

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

169

September 2020



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The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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

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Front Cover Photographs

Top: 485045 leaves Ryde Pier Head. 11 February 1989.

Photo: Peter Robins. Article Page 14.

Bottom: 004 leaves Ryde Esplanade. 1 May 2005.

Photo: Peter Robins. Article Page 14.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

For the present, all meetings are being conducted on Zoom starting at 7.30pm.
See page 3 for further details on how to take part.

- Thursday 17 September **FIFTY YEARS A TRANSPORT PHOTOGRAPHER** Keith Gower
Keith, one of our own members, delves into his photographic collection to bring us a selection of images of steam and diesel from the 1970s through to the present day.
- Thursday 15 October **LONDON AREA STATIONS & SHEDS 1958-60** Ken Livermore
Ken's selection takes us back to the time when steam was just starting to give way to diesel and electric traction as he tours an area many of us will remember from our youth.
- Thursday 19 November **1969 – THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS...** Geoff Plumb
The quality of Geoff's photography is well known. This presentation, the first year after the end of regular British steam will nevertheless provide a variety of subjects including some steam overseas.
- Thursday 17 December **A TOUCH OF WINTER** Peter Robins
In place of our traditional pre-Christmas social gathering, Peter brings us a selection of seasonal pictures from home and abroad to get you in the mood.

We are waiting to see how things develop before confirming meetings in 2021. Hopefully we will be able to return to normal but if this proves impossible further Zoom sessions will be arranged.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I detect a light at the end of the tunnel with the engine moving closer in stages. Maybe it shunts about for a while as the local stopper gets ready for its departure. No mad rush but gradually our preserved steam lines are opening up if with a limited service. My reassessment as Chinnor Station Master/Train Despatcher takes place over the Bank Holiday: I hope to have passed by the time you read this.

Gradually your society is settling down to regular meetings by 'ZOOM'. Something most of us had never heard of 6 months ago but it has really caught on around Marlow. I realise it is not everyone's choice or maybe you are not able to receive it (David Woodhead can offer advice if needed) but it does show the society is still functioning. I do not intend to spell out here all the treats we have in store for you as they are printed elsewhere but we had an outstanding event this August when our President gave us a Zoom Quiz. Mark must have spent a lot of his valuable time researching a multitude of questions on a very wide range of railway topics from the London Underground to the Marlow Branch. An all this on his Birthday and whilst on holiday. We know he is always hard at work solving this part of the nation's railway problems but was this beyond the mark (no pun intended – yes it was)?

Over 90 questions with no one 100% correct. We believe Luke Ripley ran away with the prize (a free entry to the next Zoom!) as he disappeared before we could congratulate him. I failed miserably but really enjoyed the quiz as did we all. It was the Royal Albert Bridge the King could not cross to get into Cornwall years ago.

Whilst on about Zoom meetings your committee are looking at possible reciprocal arrangements with other railway societies to see if they have interesting topics to share. More on that as discussions and negotiations continue. Naturally we have not given up on our booked speakers but re-engaged them for next year or agreed a Zoom talk from them.

Meantime you get your copy of the *Marlow Donkey* if you are a paid up member and receive Mike Walker's regular briefing by Newsletter. Some fascinating articles and great photos from then to now. So whilst we are not yet able to meet at the BECC you should be well satisfied with your membership. In conclusion a warm welcome to a number of newly joined members from far and wide. A good decision chaps.

Mike Hyde

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We have recruited a number of new members during the summer period.

John Hayward from Sussex, Don Kennedy from West London, Brian Read from Worthing, David Hartley from Skegness, Richard Gladstone from Didcot and Bob Haskins. The prize for the most distant recruit goes to Michael Sherwood of Beckenham - that is the suburb of Perth, Western Australia - not South London!

Welcome to you all.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Although we have not been able to hold proper meetings we have conducted several on-line virtual meetings using Zoom.

The first of these was on 7th May when Mark Hopwood gave us his Presidential Address updating us on the latest developments at Great Western and South Western Railways.

From July we have resumed a monthly programme starting with a members' "slide" evening. Four collections were shown, Tim Edmonds featured the railways of Switzerland; Peter Robins showed a selection of images he's taken since going digital; Mike Walker took us on a tour of the Columbia River Gorge in the western USA and Tim Speechley presented some more memories of the 1980s.

Whilst we don't usually have a August meeting this year we made an exception and had a railway-themed quiz hosted by our President. There were four rounds, the final one concentrating on the Marlow branch which seemed to fox many!

Attendance of these gatherings has been in the mid-20s to low 30s which is lower than our traditional meetings and a little disappointing.

ZOOM: HOW TO TAKE PART

Sadly, it seems we will be unable to have regular meetings for the foreseeable future, at least the rest of 2020, so we will continue to offer Zoom meetings - see page 2 for the programme.

To take part you do not need any special equipment. For maximum effect you need a PC, laptop or tablet which ideally has a camera and microphone. A smartphone can also be used.

If you don't have one of these devices with camera and microphone you can still enjoy the Zoom meetings if your computer has sound - if you can, for example, listen to or watch radio or TV you can attend our meetings.

A few days before each meeting, Peter Robins sends out an email to all on our list inviting you to take part by registering which will lead to you receiving another email with the log-on and password details for that meeting. Follow the instructions and you'll be able to join in.

If you want more details or guidance please contact Dave Woodhead - details on page 1 of this issue.

CROSSINGS UPGRADED

Network Rail have upgraded the protection of three of the public crossings between Bourne End and Marlow. Miniature red/green lights for crossing users have been added to the Upper Thames Sailing Club (Bourne End), Calcott Lane (Little Marlow) and Mill Lane (Marlow) crossings.

The lights are activated by approaching trains. If a green light is displayed it is safe to cross but a red light indicates a train is imminent and you should wait.

The first and last named are pedestrian only crossings but Calcott Lane is a vehicle crossing except the landowner on the north side has erected a steel fence across the lane parallel to the crossing gate rendering the crossing unusable by anyone!

BOURNE END LANDMARK DEMOLISHED

The highly-regarded cafe in Station Road next to Bourne End station has been demolished as a result of serious structural damage in received in a road traffic accident in December 2019 when it was struck by a Volkswagen.

