

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

163

March 2019



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The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Cover Photographs

Top: 1450 crossing Marlow Viaduct - 15 July 1973.

Photo: Tony Canton. Article Page 15.

Bottom: Hymek 7011 dragging DMU W55023 & W56284, passing Cookham.

Photo: Peter Robins. Article Page 15.

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 March **UK STEAM PRESERVED 1968 TO THE PRESENT DAY** Ken Livermore
From its humble beginnings in the 1950's, Railway Preservation has become one of the UK's National Treasures. Hundreds of engines have been restored, dozens of lines have been re-opened and steam specials run on the main line every week. This presentation sets out to capture the spirit of the last 50 years including main line action, preserved branches and the narrow gauge.
- Thursday 18 April **8TH COLOUR RAIL JOURNEY** Paul Chancellor
An Eighth Colour-Rail journey will, as usual, feature scenes from around the country with both black & white and colour digital images with the central theme being the number 1959.
- Thursday 16 May **MY RAILWAY CAREER AND MY RETURN TO THE WESTERN** Dick Fearn
Dick Fearn is a career railwayman with over 45 years experience in both the UK and Ireland holding many of the most senior posts in the industry. Now retired from full-time executive roles but he has taken on part-time responsibilities including Chairman of the Western Route Supervisory Board and, in the railway heritage sector, Chairman of Bluebell Railway PLC. In his talk Dick will compare and contrast his railway experiences in both Britain and Ireland and both pre and post-privatisation.
- Thursday 20 June **50 YEARS OF RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHY Part 2** Dr. Les Nixon
Les returns to complete his reflections on half a century of railway photography both at home and overseas. This is our annual joint meeting with the Windsor & Maidenhead RCTS branch.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It is with not a little sadness that I am writing these, my last Chairman's Notes. As you know, I stood down from the committee and thus as chairman at February's AGM. This was not a decision taken lightly and I had considered doing so two years ago but was persuaded to carry on. I have given it a great deal of thought and there has been much soul searching. The reason is that I just want the freedom to be more spontaneous about doing other things, going away on non-railway holidays, taking advantage of late bookings and that sort of thing, without having to think about what I need to be doing for this society and others for which I have also had responsibilities. I'm sure some people consider that I am being selfish and that my duty is to carry on in the role I have had for the last 12 years. Perhaps they're right but I would like to think I've done a reasonable job and that I've helped to steer the society in the right direction over most of those years, ably assisted by former and current committee members. I'm also looking forward to having more opportunity to talk to some of you at meetings than I have had for a very long time.

I seem to have managed very little related to the hobby over the last few months but did discover the benefit of our having a new grandson en-route to the Great Central Railway, as the suggestion of my going to their gala at the end of January was surprisingly well received by "management" when I pointed out I could drop off Nana on the way and pick her up again later. The gala was very good, with a very intensive service but on a bitterly cold day. I passed the last hour of daylight at Quorn, overlooking the station, and the wind chill was dreadful. However, I suspect I will be getting many more opportunities to visit there in due course as Alexander grows up.

Having my car serviced in Slough gave me the opportunity to have a look at current operations on Great Western and I went to Taplow for an hour or so, though it looked more like a building site than a station. To my total surprise HST's ran on down and up mains within a couple of minutes of my arrival and I realise how lucky I had been to see them, given the preponderance of

IET's. I have been receiving information from a friend about the remaining HST rosters and I was very amused to see the 800's described, for the first time, as "Cucumbers", which seems quite apposite. Whilst not wishing to upset our President, I do think the GWR green is rather a drab livery for modern trains and the much lighter red/white/grey I've seen in pictures of LNER Azumas looks much more attractive to my eyes.

I have managed a personal railway "first" recently. We spent a few days in Liverpool, to attend a surprise birthday party and may I say, as an aside, what a fabulous place is Liverpool, with revitalised docklands retaining much of their heritage, a plethora of splendid monumental buildings rubbing shoulders with very interesting modern creations and two superb cathedrals, not to mention friendly people and an exciting night life. Well, from there we went on to Altrincham to see Gay's aged aunt and cousin, Max. Whenever we visit we always go out for an evening with Max and on this occasion we went from Altrincham to Hale and back by train and I realise it's the first time I've ever travelled on a "Pacer". I probably couldn't have chosen a shorter journey anywhere – it's about 2 minutes each way – but at least I did it and just in time before these units are withdrawn after nearly 40 years' service. The "Cheshire Midland" pub at Hale (named after the railway line) is quite a draw, being a Samuel Smith's tied house with bitter at just £1.80 a pint !

I thank Keith Gower for volunteering to join the committee but wish somebody else had thought to do so as well, as it is still one member short. Their next meeting is not until 12th March, so new roles and responsibilities may not be published in the *Donkey* until the June edition, subject to the receipt of enough articles from you all to allow its publication, though I'm sure Mike will include details in a suitably timed newsletter before then. I wish them well and it will seem very odd not to be at the helm of the MDRS any longer.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBER

We welcome another new member to the Society, John Bird who joins us from Alton.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

With the retirement of Tim Speechley at the AGM, Mike Hyde has moved up from being Vice-Chairman to take the Chair. However, Mike has indicated that due to his many other commitments, he only wishes to serve for a matter of months, a year at most, whilst other arrangements can be made. He is therefore "Acting Chairman".

Keith Gower put himself forward to serve on the committee and was therefore duly elected at the AGM. This still leaves us, technically, with a vacancy which we would really like to fill so please give it some consideration.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Following another excellent social evening in December - thanks once more to Georgie Caldwell and Lorna Hopkinson for the superb meal - the new year got off to a great start in January with another visit from Geoff Plumb who this time looked back to 1968.

Unfortunately other commitments took our President out of the country in February so he was unable to make his address after the AGM. However, rather than leave us in the lurch, Mark arranged for Paul Stanford, Route Delivery Director for Network Rail Western, to take his place.

Paul proved an excellent substitute and gave us a very comprehensive review of all the infrastructure upgrades being carried out across the Western, from electrification and the Reading redevelopment to resignalling and even platform extensions.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, FINAL REMINDER

At the time of writing only a handful of members have yet to renew for 2019. Hopefully this is simply an oversight and we can look forward to your continuing support.

The good news is that Peter Robins has once again 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.

Remember, the Society now has a 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.

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.

If you are renewing by post please send to Peter at:
1 Chalklands, Bourne End, Bucks., SL8 5TQ.

PLANNED TRIPS

Two Society outings are provisionally planned for this year.

First, on Saturday 8th June we plan to visit the Epping & Ongar Railway for its steam gala subject to an interesting line up. This will be made using public transport involving either GWR from the branch or Chiltern from High Wycombe, depending on which is most convenient, and the Central Line.

On Saturday 7th September we intend making another visit to the Statfold Barn Railway for its annual enthusiast's event. As always, Statfold is an evolving system and much has changed since our last visit so a return is justified. There is a £10 deposit on booking with a balance of £12.50 on or before the day. Shared cars will be used.

Another idea under consideration is taking a last trip on a GWR high speed train before they bow out of long-distance service in May.

DONKEY CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Once again, this issue has left my "pending" folder somewhat depleted so once again the editor is appealing for material for forthcoming issues.

Any railway related contribution will be most welcome and can be either a photo feature or full article.

RCTS MEETINGS

Our friends in the RCTS have the following meetings planned for the coming months.

Monday 25th March
an Evening with Mark Hopwood

Monday 15th April
American wanderings - Heading West Gordon Davies

Monday 20th May
Railways of China Peter Robins

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, SL6 3AX starting at 19:30. MDRS members always welcome.

STAN VERRINDER

Sadly we have to record the passing of Stan Verrinder. He actually died back in August but it was only when his annual Christmas card failed to arrive that enquiries were made and the sad truth uncovered. He was 88 and had been in poor health for some years.

