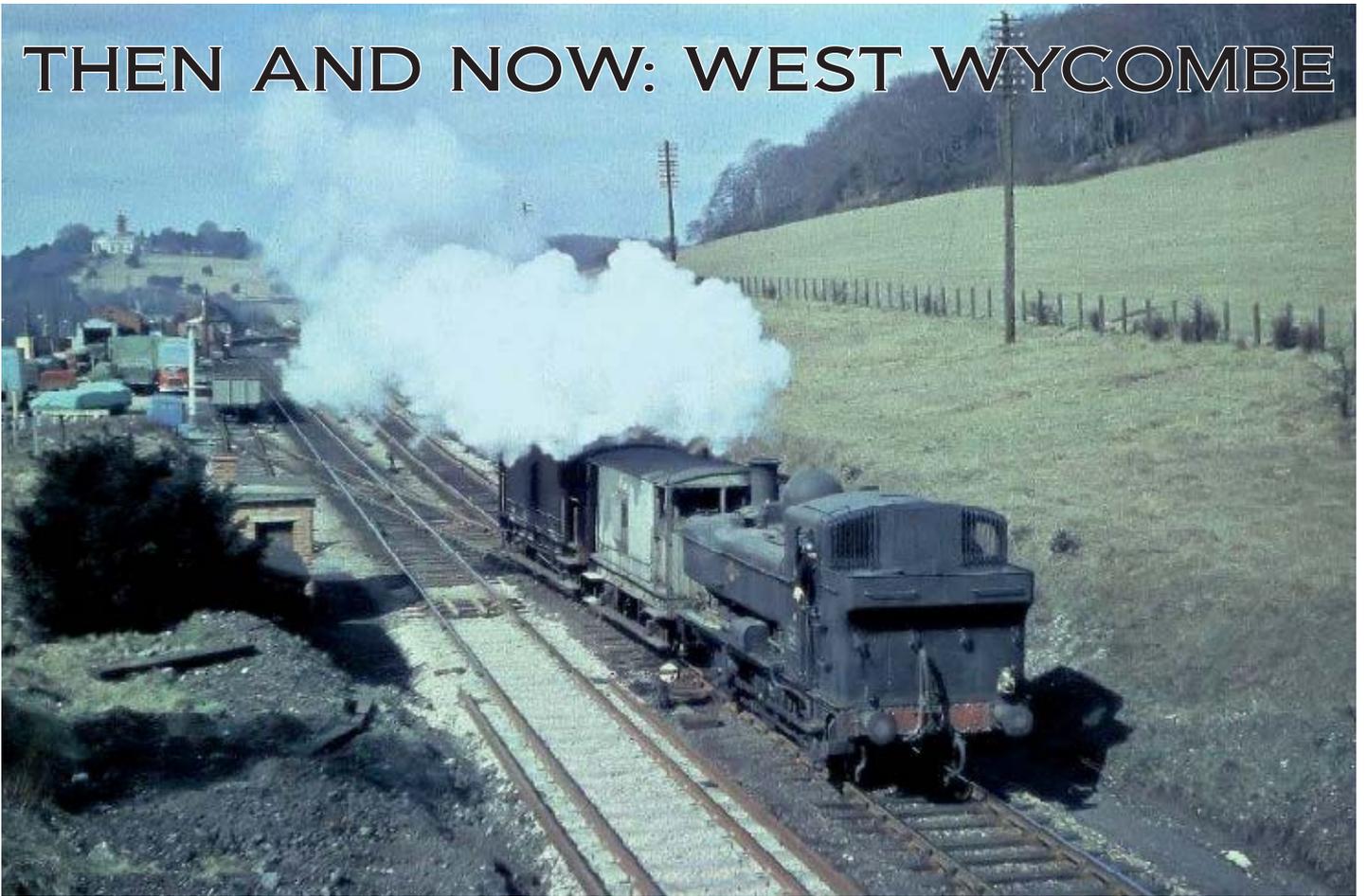


Photo: Gerald T Robinson

West Wycombe lost its passenger service in November 1958 but the goods yard remained until 4th February 1963. Eleven months earlier, 4638 departs with a pair of brakes. The yard is now home to a motor engineers and Heyfordian Travel. On 27th August 2017, 47812 passes with an

additional Birmingham to Marylebone service. The Class 168 in the background is passing the site of the passenger station.

Photo: Mike Walker