The cafe proprietors had hoped to repair the building but a number of obstacles got in the way and this proved impossible. The site has been used to provide extra parking spaces.

It's not clear when it was built but it would appear to date from the early 1930s, or what its early use was. Prior to becoming a cafe it was the office for a company called Meltec. From 1980 to 1982 they used the old goods shed to make the first kidney dialysis machine for home use.

At various times before that it was a coal office, flower shop, car-hire office and a popular sweet shop. Your editor remembers his late father becoming very agitated one day when the loco engaged in shunting the sidings between the level crossings stopped on the Station Road crossing whilst the fireman climbed down and went to the shop to get his "tanner" (6d = 2¹/₂p) deposit back on his bottle of pop. Appropriately, the loco was a 61xx or "tanner-oner".



The Marlow Donkey



GBRf 50049 Defiance and 50007 (running as 50014 Warspite) were used to haul 5Q69, the 12:36 Burton Whetmore Sidings to Reading TCD delivering GWR 769943, seen approaching Culham 114 minutes late on 7th August 2020.

two photos: Mike Walker

46100 Royal Scot and 70000 Britannia approaching Fairwood Junction with 1Z46, Saphos Trains' Devonian Express, the 06:55 Cardiff Central to Plymouth on 12th August 2020.



BEATING THE VIRUS

MARTIN STOOLMAN takes an unlikely August 2020 Day Excursion on the Settle to Carlisle Railway



D6817 (37 521) drawing into Appleby with the 08:35 from Skipton at 10:01. All photos: Martin Stoolman unless noted.

So there we were at our Devon home in late July, my wife Maureen and I, watching the national “Corona” News on TV and contemplating a summer largely devoid of holidays and mini breaks. We don’t have a car and the instruction had been to avoid train travel unless it was absolutely necessary.

Suddenly, up on the screen, there was a feature about Jeremy Hosking's latest venture, daily timetabled virus-busting excursion trains along the wonderful Settle & Carlisle Railway. The only trouble was nobody was using them, unsurprising really, but the message was clear: come and ride this train, we want your custom! “Oh, wouldn’t that have been great to go on?” we both said almost in unison, feeling we were still in lockdown. It took us a while, but eventually the realisation dawned that there was nothing now stopping us....

Well, almost nothing. Without fail, whenever I have ventured that way in the past it has rained, often relentlessly, to the point where, whenever Maureen has suggested a holiday in that part of the world, I have firmly vetoed it. But the thought of getting out and about, especially behind heritage locos on the S&C, was enough for my weather prejudices to be dropped on this occasion.

And so to the computer we went. Having worked for First Group we are lucky enough to have travel concessions on both GWR and Avanti West Coast, so Carlisle was quickly established as the destination of choice. But, bearing in mind the furthest west that the special S&C trains were reaching was Appleby, would Northern Rail be able to convey us from



Two very presentable Northern 158s in the bay platforms at Carlisle. 158 787 (left) forms the 08:03 to Newcastle, 158 848 (right) forms our 08:24 to Leeds.



68 020 Reliance in one of the through roads at Carlisle with push/pull ECS which will later form a TPE service northwards.



Morning peace and tranquility at Carlisle station under the restored overall roof.

Carlisle early in the morning and return us from Appleby in the evening? Perhaps surprisingly given all Northern's problems, the answer (at least on paper!) was yes they would. So we quickly booked ourselves a couple of cheap nights in a Premier Inn on August 3rd/4th, and then went on the website of Rail Charter Services Ltd. "Fares start at £17.50 (single ticket price based on two people booking from the same social bubble sharing two seats in a bay)" it proclaimed promisingly in true Covid-19 language. By the time "service fees" etc had been added on, this had become a price of £60.00 for two returns from Appleby to Settle/Skipton. But bearing in mind a lot of effort had gone into making the all first class stock "Covid secure", plus our wish to give this enterprise our support, we duly parted with our money and back came our e-tickets. We were good to go.

But... back to the weather. Two days before departure I just had to look at the forecast and, what do you know, whilst the South was likely to be warm and mainly dry, an active low pressure system was due to move in off the Atlantic on Monday night and plant itself over the North and West for the exact duration of our visit. "Inevitable" I thought.

Monday 3rd August dawned and, dressed in our obligatory face masks, we had a perfect journey from Exeter St David's to Paddington, giving Maidenhead a quick wave as we passed through at 125mph on our 9-car Hitachi 802 unit. On long distance GWR services in these troubled times there are no seat reservations but you have to have a pass for an allocated train in addition to your ticket. This is so they can control numbers on each train as you are only allowed to use the window seats. Also only one person can sit on a table for four, but because Maureen and I are in the same "bubble" we could both sit at the table, provided we kept to the window seats. There were still no on board refreshments whatsoever, and nearly all the station kiosks and cafes were closed, but we knew this and came prepared....

Our timely arrival at Paddington meant we could easily transfer, via a spacious Hammersmith & City Line train, to Euston for the 11:15 to Glasgow Central, first stop Crewe. On the Avanti North West Pendolinos seat reservations were supposedly compulsory, with only window seats intended as available for use, this being of course to allow for social distancing. However we got the distinct impression that such things did not matter north of Preston as the train filled up to near normal capacity levels, most people seemingly not having a seat reservation or feeling any

need to adhere to restrictions – apart from the wearing of face masks which was at least universally complied with. Arrival at Carlisle was bang on time.

The following morning the rain had arrived at roughly the same time as we arrived at the station for our 08:24 Leeds service which we were to catch as far as Appleby. Eerily there was hardly anybody about, and this at what used to be known in former days as rush hour! Incredible. There was plenty of noise however, caused by a combination of no 68 020 on ECS throb- bing away in one of the centre roads, and the by now heavy rain crashing down ominously on the impressively restored overall roof. In fact the roof wasn't the only thing to admire about Carlisle station as the whole place had the feeling of being very well cared for.