Stan Verrinder is not a name well known to the majority of today's members but we owe him a great debt. He was one of the group that attended a WEA course tutored by Roger Bowen in the autumn of 1976 that directly led to the formation of our society early the following year. He was the society's first treasurer and edited the embryonic Marlow Donkey, then a few sheets copied on his office's Roneo machine – remember them? Stan had a terrific knack of being able to extract money from members with a smile and good-natured menace. He took the bookings for the annual charabanc trip only, reluctantly, accepting a death certificate signed in triplicate as an excuse for non-participation. Today it seems unbelievable that we regularly filled a fifty-seater coach for such outings. He was equally adept at imposing a three-line whip for the annual Christmas dinner.

Unfortunately after around a decade his employers, the Inland Revenue (he was a valuation officer), moved him from its Reading office, where he enjoyed a view over the Great Western main line, to Eastbourne. So Stan and Eileen moved to Seaford where they remained until his death. To mark his key role in founding the society, he was made an honorary life member and famously presented with a copy of the History of the Southern Railway upon his departure in order that he could acquaint

himself with the strange “tramway” that served his new home – Stan had little regard for railways other than the Great Western.

Stan was born and brought up in Newport, South Wales and his first job was as a lad cleaner at the Ebbw Junction shed in the GWR's brief post-war period. His railway career was, however, short being brought to a close by national service. How he made the transition to the civil service was never really clear. He was a life-long socialist and would always cover the outside of his home in Lodge Close, Marlow (a couple of doors down from the house now occupied by Malcolm Margetts) with “Vote Labour” posters at election time. What his neighbours in that true-blue enclave made of this can only be imagined. We used to have some terrific arguments in the Marlow Donkey pub where we all, including the normally left-of-centre Roger Woodham, took an extreme right-wing position just to wind Stan up although there was never any rancour or malice.

Stan's other great passion was genealogy and had researched the entire Verrinder family back to around 1660 discovering branches across the globe and founding the Verrinder Society – it was probably fortunate his family name was somewhat unusual, not Jones or Smith! As a result of this research he found one of his ancestors in the railway industry, Edgar William Verrinder, rose to the rank of Traffic Superintendent although much to his chagrin it was of the London & South Western Railway based at Waterloo between 1881 and his death in 1893.

His passing leaves only two of those who attended the founding meeting on 24th February 1977, Roger Bowen and your Editor.

HST TWIGLIGHT



Peter Robins has spent much of the last few months recording the final days of GWR long-haul HST operation. On 27th February 43185 *Great Western* and 43086 sweep round the curve at Hungerford Common with 1A77, the 05:05 Penzance to

Paddington. Peter knew 43185 was on this train because he checked the Dawlish webcam before he left home. Oh, the wonders of modern technology!

UNA GIORNATA AL MUSEO (A day at the Museum)

Tim Speechley

I mentioned in my Chairman's Notes for December that Gay and I had taken a holiday in Sorrento in early October, and whilst planning this I realised that the Italian National Railway Museum was located just south of Naples and was quite accessible from where we were staying. So once out there I arranged for Gay to go on an organised trip to Positano and Amalfi with some friends we had made at the hotel, whilst I made my pilgrimage to the museum at Pietrarsa.

Much of the Neapolitan suburban area is served by the Circumvesuviana Railway which consists of several different lines, including one that goes all the way to Sorrento. It is a system built to the fairly unusual gauge of 950 mm and is all overhead electric at 1500 v DC. The Sorrento to Napoli line is 47km long (31 miles), features 36 stations, including those for Pompeii and Herculaneum, and was incredibly busy most of the time, even in October. There seemed to be two classes of emu in use, which I would term, not exactly technically, as "pointed fronts" and "flat fronts". I think these date from 1971 and 1989 respectively. There are some much later units that are supposed to work "express" services but I didn't see one of those. Livery appears to have once been red and silver (or white?) but every unit I saw was heavily graffitied, quite shockingly so.

Gay and I used the train for our visit to the ruins at Herculaneum and later I opted for a simple journey from Sorrento to San Giorgio a Cremano and then a walk of a couple of kilometres to the railway museum, rather than go right into Napoli and change onto another system. Although the railway is now part of a regional transport system (a sort of Naples PTE) I found it very difficult to get any information about runabout or day tickets (even with my Italian) but ordinary return fares were very reasonable (I think I paid about 5 Euros for my return trip to San Giorgio).

I had done the walk from the station to the museum a couple of times on "Streetmap" whilst still at home and felt confident I could do it easily once there but, of course, I got lost and only after asking for directions at a couple of shops did I get back on track. Unlike in the UK, the railway hobby is not common in Italy, so I was expecting the museum to be pretty quiet for my Friday visit, so it came as a great shock and disappointment to find on my eventual arrival that it was being used for some sort of youth gala and much of it was occupied by hundreds of teenagers taking part in organised events as well as listening to loud music being played by a number of groups. I could hear myself saying "why of all days did I choose today?" but I was there and had to make the most of it.

Pietrarsa is an old workshop built originally in the 1830's and lies alongside Italy's first ever railway that ran from Naples to Portici (not far further south) and used locos assembled in the works from components built in the UK. Later, several hundred locomotives were built there between 1867 and 1888 but after that it became just a repair and overhaul facility, this role continuing after nationalisation of the Italian railways in 1905 to form FS (Ferrovie dello Stato – State Railways). The works continued specialising in steam loco overhauls until it was closed in 1975 and then, after a long period of neglect, it was converted into a museum, opening in 1989, the 150th anniversary of the adjacent first Italian railway. Later it closed again for a long period of restoration and the current museum opened in late 2007.

There are several separate buildings used for displaying the exhibits. I had started in the most impressive, the old erecting hall, which has stalls either side off a central traverser road, almost every one having a steam locomotive on it, though some of the tender locos were without their tender. My visit there was

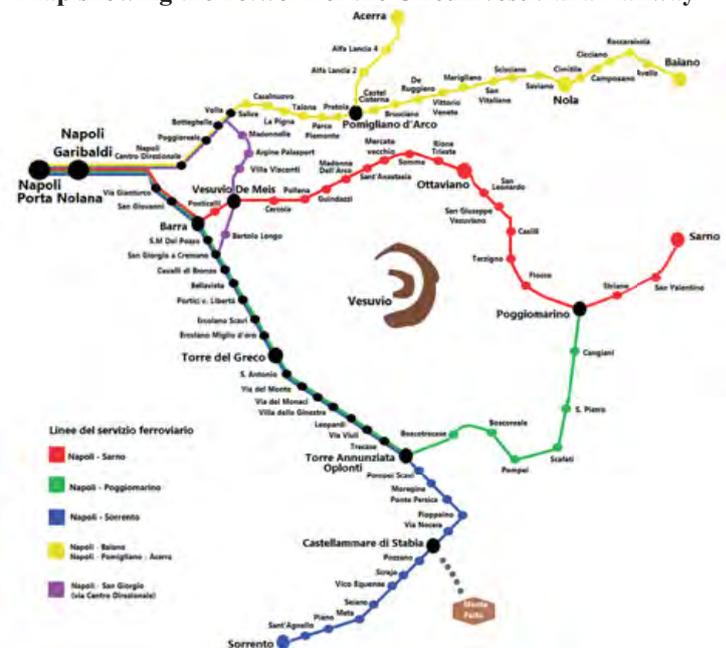


A "Flat Front" unit, built from 1989, at Ercolano station (for the Herculaneum remains). Note the extensive graffiti. (Well the Italians invented it!)



One of the "Pointy Front" units dating from 1971 stands at Sorrento station.

Map showing the network of the Circumvesuviana Railway



An outside view of the museum's pleasant aspect, showing the unusual semi-turnstile (sector plate?) and the only loco outside, an unrestored 2-8-2T (940.036) of which a restored example (940.033) is in the Engine Hall.



curtailed by the crowds of youths sat on and around many of the exhibits and by the loudness of some of the “music”, so I headed elsewhere to find somewhere I might be able to get some photos and hear myself think. Another hall houses railcars (“Littorine”), electric locos and some rolling stock, including a very opulent royal coach built by Fiat in 1929.