We stood adjacent to 2-car unit no 158 848 in one of the south facing bay platforms, but with just one other intending passenger, the unit dead, and no train crew two minutes before departure time, we inevitably developed that sinking feeling, especially given Northern Rail's unenviable reputation! However a driver and guard did appear, the unit was revved up, the doors were opened and we duly boarded. Departure was 2 minutes late but, hey ho, nobody seemed to worry.

I have to say I have always rather liked class 158s, a vast improvement on their earlier second generation DMU cousins, and being able to select a table with nothing to obstruct the views out of the window (apart from the rain!) was an absolute pleasure. However, as we travelled over this extremely expensive stretch of railway which we had almost to ourselves, I could not help having an uneasy feeling that, but for our presence, the two members of traincrew would have outnumbered the passengers! And our own train fare (£12.70 for two day returns with Senior discount, Carlisle to Appleby) wouldn't have even begun to cover the cost of the signalmen being employed in the various boxes we passed, mostly still complete with full semaphore signalling. "Enjoy it while it lasts," was my main thought as we glided along. However wondering how we were going to avoid getting soaked while waiting for over an hour at Appleby came a close second!

Had it not been for the weather, we would have explored the town which, unusually for the S&C, is conveniently located close to the station. However the good news was that the waiting rooms were open in spite of us being the only ones mad enough



47 593 Galloway Princess is on the rear or south end of the train, while on the right 66 021 sits with an eastbound weed-killer train, top and tailing with 66 067.

to be around. And an umbrella provided enough protection to enjoy this wonderful little station, complete with full semaphore signalling, and sidings off to the right which contained a green class 20 albeit out of sight, 20 107, apparently the standby loco for the day. (A sensible precaution as there had been problems on previous days). An eastbound weedkiller train, top and tailed by two DBS class 66s, later provided added interest.

A few others were braving the rain by the time 10:00 came round and our charter train was due inbound from Skipton. Its arrival provided some good photographic opportunities, before it shuffled off to the sidings, to return in good time for our 10:35 departure. An orderly queue of about a couple of dozen folk formed at the same door in coach A – we had all been reserved in the same coach. However common sense prevailed, and, in the interests of social distancing, people began to spread through the other three coaches. After departure I did a count through the train and 31 passengers were aboard a five coach formation consisting of a staff coach and four first class ex-Anglia Mark III coaches.

Perhaps it's just that I'm used to the upright seats of modern trains, but I found the reclined position of these ones a bit odd at first, but I soon got used to the comfort! Perspex screens have been installed between each bay of seats which deem the train Covid-friendly enough that face masks do not have to be worn – a major plus after many hours of masked travel the previous day! And low and behold a catering trolley was operating, staffed by a lady who would otherwise have been working on Northern's units. All this provided us with a sense of refreshing normality. Certainly the two couples from Newcastle behind us were taking full advantage as two bottles of wine had been consumed well before Settle!

47 593 was “up front” but didn't have to work very hard as we found ourselves meandering at a slow pace behind the aforementioned weedkiller train. This was nice as it gave more time to admire the passing stations and what we could see of the scenery which, by the time we passed through Dent, had largely

disappeared into the mist. The peaks of Wherside and Ingleborough were out there somewhere! A steam train was apparently taking rest in Hellifield station which we were advised about as we approached but “blink and you'll miss it” - and I did!

There was an option to de-train at Settle but, like most others, we decided to continue through to Skipton for a four hour break. We quickly discovered the attractions of the town's pubs (they kept us dry for one thing!), and also of the local beers including of course Timothy Taylor Landlord, brewed up the line in Keighley. Perhaps because we were now further east, the rain had eased enough for us to walk around and enjoy other facets of this delightful Yorkshire town.

Then it was back to the station in time for our 16:12 return departure, which arrived at 15:49 and disgorged a healthy load of passengers – I'd say it was at least two thirds full. That was heartening for the train operator and indeed for the S&C. Our journey back was enjoyable with only the staff coach separating us from 37 521 at the front. Running as D6817 in original green livery, this loco really did look and sound the part!



47 593 heading the stock back into the station again, ready for the 10:35 departure. Taken while trying to control the umbrella!



The former Greater Anglia Mk3 First Opens have been fitted with Perspex screens between each bay of seats which are hardly visible.



The wearing of face masks is not required on the service which makes the experience much more pleasant. Martin enjoys a coffee.
Photo: Maureen Stoolman

Drawing into Appleby little did we know that we were in for a nice surprise. There greeting us on the eastbound platform was an ex-Southern Merchant Navy, taking water and looking magnificent, at the head of The Dalesman from Carlisle to York. This was the return working of the steam train that I had missed at Hellifield earlier. Suddenly the prospect of another rain-soaked hour on Appleby station, waiting for our onward train to Carlisle, didn't seem so bad after all! Seeing this loco getting away on the damp rail with its rake of West Coast Railway Mark Is was certainly something to look forward to.... however 35018 *British India Line* made a faultless but nonetheless spectacular departure, as it pulled powerfully past towards (after a good many miles) the summit of the line at Ais Gill.

The further good news was that the 2-car 158 forming our 18:46

from Appleby to Carlisle was bang on time, and had a reasonable complement of passengers on board who appeared to be locals in the main. Following a night's sleep the morning 09:47 departure from Carlisle back to Euston, whilst a few minutes late due to signalling problems at Stafford, got us to London in time for our 14:04 GWR service back to Exeter. And it had eventually stopped raining just north of Wigan!

Overall we had a really good time, and it was such a relief to break out of the lockdown. The Settle and Carlisle is a fantastic stretch of railway, and something that we are lucky to retain as a vital part of our railway network. But as for the weather – let's just say Maureen is going to have her work cut out persuading me to go on a holiday up there any time soon!

Another view of D6718 arriving at Appleby with the 08:35 From Skipton.

Photo: Maureen Stoolman

35018 British India Line prepares to leave Appleby with the return Dalesman from Carlisle to York. 47 593 is on the rear of our train, recently arrived from Skipton.



No more will I go to Mumby Road: the East Lincolnshire closures of 1970

Tim Edmonds

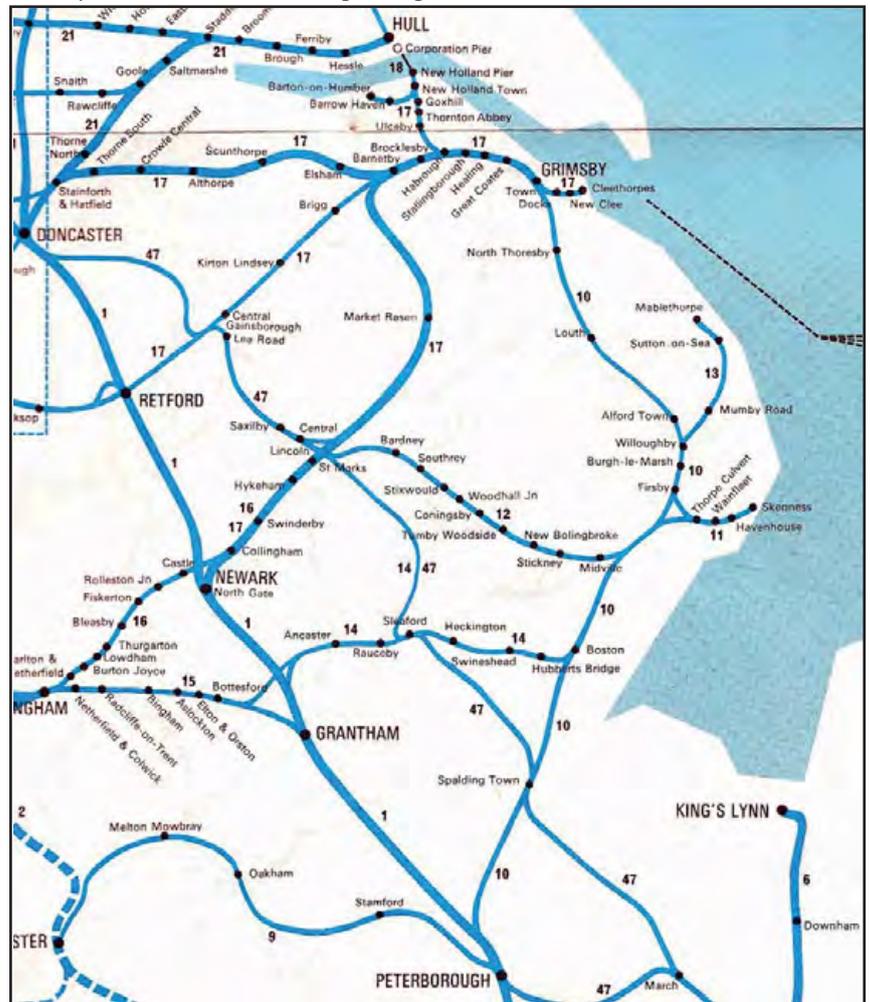


The railway geography of the old county of Lincolnshire was largely the story of three major railway companies. The Midland penetrated from the west with lines to Lincoln, Stamford and Little Bytham. In the north the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire (later Great Central) had a network of lines converging on the ports of Grimsby and Immingham. The biggest player was the Great Northern Railway, which held a near-monopoly of much of the eastern and southern parts of the county. It also had a share in two joint lines. From an end-on connection with Midland at Little Bytham the Midland & Great Northern Joint line headed east to Norfolk, crossing at Spalding the Great Northern & Great Eastern Joint line from March to Lincoln and Doncaster.

The GN served the largely-rural east through a network of lines based on the former East Lincolnshire Railway, which had opened in sections from Grimsby to Boston in 1848. The EL was always worked by the GN but remained an independent company until the Grouping. Two weeks after the opening of the EL, the GN opened its Loop Line from Peterborough to Spalding, Boston and Lincoln. Until the completion of the main line via Grantham and Retford in 1852, the GN was able to run trains via the Loop Line through to Doncaster by running over the MS&L via Retford. The line through Sleaford was completed to Boston in 1859, providing a link from Barkston Junction on the GN main line, and a line from March to Spalding was opened in 1867. Branches were opened from Kirkstead (later Woodhall Junction) to Horncastle in 1855 and from Firsby to Spilsby in 1868, while a line from Louth over the Wolds to Bardney was opened in 1876. Holiday traffic to the developing resorts of the Lincolnshire coast was catered for by branches opened to Skegness from Firsby in 1873 and from Louth to Mablethorpe in 1877. A curve was opened at Firsby in 1881

Class 31 No 5634 and Class 25 No 5244 head light engine through Spalding past the crowded goods sidings. A DMU with trailing van waits to depart with a Peterborough – Grimsby service on 8th April 1970.

The East Lincolnshire lines as shown in the 1970 Eastern Region timetable map. Note that Spalding is marked as 'Spalding Town' a name that was applied post-nationalisation. There was only ever one passenger station, but it was used to distinguish the main GN station from the goods station of the Midland railway, which was known as Spalding St John's and closed in 1966.





A DMU with trailing van leaves Spalding for Boston and Grimsby, while Class 10 No D4061 is busy in the yard. Branching to the left is the GN&GEJ line to Sleaford on 8th April 1970.

to give direct access to Skegness from the south without reversal, and the Mablethorpe branch was extended to Willoughby via Sutton-on-Sea in 1888, forming a loop back to the EL. This led to the demise of the independent 2ft 6in gauge Alford & Sutton Tramway, opened in 1884 and closed in 1889. A late addition to the network came in 1913 with the opening of the 'New Line' from Coningsby Junction (south of Woodhall Junction) to Bellwater Junction (south of Firsby). This was prompted by the popularity of Skegness as a seaside destination and provided access for trains from Lincoln and beyond without the need for reversal at Boston.