Across an open section that in the past would have had lots of tracks in it, another building (sadly rather poorly illuminated) houses several diesel locomotives. There are a couple of fairly conventional shunters and one of the weird “tall cab on wheels” machines built from the 30’s to the 50’s. Of more interest to me were two “first generation” main line locos from the late 50’s. Both Bo-Bo’s, D342.4011 is one of 14 diesel-hydraulics by Ansaldo and D341.1016 a diesel-electric from Fiat. These were used for comparative trials that resulted in the adoption of diesel-electric traction to replace steam on non-electrified lines in Italy.

The next building contained models and had a large number of number plates on the walls but this is no York Museum, with its huge array of all sorts of railway artifacts. Here, the vast majority of the exhibits are full-sized rolling stock and there isn’t really much else. It’s all in very good cosmetic condition but I’ve no idea if any of it is workable – probably not – and very little of it would be easily extractable from its permanent resting place. Anyway, having looked at these subsidiary buildings, I returned to the original erecting shop and, miracle of miracles, the kids, their minders and the musicians had all gone, leaving the place more or less exclusively to me. I guess it must have been lunch time!

his large building is very impressive and crammed with steamers, the only exceptions being a quartet of very old three-phase electrics from the north of Italy in one corner. I won’t list all the engines but there are about 25 of them, a mixture of tank and tender types, ranging from a diminutive 0-4-0T looking like a tram loco (but actually derived from an earlier steam railmotor)

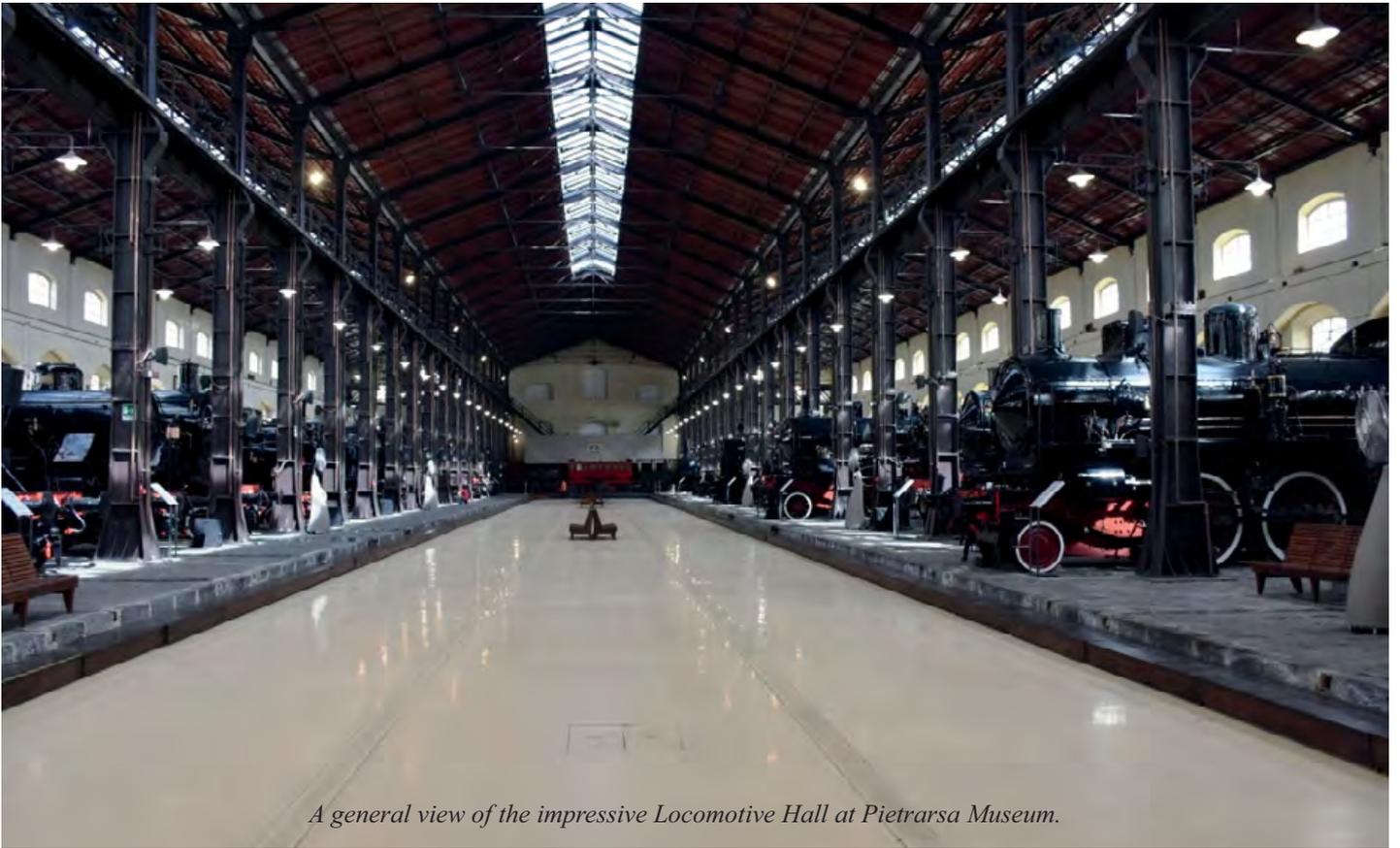
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through to a huge 2-10-0. Many have that classic “Italian look”, tall and narrow, with fairly unencumbered lines and pointed smokebox doors, but there is a lot of variety, like a couple of 950mm narrow gauge tanks, one a 2-6-0T (class 302) and the other an 0-6-0 Rack tank (class 370) from Sicily. Amongst the standard gauge tanks there was a 4-4-0T built by Couillet in Belgium for the Nord Milano Railway in 1896, which subsequently went to the Monza-Molteno-Oggiono Railway when the FNM was electrified. Another non-Italian built beast was an Austro-Hungarian 0-10-0 that had been taken as war reparations after WW1. This loco was in the process of being repainted, much of its valve gear being masked-off in brown paper.

I was quite surprised to see 736.114, which was clearly a USATC S160 and reference to the information board revealed that FS had retained 248 of these locos after the second world war, this one surviving as a stationary boiler long enough to be saved for preservation. Every loco had an information board giving quite detailed information in both Italian and English.



First generation Fiat diesel-electric Bo-Bo 341.1016 from 1958.



A general view of the impressive Locomotive Hall at Pietrarsa Museum.

Unfortunately they were placed prominently at the front of the locomotives but, now having the museum virtually to myself, I discovered they were light enough to move elsewhere whilst the odd photo was taken.

I spent quite a long time photographing all the locomotives and towards the end of the visit I discovered one more loco. This was hidden away in a curtained-off area used for some sort of audio-visual dramatic reconstruction of the opening of the railway line nearby (but not taking place this day). It was a replica built in Florence in 1939 (for the centenary of the opening) of one of the original locos, called "Bayard" that was built by Longridge and Co of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. There is the loco, a tender and also some replica coaches from the era.

By now I felt I should start my journey back to Sorrento. I had a quick look round the other buildings again prior to my departure and was disappointed there was no café at all, just the odd dispensing machine (for which I didn't have the right change) but having said this, I suspect I was the only visitor still on the premises by now. The walk back to the Circumvesuviana station was much simpler this time and I didn't get lost. I noted that several of the roads in San Giorgio a Cremano were "wired" for trolleybuses but there was no sign of any operational buses, so I assumed the system wasn't currently in operation. Back at the station I had to run to just catch a train, discovering it was for Poggiomarino, diverging from the Sorrento line at Torre Anunziata, where I had a very brief wait for my onward train. I got a seat in the front carriage and had a view through the open cab door, which was quite interesting, noting that one of the stations on the way, at Seiano, has its platforms located in the middle of a tall viaduct.