The GN&GEJ was created by stitching together various pre-existing GE and GN lines with a new line from Spalding to Lincoln via Sleaford. In Lincolnshire, the former GN lines from

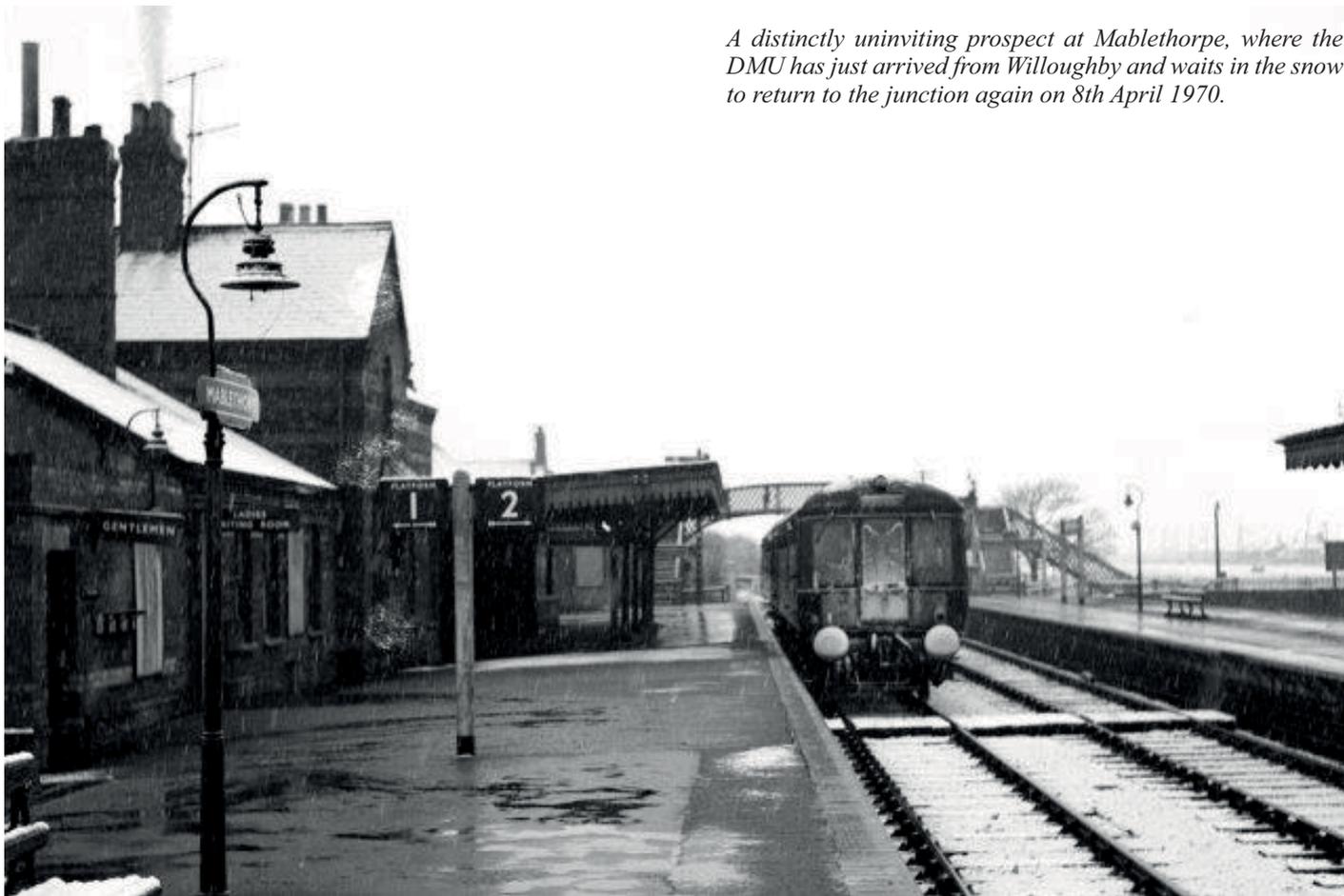
March to Spalding and Lincoln to Gainsborough and Doncaster (Black Carr Junction) were vested in the GN&GEJ. The M&GNJ had a more complex history, but suffice it to say that the section through Spalding began as lines east to Holbeach, opened in 1858 by the Spalding & Norwich Railway, and west to Bourne, opened in 1866 by the Midland & Eastern Railway. Both lines were worked by the GN and after a series of extensions and amalgamations they became part of the long and rambling M&GNJ system in 1893. Most of the network was closed to passengers in 1959, with goods services from Spalding to Sutton Bridge and Bourne lasting until 1965.

GN closures had started in 1939 when passenger services were withdrawn from the Spilsby branch, goods lasting until 1958. Next was Louth – Bardney, with passenger services withdrawn in 1951 and goods services going in stages from 1956 to 1960.

Fully-signalled and complete with goods shed and overall roof, Firsby station waits for business on 8th April 1970.



A distinctly uninviting prospect at Mablethorpe, where the DMU has just arrived from Willoughby and waits in the snow to return to the junction again on 8th April 1970.



The Horncastle branch lost its passenger trains in 1954 but goods lasted until as late as 1971, while the Louth – Mablethorpe line closed completely in 1960, converting the loop into a branch from Willoughby.

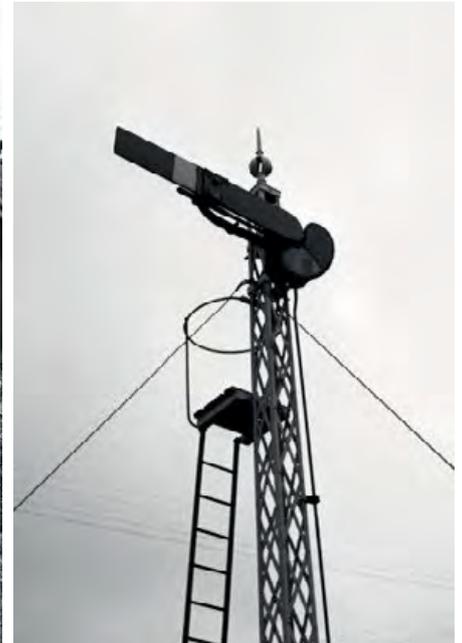
The Beeching Report of 1963 proposed the withdrawal of all passenger services from Peterborough to Grimsby via Spalding, Boston and Louth, together with Boston – Coningsby Junction, Firsby – Lincoln Central, Firsby – Skegness and Willoughby – Mablethorpe. This would have left Sleaford – Boston (reached via Grantham and Ancaster) as the only part of the former GN system east of the GN&GE Joint line to retain a passenger service. The names of the stations to be closed included three that made it into that wonderfully evocative Flanders and Swann ditty 'The Slow Train': Mumby Road, Dogdyke and Tumbly Woodside. The Boston – Coningsby Junction section of the Loop line (including Dogdyke station) had already been listed for closure and went in June 1963. In the end the Boston – Skegness line was retained, with all trains using the south curve at Firsby to reach the branch without reversal. This avoided Firsby station which closed with the EL, and all the other lines listed, on and from Monday 5th October 1970 in what was the last of the major railway closures in Britain.