In the end it had been a most enjoyable and rewarding visit. I had started travelling to Italy for work with Fiat in the late 1970's and in those early years I did see the occasional steam loco on shed when travelling by train (Novara and Rimini come to mind) but to my regret, I have never seen an Italian loco in steam and still haven't but to see so many engines of such a variety of types, albeit dead, in one place was very interesting and this had been an opportunity not to be missed.

2-6-0 640.088. The last loco to be overhauled at Pietrarsa Works in the mid-1970's. It has the odd Italian arrangement of inside cylinders and external valve gear.





The largest loco in the collection 2-10-0 480.017. Built in 1923, originally for use on the mountainous Brenner line into Austria.

Wot no chimney? - Crosti 2-8-0 741.137 has one part-way along the other side, like the Franco-Crosti 9F's in the UK.



The "tall cab on wheels" shunter: D207.020 Built by ABL (Antonio Badoni di Lecco) in 1931. Production of these very distinctive units went on until the 1950's.

736.114 An ex-US Army Transportation Corps S160 2-8-0. Its tender was alongside. Although FS had 248 of these after the war, they did not stay in service for very long and this one survived as a stationary boiler.





Fiat built "Littorina" railcar of mid-1930's with a slightly later Breda unit to its left.

The replica Bayard, named after the engineer for Italy's first railway. The original was built by Longridge and Company in Newcastle in 1839 and this replica by an FS workshop in Florence for the line's centenary in 1939. The photo is not very good because this exhibit was hidden away in a curtained-off area I suspect should have been out of bounds to all visitors.

Another general view of locos in their impressive surroundings.



NOTABLE DONKEY TRAILERS



As is well known, from at 1930s onwards the *Marlow Donkey* was operated push-pull by what the Great Western called Auto-trains, normally powered by Collett's 0-4-2 tanks. Most of the trailers used were fairly standard but from time to time some notable exceptions appeared. Around the time of nationalisation the venerable 'Clifton Down' two-coach sets converted from Victorian era non-corridor stock was used.

In the final years up to Dieselisation the normal choice were the post-nationalisation Hawksworth designed trailers but occasionally something of note was provided as shown here.

W221W (above) is one of the Hawksworth vehicles but note it carries the name *Wren*. It was one of only two to be named (the other was W220W *Thrush*) and was built to Diagram A40 in August 1951.

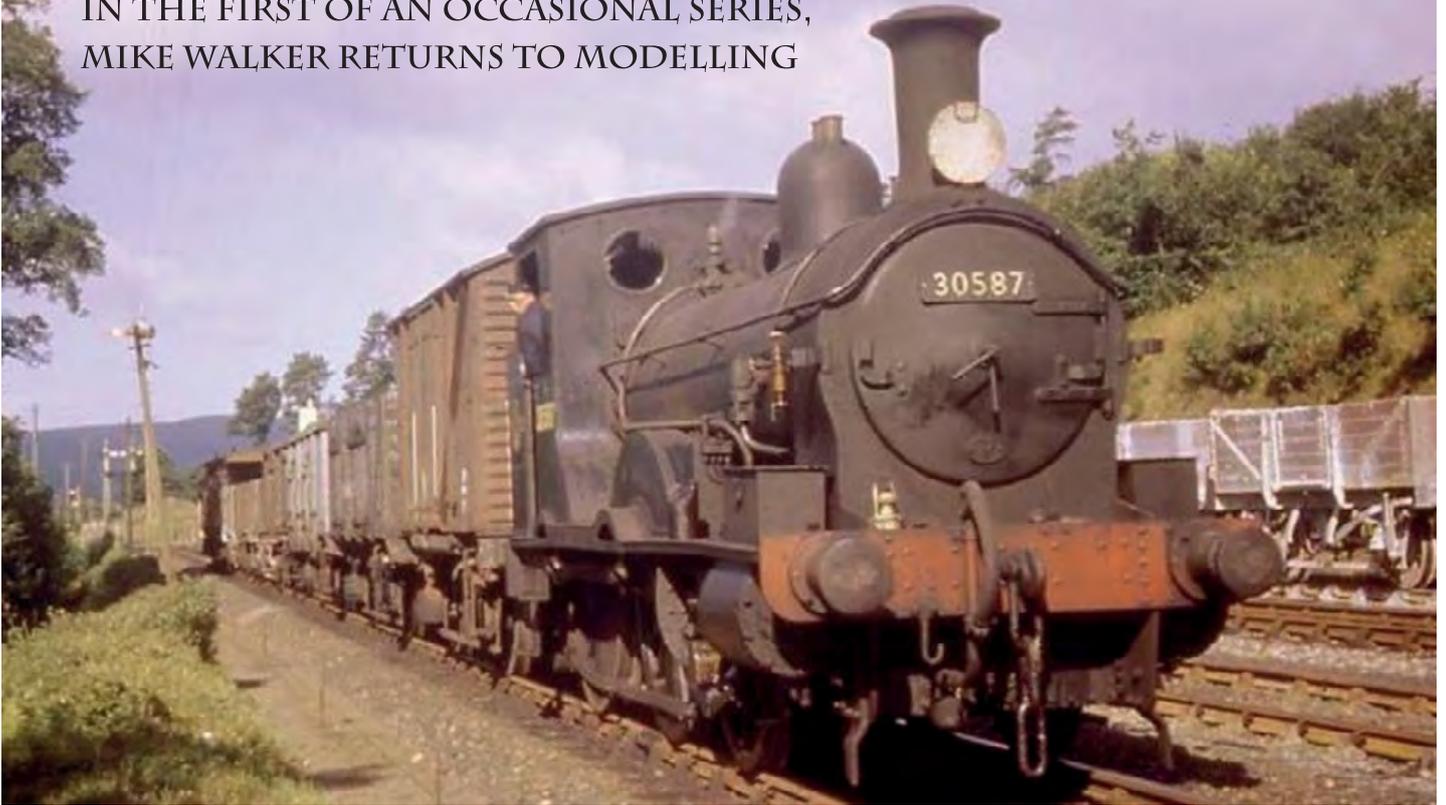
A very different type of trailer is represented by W250W (below) which spent some time on the branch. It was one of a batch of twelve built as brake 3rds and converted in 1953 to diagram A44 providing a link with the 'Clifton Down' stock. Both are seen in the Down Sidings at Bourne End in 1962.

Both photos: Mike Peart/MDRS collection



THE BOSCARNE PROJECT

IN THE FIRST OF AN OCCASIONAL SERIES,
MIKE WALKER RETURNS TO MODELLING



With more time on my hands now that I have “semi-retired”, I’ve decided to take up railway modelling once more after a lapse of around a quarter century. My initial “inspiration” was the superb model of the GWR 14xx tanks recently marketed by Hattons.

My old layout, a generic GWR branch line based on an extension of the Yealmpton branch to Modbury in Devon, had been quietly deteriorating in the attic to the point that it would be easier to start afresh than to try and revive it. This time I thought I’d like to try and model a real location, but where?

The obvious choice would be somewhere where the 14xx’s were to be found. I considered numerous West Country locations including Fowey, Brixham, Mortonhamstead, the ever-popular Ashburton and Hemyock whilst closer to home both Wallingford and Watlington were examined. However, all were rejected for one reason or another, either they didn’t fit the space I had available or weren’t operationally interesting enough being the main cause.

One day, and I’m not sure what triggered this, I had one of those 10 Watt lightbulb moments and suddenly hit upon Boscarne Junction on the old Bodmin & Wadebridge where the Western met the Southern. True, it never saw a 14xx but it did feature a somewhat eclectic selection of motive power and rolling stock from both parties which a quick trawl of the web revealed all could be acquired in the form of the modern highly detailed ready-to-run models or kits. If I took a liberty and introduced a major curve in the middle of the prototype layout it would fit my space. I started to make more investigations and plans.