I had never visited or travelled on the East Lincs lines before closure was announced but had two opportunities to do so during the last six months of passenger services. The first came on Wednesday 8th April, when my father needed to make some calls in Lincolnshire in connection with his interest in church organs and invited me to come along. He needed little persuasion to make diversions to various railway stations during the day. Driving from our Cambridgeshire home the first stop was Spalding, following the Loop Line from Werrington Junction as closely as we could and noting on the way a northbound passenger train behind Class 31/2 No 5660 and a southbound DMU. Today Spalding has just two through lines and a two-platform



It has stopped snowing at Willoughby, where the branch train has returned from Mablethorpe (the line going to the right) while the connecting Grimsby – Peterborough Cravens DMU with trailing van waits to depart.

Having reversed at Firsby this DMU has the somersault signal to depart and heads for Skegness on 22nd June 1970.



Waiting for the occasional slow train, slumbering Tumby Woodside still had its somersault signals.

passenger station, but in 1970 this was busy junction with four through platforms and a bay, a busy goods depot and extensive sidings filled with wagons. As we reached the footbridge north of the station Class 31/2 No 5851 headed towards the Yorkshire coalfield with a long train of empty mineral wagons while Class 10 No D4061 was busy in the yard. A Grimsby-bound two-car DMU with trailing van had arrived at the station when Class 31/2 No 5634 and Class 25 No 5244 appeared light engine from the north.

I do not recall the places where my father needed to stop, but the next part of the journey took us beyond Boston on the A16, pausing where this crossed the New Line at a deserted and silent Stickney station, unstaffed since 1968. Much of the heavy excursion traffic to Skegness had gone and its day had passed, so with sparse local traffic on a double-track line it was a prime candidate for closure. Although staffed, Firsby station was also quiet. No trains were due to stop under its overall roof in the immediate future but there was time for a quick look round, pausing to admire the GN somersault signals. Thus far we had enjoyed a cool day with plenty of sunshine, but as we headed on to Willoughby the clouds closed in, the temperature dropped, and it began to snow. A Peterborough-bound DMU arrived and departed and in the circumstances the waiting branch train seemed inviting so, while my father went to his next call, I bought a cheap day return to Mablethorpe, thus enabling me to take the slow train to Mumby Road. At Mablethorpe the snow was starting to turn to sleet so, after a quick look round the bleak station with its two long platforms, I took shelter in the train and waited for the return to the junction. My father was waiting in the car for the journey home,

A Derby DMU at the compact Barton-on-Humber terminus on 22nd June 1970. Alas, nothing remains here now but a single line, platform and shelter, but at least it is still open.



Having arrived from Grimsby and completed a return trip to Barton-on-Humber, the DMU heads back to Grimsby with passengers off the ferry from Hull on 22nd June 1970. The station closed with the withdrawal of the Humber ferries in 1981.



Pier – one of those rarities, a railway station without a railway. After the passenger closures, goods traffic survived between Grimsby and Louth until 1980, from Lincoln to Horncastle until 1971 and to Bardney until 1983, and from Peterborough to Spalding. Although Spalding was still served by passenger trains on the Joint line, these were cross-country services and there was local concern over the loss of access to the main line at Peterborough. With subsidy from the local authority a Peterborough – Spalding service was reintroduced in June 1971, then in 1983 the Joint line from March to Spalding was closed and its trains were re-routed via Peterborough, thereby giving Spalding a much improved service. A short section of the EL line is the

home of a small heritage operation, the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway. This originated in a pressure group to retain the line from Grimsby to Louth after final closure, but the track was quickly lifted. Ten miles of trackbed from Waltham to Louth was purchased and track has been relaid between Ludborough and North Thoresby, with plans to extend towards Louth.

This was written during the Covid-19 lockdown, which made it impossible consult my normal source of archive timetables – the Railway Studies Collection at Newton Abbot Library. Although photos, notes and magazines helped to piece together a story, this article is lighter on detail than I would like.



PS Tattershall Castle was built by William Gray & Co at West Hartlepool in 1934 and worked between Hull and New Holland until 1972. It is now a bar/restaurant on the Thames opposite the London Eye.

Taken the day after my arrival, when the sun was shining, this is the impressive 1881 station building of the MS&L/GC at Hull Corporation Pier; terminus of the ferry from New Holland. It was closed in 1981 on the opening of the Humber Bridge.



THE LONDON UNDERGROUND RETIREMENT HOME

53 Years of former LT Stock on the Isle of Wight

By David Collins



As is well known by enthusiasts, since the end of steam the railway on the Isle of Wight between Ryde and Shanklin has been operated by former London Underground tube stock, namely the Standard Stock of 1923-1934 vintage from 1967 to 1989 and the 1938 Tube Stock from then to the present day. This stock is due to be withdrawn this year and replaced by former D Stock units under the auspices of Vivarail.

Before looking at the former LT stock operations on the island here is a brief overview of the history of its railways. The first railway to be open being the Cowes & Newport Railway in 1862 followed by the Isle of Wight Railway between Ryde and Shanklin two years later. By the turn of the 20th century the total route miles were 55½ miles. Remarkably the island contained three independent companies (the Isle of Wight, the Isle of Wight Central and the Freshwater, Yarmouth & Newport) with two mainland companies (London & South Western and London, Brighton & South Coast) jointly responsible for the line on the Pier at Ryde as well as the ferry services to and from Portsmouth Harbour. At the 1923 grouping all the island railways became part of the Southern Railway and from 1948 the Southern Region of British Railways.