These were run past our society’s resident railway modelling guru, Ron North, who quickly told me things had moved on during my “fallow years”. He told me of new, strange concepts such as DCC (Digital Command Control - there’s no escape from the digital world!) and “you must have sound”! Oh good grief, my head started to spin but I wasn’t dissuaded. I could, I thought, start off with traditional control then go to DCC later.

What I’m hoping to replicate: Beattie Well Tank 30587 stands on the Western Region main line at Boscarne Junction whilst shunting a goods train in August 1962. A rake of china clay wagons sits in the SR exchange siding. Everything in this picture is available ready-to-run.

Photo: Colour Rail BRS1797

Before going too far I measured up the space available and produced a detailed plan to check what I had in mind was feasible. It was. I found I could produce a basically circular layout one side of which would represent Boscarne Junction with full scenery whilst the other half would be a “fiddle yard” representing Bodmin General (WR) when entered from one end and Wadebridge from the other. Bodmin North (SR) and the Wenford branch would be another stub-ended fiddle yard. The continuous run would be useful if I just wanted to run trains but more importantly it would provide a means of running in locomotives to optimise their performance.

The real Boscarne Junction was simple. The three single lines converged and, with two exchange sidings formed a short section of quadruple line. The signal box was at the Wadebridge end along with a level crossing whilst at the Bodmin end there was a small ground frame building and a platelayers hut. Apart from a cottage for the signalman, that was it. There was no station - the one there today is a creation of the preservation era. Remarkably, the signal box is available ready made by Bachmann who also did the ground frame but it’s no longer available although building one will be a simple task.

Whilst there was no station for most of the line’s life, a small halt was provided at the Bodmin end in 1964 in connection with the introduction of Diesel railbuses (see ‘Donkey 162’) This consisted of a short wooden platform on the WR line and a ground level boarding area on the SR. This, I decided, I could model as a removable module, interchangeable with one representing the former area which was simply scrub and bushes.

A pleasant surprise was finding Peco now made their Streamline track with bullhead rail as an alternative to flat-bottom. The down side is that only large radius left and right hand points are available in bullhead but a quick check of my plans revealed that I could accommodate them, the fiddle yards could be flat-bottom.

So, where to begin? The first order of business was to clear the attic which had become a general dumping area. Masses of old magazines and other “junk” had to be disposed of - occasionally resulting in cries of “so that’s where that went to”. This took most of the winter of 2017-18 after which I planned to dismantle Modbury. However, things didn’t go quite to plan with my now infamous fall in the garden which meant I was unable to do any physical work on the project for most of 2018.

The enforced layoff was put to good use by researching Boscarne Junction and gathering stock. I acquired two books both confusingly titled *The Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway*, a softback by Charles Whetmath and a hardback by Michael Messenger, and the appropriate volume of the Middleton Press books, *Branch Lines Around Bodmin*. Phil Searle found a copy the rare *Special Cornish Issue* of the *Great Western Railway Journal* which supplied many useful details of the china clay operations and B Sets used in Cornwall. Ron North arrived at a meeting with a copy of *Back Track* from 2008 which had another useful article on the B&W.

I joined an on-line group dedicated to the study of the Cornish china clay branches and through this, and from the pages of a book called the *District Controller’s View* along with the other printed sources listed above, I was able to assemble typical working timetables for Boscarne Junction from the mid-50s and early and mid-sixties. These were a revelation. Any thoughts that BJ was a sleepy backwater were quickly dispelled - it was actually constantly busy for most of the day. The same sources enabled me to work out engine and stock diagrams allowing me to establish what stock I need to operate the layout prototypically. I decided to concentrate on the period from circa 1953 to the end of passenger services in January 1967.

This brings us to stock. Whilst it might seem akin to the ill-fated NER electrification (build the locos first then abandon the scheme) to buy locos and stock before building the layout, there is a good reason. These modern, highly detailed models are generally made in small batches with no guarantee of further runs so one has to seize the opportunity as it arises, either to buy new or used if necessary - I’ve been on eBay quite a bit!

The Western worked its services to Bodmin and Wadebridge using 45xx Small Prairies and Bachmann’s model of 4569 (a long time Bodmin resident) was an early purchase. I shall need at least one more, two if I’m to run a schooldays timetable! These were replaced around 1962 by the infamous North British Type 2 Diesel-hydraulics. Dapol have supplied one of these, D6325. A superb model that, unlike the prototype, runs sweet as a nut. The only issue is that the cab lights up - you would never see a real locomotive operating in darkness with them on so why provide them on a model? Apparently you can switch them off but first I have to work out how to get inside without wrecking the thing! Gone are the days of a simple screw underneath...

By contrast the Southern used a variety of motive power. The trio of Beattie Well Tanks were the only power permitted on the Wenford branch and the Kernow Model Centre have supplied me with 30585. These veterans were replaced in late ‘62 by ex-GWR panniers 1367-1369, one of which, 1368, I’ve acquired - a Heljan model purchased from my good mate Brian Daniels at a suitable discount at the 2017 Warley show when he was working on their stand. The panniers actually came to Wadebridge whilst the SR were still in operational control having come from Weymouth where they were also under Southern control. They didn’t last long once the WR took over completely in 1963 and were replaced by 204hp shunters the following year - yup, got one by Bachmann - more cab lights!

Southern passenger services were mostly in the capable hands of the LSWR O2 0-4-4- tanks up until around 1960 when former GWR 8750 class panniers took over, with 4666 and 4694 being regular performers. In turn, these were replaced by Ivatt 2MT



1369 at Boscarne Junction with the Plymouth Railway Circle’s ‘Wenford Special’, the last steam working on the Wenford branch on 31st October 1964. W79977 waits at the Exchange Platform on the line to Bodmin General. Note the unusual double-sided signal, a modelling challenge!
Photo: Mike Walker collection

Boscarne Junction signal box looking towards Wadebridge with the level crossing and home signal beyond. The section of the 'box on stilts' suggests an extension but it always appears to have been like this. The railwaymen's cottage on the right is the only other major structure needed. It still exists, albeit somewhat modernised.

Photo: Mike Walker collection



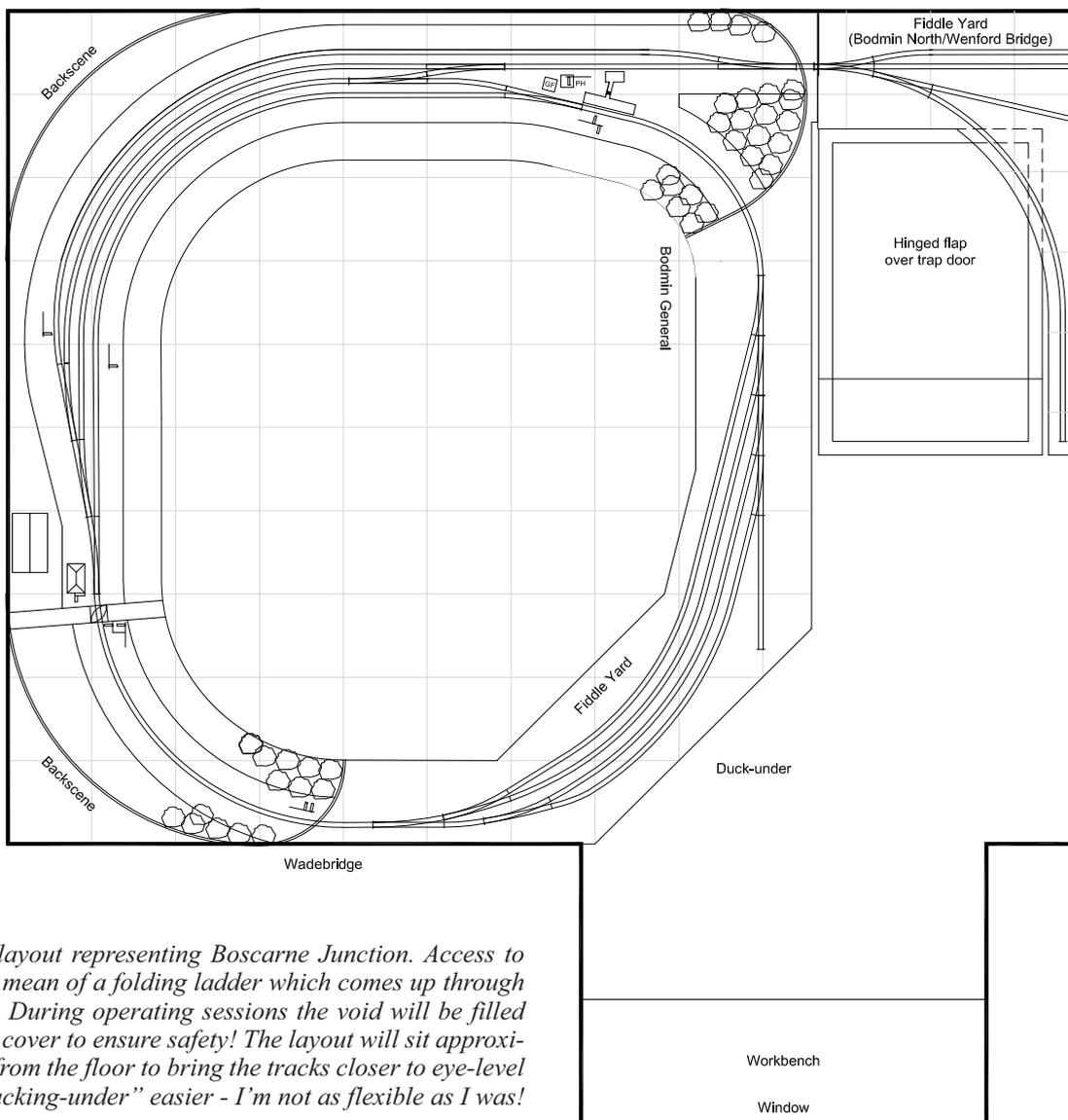
tanks in 1962, in particular 41272 and 41284, which brought down the end of steam in 1964.

Kernow provided a delightful model of an O2, although it will need renumbering, whilst Bachmann have supplied 4666, lightly weathered.

The Ivatts provide more of a challenge. Bachmann have made several batches but both the locos listed above were fitted with push-pull gear, although that was not actually used on the branch. Bachmann did indeed make such a variant but that was one of the earlier series which are, it appears, not suitable for DCC. Whilst not planning to go digital, at least initially, I want to keep my options open so I thought, no problem I'll add the gear to a standard, current, model. Back when I used to model you could get all manner of detailing parts

but no more it seems. Presumably, the high quality of modern models has reduced the call for such items. However, I've since found that 41320 was also a regular performer and not push-pull fitted so I only need a current example and renumber it.

I had seen photographs of N class moguls working to Bodmin North but had thought this to be occasional appearances only. But my researches showed they were booked for one passenger



The planned layout representing Boscarne Junction. Access to the attic is by means of a folding ladder which comes up through the trap door. During operating sessions the void will be filled with a hinged cover to ensure safety! The layout will sit approximately 4 feet from the floor to bring the tracks closer to eye-level and make "ducking-under" easier - I'm not as flexible as I was!

and one goods turn daily. Fortunately, Bachmann offer a miniature version but beware; the same DCC compatibility issues arise as with the Ivatt. It is somewhat disappointing that T9s never made it to Bodmin (despite being common at Wadebridge) as Hornby made a lovely model of those.

From 1964 to the end of passenger services, Diesels ruled the roost with a GRCW single car shuttling between Bodmin Road and Padstow and the AC railbus linking Bodmin North with Boscarne Junction. Goods services, except to Wenford, were handled by the D63xx hydraulics which also retained a couple of passenger turns. Again, sadly, no Hymek ever appeared - I did like them in their original livery. All the required Diesels have now been acquired.

Passenger stock was next. Throughout the period being represented, at least until Dieselisation, the Southern services were provided by what were known as P Sets which comprised a pair of Maunsell corridor coaches, a Brake Second and a Brake Composite. Hornby have made both of these but they are not currently available. However, they were the key to making a realistic representation of services through BJ. Obtaining a BR green BSK was relatively easy but the BCK is much rarer and it took several attempts on eBay before I was successful. Since then I've added a second pair in blood-and-custard livery.

On the Western, the standard B Sets (a pair of close coupled non-corridor brake composites) held sway, mostly of the E140 design. Fortunately, Airfix had chosen this for modelling back in the 1980s and I already had a pair in GWR livery which could be "nationalised". However, what we all thought back then was a superb model now looks woefully inadequate alongside Hornby's incredibly detailed Maunsells. Most things can be corrected with some work but for some reason, Airfix chose to model the door and commodore handles not in recesses (as they were on the prototype due to their overall width) but on small raised "plinths". Some brave souls appear to have corrected this but I don't feel brave enough so I'll have to live with this. I've since acquired a second set (like the P set, two sets are required to run the daily service authentically) and the plan is, after detailing, to finish one in crimson and the other in maroon. No doubt, as soon as I finish that work, Hornby (who have previously re-released the ex-Airfix models) will announce a new, retooled and correct model - it's called "Sod's Law".

Goods stock is less of a challenge. The predominant part of the fleet will be china clay wagons. I spent much of the summer evenings of 2018 assembling kits and now have a good fleet of former GWR type O13 examples and a couple of former private owner ones based on the RCH 1923 design - the aforementioned on-line group provides full details of numbers, brake types and even tare weights so there's no excuse for getting it wrong. The only problem is, much of the detail then vanishes under a wash of white acrylic paint to replicate the stained condition these vehicles ran in.

The BR version of the china clay wagons should be easy in theory as Bachmann make them. But... Their model leaves much to be desired. For a start they've chosen to portray the wagons after upgrade work in the 1970s when they acquired roller bearing axle boxes and fixed tarpaulin rails. The latter can be simply discarded but the chassis is another matter. After much deliberation, the "cure" would seem to be replacement with the Parkside BR mineral wagon chassis and add vacuum brake gear plus replacement buffers. The body needs some work too followed by repainting and lettering to the earlier style then weathering again. Bizarrely, Bachmann make a mineral wagon with the correct and finely detailed chassis yet they've not chosen to use this on their china clay wagons even for the latest production run. They've even marketed the 1970s BR version in GWR livery - buyers beware!

Otherwise the wagon fleet is quite straight forward requiring a selection of vans, general purpose opens and both wooden and steel bodied minerals all of which are readily available ready to run. There are a few specials. There was an oil depot at Bodmin North so Shell-BP class B (black) tankers were regularly seen. These arrived via the WR and were conveyed from Bodmin General to Wadebridge tacked on the back of the branch B set (You wouldn't have got away with that if they were class A, silver, tanks which carried petrol rather than fuel oil!) and were then tripped back to Bodmin North.

After the North Cornwall line closed in 1966, Presflo wagons branded for the Delabole Slate company passed through Boscarne Junction on a regular basis. Kernow provide same. I have a Lowmac machinery wagon which I propose to nationalise and when I heard Oxford Diecast were bringing out an early combine harvester I thought it would make a terrific load. Sadly, now the model has appeared, whilst it is superb, the cutter head is an integral part of the main casting and not detachable as I'd hoped. With the head in place, a combine is definitely out of gauge!

Brake vans are another thing that add to the authenticity. Naturally the classic GWR Toad was much in evidence and to my delight I found Hornby made a model of the AA23 design complete with the number 35392 and correctly branded "Bodmin RU" and "To work between Bodmin Rd. & Boscarne Junc." - I snapped up the last example Kernow had in stock. To this I've added Oxford Rail's smaller AA3 design which will, unfortunately need renumbering and branding as it's currently marked "Bala".