The island has always had a limited loading gauge. Most notably because of the tunnels just beyond Ryde Esplanade. For this reason, the rolling stock that can be used on the island is restricted. In steam days the coaching stock was largely hand me downs from the SR's mainland constituent companies, being narrower than more modern stock. Motive power was provided by the LBSCR's A1x Terrier (a few of these were owned by the island companies) and E1 0-6-0Ts and the LSWR's O2 0-4-4Ts. By the 1950s these were approaching the end of their working lives. So, BR investigated replacements.

The first proposal was to adapt some Ivatt Standard class 2 2-6-2Ts and Mark 1 coaching stock, but due to the 1955 modernisation plan this was not proceeded with and alternatives with diesel or electric power were considered. As an aside, the Ivatt Tank proposal was realised 50 years later when two restored www.mdrs.org.uk

4-VEC 485043 leads 3-TIS 486033 descends from Ryde Esplanade into the tunnel with a Shanklin train on 26th June 1981. The tunnel is the main restriction affecting the island's loading gauge.

Photo: Tim Edmonds

members of the class entered service on the preserved Isle of Wight Steam Railway. Also, the use of hand me down mainland equipment extended beyond rolling stock. The signal box at Ryde St. John's having been moved from Waterloo East in the 1920s.

Even more modern motive power was cast into doubt as the Beeching Report had recommended the complete closure of the network on the island. After much campaigning it was decided the line between Ryde Pier Head and Ventnor should be retained. This was changed to Shanklin after a landslide between there and Ventnor which was considered uneconomic to clear.

As for what trains would work the now 8½ mile line, proposals for a diesel service possibly provided by cut down Class 73s were made initially but the need to have specially built rolling stock for such a short line with a small profit margin was prohibitive. Since BR did not have any suitable stock (apart on the Waterloo & City which were unavailable), LT was approached for some withdrawn Standard Stock.

This stock dated from 1923 to 1934 having been ordered by the Yerkes group of tube railways (collectively known as the London Electric Railway) from the Metropolitan Carriage & Wagon Company. It saw service on all the then tube lines. At the start of the 1960s it was being withdrawn with the introduction of the 1959 and 1962 Tube Stock on the Piccadilly and Central Lines, though the last line to see them in service was the Moorgate to Finsbury Park branch of the Northern Line (perhaps ironically because it too was to pass from LT to BR ownership). Initially BR purchased 12 cars to work the Ryde Pier Head to St John's shuttle in 1961 with the intention to convert them to diesel operation. However, it was found the electrical equipment was still in good condition so it was decided to convert to 750 volts DC third rail operation, and a further 61 cars were stored



Top 4-VEC 485044 leads a 3-TIS unit into Ryde St John's Road with a Pier Head train on 26th June 1981. The signal box formerly at Waterloo East is on the right.

Below A passenger's view of the rather primitive and uncomfortable facilities inside 4-VEC 485044 at Shanklin. Note the luggage storage space on the right plus the route map as displayed inside the cars, London Underground style.

Three photos: Tim Edmonds

by LT as it was hoped the Cowes line might be retained as well as the Shanklin line. In 1965, when the Minister of Transport announced the former was to close, this was reduced to 46.

Conversion to third rail operation was done at LT's Acton Depot in 1966 and the units were repainted from LT Red to the then new BR corporate Rail Blue livery at BR's Stewarts Lane Depot. They were reclassified by BR as 4-VEC (4 car) and 3-TIS (3 car), later becoming Class 485/486 under TOPS (for the sake of continuity and fact that the LT classifications are better known by enthusiasts, in this article the former LT stock will be continued to be referred to as such). As the island line had not been electrified yet initial tests were done on the Southern Regions suburban lines.

The first car to arrive on the island was Driving Trailer No. S38S in September 1966 when it undertook gauging trials. As the third rail had not been laid, this was done with the car being hauled by the now preserved O2 No. 24 Calbourne, made possible as locomotives on the island were fitted with air brakes. This was not technically the first ex underground carriage to work on the island as the IWR obtained some former Metropolitan Railway 4-wheelers in 1914.

On 31st December of that year the last steam hauled BR trains ran on the island with the railway closing for three months for electrification work take place. The Standard Stock had to start to arrive by then. The new electric service on the island commenced on 20th March 1967 with an hourly service between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin, increasing to three trains per hour for the summer season requiring 6 7-car trains. Additionally, a shuttle service ran between Ryde Pier Head and Esplanade to supplement the tram service along the pier replacing it completely in 1969. Freight traffic had ceased in 1966 but a Class 05 was shipped to the island to handle engineering duties, later replaced by a pair of Class 03s.

Even as early as 1970 thoughts were being given to replacing the Standard Stock as it was only envisaged to have a life span on the island of ten years. One proposal being the line being taking over from BR by a private company called Vectrail who proposed replacing the Standard Stock with rail mounted bus bodies as they demonstrated on the Meon Valley line in 1966. The reconstruction of the Cowes line was proposed, as an aside

the company had made an agreement with the Wight Locomotive Society to run preserved steam trains over the line from its base at Haven Street. Sadly, the scheme failed with the WLS purchasing the line from Haven Street to Wotton to run as the IoWSR.



Following overhaul the Standard stock was painted in blue/grey livery with grey doors and Ryde Rail branding as shown here by 485041 at Shanklin on 13th July 1986 with car S1 nearest. Note the red disc used on these trains as a tail lamp during daylight hours.

Photo: Mike Walker



Throughout the 1970s rumours of closure of the BR line persisted due to high losses and the age of the Standard Stock. These proved to be unfounded and the 50-year-old trains carried on into the 1980s. At this time enquiries were made with LT as to the availability of 1938 Tube Stock, but none in good order were spare, those already withdrawn were life expired. Plus, it was thought that under floor equipment being exposed to salty air could be problematic. The possibility of Class 503 units being transferred from Merseyrail was also considered but rejected because of the infrastructure modifications that would be required.

With no suitable replacements, refurbishment of the Standard Stock was commenced in 1982. Units were repainted in "Inter-City" Blue & Grey and the interiors painted light green and the seats fitted with the moquette used on the D Stock and 1983 Tube Stock, plus luggage areas being provided. Also, around this time the local branding Ryde Rail was adopted. Another rebranding came in 1986 with the creation of Network South East with stock and stations being repainted in the distinctive Red, White & Blue colour scheme (prior to this some stations still had SR green nameboards) though the Ryde Rail logo was retained on unit cab ends.