The curves on the Wenford branch meant that BR Standard 20 Ton brakes and the longer GWR ones such as 35392 were prohibited so a trio of former LNER Toad E vans were allocated to Wadebridge for the job in the late fifties replacing the previous LSWR "road vans" which were literally falling apart. Hornby's new super-detailed Toad E, suitably renumbered, has filled that role whilst Kernow assure us they are working on a limited edition model of the LSWR road van and Hornby have announced a different LSWR van for 2019 - my credit card is on standby! I've also got a BR Standard van.

Curiously, despite being officially banned, photographs of the numerous enthusiasts' brake van specials which ran up to Wenford in the 1960s show them including both full size GWR Toads and BR Standards along with the SR 25 Ton "Pillbox" type and even, on a single occasion, a "Queen Mary" bogie brake van! Desperation perhaps?

The autumn of 2018 and into the winter saw work to demolish the old layout. This has been somewhat slow as I took advantage of the unseasonably good weather during the period to work on the garden that had sadly deteriorated badly over the summer months when I was unable to keep up with my regular maintenance regime but it was completed by Christmas.

Next, the room was redecorated and some new carpet tiles laid before starting on the most important part of the new layout, building the benchwork followed by the tracklaying, the two most critical aspects of building a reliable, good running layout. Hopefully I shall have things up and running by the end of 2019 with the scenic work the following year.

As work progresses I'll come back with occasional reports on progress with suitable illustrations. Ron North has already said he'd like to pencil it in for a future Wycrail but I had to disappoint him. Boscarne Junction will be a fixture and certainly going nowhere. However, I'll happily entertain visitors once it is in a more complete state and if any of you feel like lending a hand with the construction you'd be more than welcome - just give me a call.

COMMUTING TO SCHOOL ON THE DONKEY

Extracts from a Young Schoolboy's Diary 1967-1974

Martin Stoolman concludes his memoirs



So it was pretty much Park Royal units all the way during 1971, greatly enhancing my short journey to school on the Donkey. Their all-conquering presence could be even more appreciated first thing on Saturday mornings if I could be bothered to get up in time. It is a quirk of railway timetabling that it sometimes takes the planners a few years to catch up with changes in society and travel habits.... In the 1950s and into much of the 1960s no doubt, it was normal for a lot of workers and even some schoolchildren (not me thank goodness!) to use the trains early on Saturday mornings. Therefore the enhanced half hourly rush hour service on the branch, with the service split at Bourne End, also applied on Saturday mornings well into the 1970s. There were no through services to Paddington by then, just a shuttle between Maidenhead and Bourne End with the unit coming out of service once it had arrived at Maidenhead with the 07.46 from Bourne End. With four Park Royal units around this meant that the Saturday peak services were almost always formed of a second unit, thus giving the chance to see two Park Royals side by side at Bourne End. Such was the case on Saturday 1st January 1972 when I got up early (no Bank Holiday on New Year's Day in those days) and cycled to the station to witness the two original units in joint action, W50413/W56168 "locked in" for now on the Marlow branch, and W50414/W56169 working to/from Maidenhead. I had no idea at the time that this was to be the very last occasion on which I would see either of them in the Thames Valley.....

For reasons that even now I fail to fully understand, both units were transferred away to Devon. It was almost as though somebody had decided that in their dotage they should be allowed a spot of semi-retirement in the West Country, notwithstanding the continuing need for them on the Donkey. As is well known they went to work on the Paignton to Kingswear line in its last year under BR until that line was taken over at the end of 1972 by the Dart Valley Railway. The Park Royals were then stored in the depths of Newton Abbot shed until being rescued by the fledgling West Somerset Railway, and conveyed to Minehead.

Pressed Steel Class 121 W55030 leads a Driving Trailer into Bourne End on a frosty 24th November 1973. On this occasion the formation would meet with Martin's approval as the van end of the "Bubble Car" was in the middle.

Photo: Mike Walker

They then played a pivotal role in helping to keep West Somerset Railway services going during the darkest days of the 1980s when that line nearly went bust. So, at least for me living in Exeter, I did have the chance to ride on them again, albeit that the Motor Brakes were paired up with the "wrong" Driving Trailers as I saw it! Sadly the cash starved West Somerset wore them into the ground, and in the mid-1990s they ended up dumped, unloved and worn out, at Williton. It is a consolation that vehicles W50413 and W56169 were saved, and are now the subject of long term restoration by the Helston Railway Diesel Group in West Cornwall.

Meanwhile, back on our branch line, the remaining two units were keeping things going – very much so in fact. Indeed there was just one day in the whole of the Spring Term of 1972 when I did not record either W50411/W56167 or W50412/W56166 on the job, proving that the Marlow line had first call on them. But amid the gathering gloom of 1972 their days were also numbered, as circumstances began to mitigate against them and against the branch line as a whole.....

My diary entry for Wednesday 1st March that year is brief but chilling: "Talked about the closure threat to our Maidenhead to Marlow line on "Nationwide" this evening. (That was the programme that followed the BBC early evening news in those days). But this schoolboy was nearly 16 now and not about to see the branch line go down without a fight! Just a few days later, and the diary entry for Thursday 9th March 1972 reads: "Dished out leaflets on the station this morning to promote support for the saving of our railway line from the threat of closure at the end of next year". Then, on Wednesday 29th March: "Mum and I went along to the first meeting to discuss the threatened closure of our railway line at the Community

The Marlow Donkey



Set L476 with DMS W51329 leading, standing at Marlow ready to work the first MMPA excursion to Maidenhead for connection to Paignton on 9th September 1973.

Visually almost identical to the more numerous Pressed Steel Class 117 versions, this was one of a small number of BRCW-built Class 118s allocated to Reading at this time, most being based in the West Country.

Photo: Mike Walker

Centre in the evening, during the course of which the Marlow-Maidenhead Railway Passengers Association was formed. Mum and I both became members and offered our assistance". (My mother remains a proud member to this day.)

So that was one thing. Then the industrial strife that started with the miners began to hit the railways about the same time. I went on a school trip to Italy (another story) but when I returned on Monday 17th April British Rail was already in the grip of a "work to rule". I recorded that both the ferry crossing from Calais to Folkestone (BR SeaLink of course) and the train from there to Victoria were delayed. The plan for us to catch the train back to Bourne End and Marlow was abandoned in favour of sending the school minibus to bring us home. I must have seen the train somewhere though as I noted that it was a Pressed Steel 2-car. No trains at all ran on the branch the following day, but luckily I had been given the day off to recover. They were running on the Wednesday when I went back, but again it was a Pressed Steel 2-car as indeed it was for the rest of the week. The Park Royals' grip had been well and truly broken! By then though the railway workers had, according to my diary, "been ordered to go back to work for a 14-day 'cooling off' period".

Then two weeks later an incident occurred at Bourne End, on Saturday 6th May, that no doubt helped to seal the fate of the remaining Park Royal units. I mentioned earlier on about there being three instances where I witnessed a Park Royal "coming a cropper" but only mentioned two. This was the third, and by far the most serious. I turned up at the station to catch the 09.16 for a trip with my brother to Maidenhead, only to find chaos. The previous service, the 08.16 formed of W50412/W56166, had de-railed on the points out by the river bridge. This would have been following the two-train Saturday early morning service mentioned earlier when the points would have required re-setting to normal, but clearly hadn't been, either through human or mechanical error. Services were suspended for the rest of the day (no trains on Sunday of course) and that was the last I ever saw of my favourite Park Royal unit.

Normal service was restored on the Monday when W50411/W56167 did the honours, as it did on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday too. But then on the Friday the rail workers resumed their "work to rule" and, whilst the Marlow trains were running, they were formed of a Pressed Steel 3-car unit. The fact that there were no trains on Saturday didn't affect me, but then my entry for Monday 15th May recounts: "Got a lift from a garage mechanic to school this morning who happened to be taking Dad's car in for a service, as there were no trains on the Marlow line". However the Tuesday 16th May entry recalls: "Pretty well back to normal on the railways today", with unit W50411/W56167 out again, as indeed it was for the rest of that week.

Ominously the following week we had Pressed Steel "bubble" cars operating on their own for the first time for an entire two

years, not that having a Driving Trailer attached is much good if it is locked out! But unit W50411/W56167 was back on Friday, and then managed to operate the service single handed apart from one day, right through until Thursday 8th June inclusive – a remarkable achievement! It was back on Saturday 10th June and the following Monday but then that was that for the Park Royals. One could speculate endlessly what ended it; the damage to the derailed unit, the fact that only one unit clearly could not sustain the service, a combination of the two, or simply the fact that WR senior management could no longer be bothered to maintain two non-standard units for a branch line that had no future. They had more important fish to fry, including dealing with increasing industrial unrest. So having started on Monday 1st June 1970, the Western's Park Royal caper came to an end (in the Thames Valley at least) on Monday 10th June 1972.

And so it was back to the old order for the rest of that year, albeit with increasing instances of the diagrammers not even bothering to roster the Driving Trailer. This became more and more prevalent as 1972 became 1973, with single cars becoming the rule rather than the exception. Us lads with a bit of train knowledge regarding such things as 2-HAPs and 4-VEPs on the Southern, used to refer to them as 1-DOOMs! And it WAS all doom and gloom too. Wednesday 28th February 1973: "Dad had to take David and me to school as a result of a drivers' one-day strike in support of a pay claim". Friday 2nd March 1973: "Unfortunately had to wait an hour on Marlow station to get home due to the present industrial unrest among the drivers". Thursday 8th March 1973: "Had to go to school again by car because of another total one-day strike by drivers". Friday 16th March 1973: "Even though ASLEF leaders voted this evening to suspend industrial action, had to go by car to school due to no trains operating to Marlow this morning". Tuesday 1st May 1973: "General strike against the Government's economic policy, although in fact most people went to work including busmen. However train drivers were again on strike so Mum had to give me a lift to school this morning".

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My diary entry for Tuesday 14th June 1973 also made depressing reading. "Watched a TV documentary this evening entitled 'Do We Really Need the Railways?'" My verdict on it was that it "predictably missed all the basic points". Three weeks earlier I had attended the 2nd AGM of the Marlow/Maidenhead Railway Passengers Association where I recall there was a lot of justified concern expressed. Things were not looking very rosy for the branch line or indeed for the railways in general. Dark days.

But then quite suddenly the tide started to turn. The new timetable had started on Monday 7th May 1973 and incredibly a full 3-car unit was now rostered for our branch line throughout the day! It was as though the management had just thrown in the towel on the issues of a single car not having enough capacity and the Guards perpetually locking out the second coach because of the lack of a gangway. But it did feel as though a sledgehammer had been taken to crack a nut! Capacity on the branch had effectively more than trebled overnight; better even than replacing a 3-car class 166 unit with a 8-car class 387! For us schoolboys we had guaranteed seats behind the driver, and quite possibly most of the coach to ourselves!

On Wednesday 11th July 1973, although I don't remember it, I went on a school trip, "a lecture near Hyde Park on high-speed trains of the future". Then during the school holidays I saw the real thing during a holiday in York, the prototype HST. Things really were looking up for the railways. Before that of course, on Sunday 15th July, there were the unforgettable Marlow Donkey Steam Centenary celebrations. I volunteered to help and ended up as a safety steward at Shaw's Crossing all day in the pouring rain! At least I did my duty. Then two months later, on Sunday 9th September 1973 (again when there would normally have been no service), I joined my mother and brother on what I describe in my diary as "a Marlow Donkey excursion, the first

of its kind". A 6-car DMU was laid on from Bourne End to Maidenhead where we changed to a brand new Inter-City air conditioned set for a day trip to Paignton and back. Hardly the act of a management intent on a hard pruning. Finally, my diary for Wednesday 28th November 1973 stated: "There are to be no drastic cuts to our railway system after all. Instead the Government announced today that investment will be increased by 50%". Some industrial action continued (this was the 1970s after all) but perhaps significantly a week long ASLEF work to rule from Wednesday 12th December 1973 failed to produce any disruption on our branch line, my train to school running on time throughout. By the time I left school in the summer of 1974 and ceased my schoolboy commuting on the Donkey, things were definitely on the up. Did we dare hope that the Marlow branch would still be here nearly 50 years later? We dare!

Just as a postscript, I know I have given the present operators a bit of a knock in this article in respect of comparative performance. However there is one area that has most certainly seen enormous improvement and that is safety. On Wednesday 19th December 1973, the day I broke up for the Christmas holidays, there occurred a terrible accident when, as my diary remembers it: "The 17.18 Paddington to Oxford came off the rails and jack-knifed, killing about 10 people and injuring 50". One of the battery door covers on D1007 *Western Talisman* had come loose and dropped down striking lineside equipment, with devastating effects. One of the dead was a near neighbour of ours.

At Bourne End, I vividly remember an incident on our school train when, as our unit was pulling out of the bay platform, one of our number who was running late, pulled open one of the slam doors after the train had started to move. We somehow managed to haul him and his bag in just before the train reached the end of the platform (in spite of the large gap between train and platform). The door was not shut until shortly before the junction. He was thankfully not seriously injured, only his pride was hurt. I am still in touch with the now 61 year old gentleman, and he still regards this incident as his worst "near death" experience. I won't reveal his name but he is known to the current M&DRS editor!

The branch line is indeed in very safe hands, with our President still in control as the MD of GWR. I began this article talking about the two through trains to Paddington in the morning. Running to almost identical timings as in 1967, it is extraordinary that these only stopped running recently given how crowded with trains the main lines now are. If it wasn't for Mark you can be sure that these would have ceased long before they did. And now we have the real prospect of a through service between Marlow and Maidenhead running half hourly throughout the day. That really is something that would never have been believed back in those dark days of 1972.



An event not recorded by Martin as he was in class took place on 20th June 1974 when W55023 and W56284 working the 15:22 Marlow to Maidenhead were involved in a collision with a farm tractor at Calcot Lane crossing between Bourne End and Marlow.

Hymek 7011 was sent to rescue the stricken DMU which it dragged back to Bourne End and then propelled it to Maidenhead. It is seen passing Cookham.

This was the last occasion that a Diesel-hydraulic locomotive visited the branch.

Photo: Peter Robins



Tony Caton



Tony Caton



Andy Sturt/MDRS collection

Memories of the Marlow Donkey centenary celebrations on a very wet 15th July 1973 which featured 1450 running between Bourne End [Centre] and Marlow which is seen crossing Marlow Viaduct [Top Left].

6106 leads a Maidenhead to Bourne End train up the climb out of Cookham at Terrys Lane [Above right] whilst 6998 *Burton Agnes Hall* comes under the Rowbottom occupation bridge with a Bourne End to Maidenhead working [Below].

Gordon Rippington



THEN AND NOW: DEVIL'S BRIDGE

TIM EDMONDS looks back through his photo collection at the development of the Vale of Rheidol's upper terminal.

9th August 1966: This was my first visit and the train was hauled by No 7. There is a single station building and all remains of the former goods yard had been removed a couple of years previously, including the two sidings (originally a loop). Note the semaphore signal with the bike leaning against it on the right. There were no raised platforms and each of the two station roads could each take a train, while the siding was used to drop one or two vehicles off a morning train and use them to provide return capacity in the afternoon for those spending the day here.



1st September 1979: No 8 on duty. The siding has been extended to full train length and the signal has gone. The station building has been restored to its earlier condition with a canopy, and has had a row of fire buckets added. There is a portacabin in the yard and another building in approach road. Visitors could wander the trackside by the station but were not allowed to go under the bridge, which has limited clearance.

6th September 2018: No 8 on duty again. The new owners have made extensive changes, including a platform with fencing and lighting. However, there is now a single platform road and a loop, and the stock siding has been relaid on a new alignment and then disconnected so that only a single train can be handled at once. There is fencing round the yard, which has several new buildings housing a shop and cafeteria. The approach road and part of the yard are used for car and coach parking. Another noticeable change is the cut-back of undergrowth on the right.