Despite this by the late 1980s the Standard Stock was life expired for certain. It had been hoped that 1959 or 1962 tube stock would provide a replacement, but these would not be available for several years. So, BR purchased some of the remaining 1938 tube stock which just been withdrawn from the Northern Line. Built by Metro-Cammell, this stock was the mainstay of the Northern and Bakerloo Lines for over 40 years. With a few units also operating on the Piccadilly Line and, for a short period of time in the 1970s, the East London Line as well.

In April 1988 28 driving trailers were put aside for NSE by LT and transferred from Ruislip Depot to BR's Strawberry Hill Depot for storage prior to refurbishment at Eastleigh Works. As with the Standard Stock, these were converted from LT's fourth rail to BR's third rail current collection. They were also painted

in NSE corporate colours and the seats reupholstered with BR standard moquette. The BR TOPS classification given to the units was Class 483. They were formed into 2 car formations as no trailer cars were purchased.

Prior to shipping to the island, the first unit was tested on the mainland between Eastleigh and Winchester on 30th June 1989. This unit subsequently arrived at Ryde Works on 6th July 1989 on a pair of low loaders which returned with two standard stock cars for scrapping.

Despite only one unit of 1938 Tube Stock being delivered, the "new" trains were launched into service on 13th July 1989 by NSE managing director Chris Green who also announced an upgrade to many of the island's stations, including a building of a new station at Smallbrook Junction. This station opened in July 1991 and had no road access, its purpose being to provide interchange with the IoWSR which had been extended from Haven Street, though there was no physical connection put in with BR. The possibility of reopening to Ventnor was also looked at but once again costs could not be justified.

The remaining 7 trains of 1938 Tube Stock were delivered over 1989 and 1990 with the last one arriving exactly a year after the official launch. At the same time many of the remaining Standard Stock were withdrawn and scrapped. Two cars were retained for Sandite Duties as the 1938 Tube Stock did not have the capabilities for this, although these were scrapped in 1994. In addition, five cars returned to London to form part of an underground heritage train. This happened in October 1990 when the train with some cars painted in LER livery ran under its own power from Fratton to London to be displayed at the Northern Line's Morden Depot open day later that month. Sadly, since then restoration has been slow, and the unit resides in the LT Museum's Acton Depot with the prospect of it being returned to running condition very slim. Other cars were returned to LT as spares for Standard Stock unit in the Underground's engineering fleet. The possibility of the IoWSR obtaining a car for display at Haven Street was mooted but abandoned after the intended vehicle was heavily vandalised.



Finally they received the first style of Network SouthEast livery with dark grey lower panels. 485045 leaves Ryde Pier Head with the 15:38 to Shanklin on 11th February 1989.

Photo: Peter Robins

When they first entered service the Class 483s or former 1938 Stock carried the revised Network SouthEast livery with lighter grey lower panels and the upwards "swoosh" of the red and white at the ends. Set 006 leaves Ryde Esplanade for Shanklin on 19th September 1996.

Photo: Mike Walker



Wearing Dinosaur livery set 004 leaves Ryde Esplanade with the 17:36 Shanklin to Ryde Pier Head on 1st May 2005. Note the hovercraft on the slipway in the background which operates a passenger-only service from Southsea.

Photo: Peter Robins

In their final guise, restored to traditional LT red albeit with yellow fronts, 008 nears Ryde St Johns Road with 2D41, the 15:49 Ryde Pier Head to Shanklin on 26th August 2016. The set numbers are now displayed in the old LT train number indicator of the centre door rather than being painted on the cab front.

Photo: Peter Robins



Privatisation came to the island in 1996. The franchise was won by Stagecoach having outbid the island based bus operator Southern Vectis, another bidder being the Wightlink Ferry Company. For the next few years things carried on with the trains and stations remaining in NSE colours and the line branded Island Line. Unusually the franchise included the responsibility of the track and infrastructure which was contracted out to Amey.

In 2000 came a change of livery, one unit painted in the famous LT Red livery (albeit with yellow warning panels) while the rest of the fleet was painted in the infamous Dinosaur livery with the units given names such as Raptor and T-Rex. The reason for this branding was to appeal to tourists given the island's association with fossils. The Dinosaur livery lasted until 2007 when the units were refurbished, and all painted in LT Red and fitting with Metropolitan Line seating moquette.

It was also in 2007 that the Island Line was amalgamated with the South West Trains franchise, becoming South Western Railway as of 2017. Changes implemented since then have been the smartening up of the island stations with a heritage feel, with stations receiving BR Southern Region Totem signs. However, by the mid-2010s age was creeping up with the 1938 tube stock and withdrawals had started in earnest on the grounds that they were unsafe to operate, and by September 2019 only one unit was serviceable. There had been investigations made into possible replacements with 1972 or 1973 tube stock, but these would not be available for some time and infrastructure adjustments would be necessary to accommodate the longer cars. Other possibilities explored included converting the Island Line to tram operation, class 455 and 456 units being transferred from SWR's London Suburban Services and the IoWSR taking responsibility for all rail services on the island, there being proposals for it to extend its services to Ryde St. John's for many years.

Ultimately the answer lay with a new enterprise which again involved former LT rolling stock. In 2012 former Chiltern



The first of the "new" trains, 484001, nears completion at Vivarail's Long Marston facility on 18th August 2020. Delivery to the island is expected to be in the autumn.

Photo: SWR

Railways Chairman Adrian Shooter set up Vivarail to provide cheap and low maintenance rolling stock for what could be described in railway terms as secondary and branch lines. To this end, 226 cars of D Stock were purchased from Transport for London, having worked most services on the District Line for 35 years. Most of these were converted to either diesel or battery power, being destined for non-electrified lines, and given the TOPS class 230. However, five 2-car units (Class 484) have been converted to third rail operation for use on the island, the units having been cleared for working through Ryde tunnels. Introduction was planned for spring 2020 but due to Covid-19 this has been put back to the autumn.

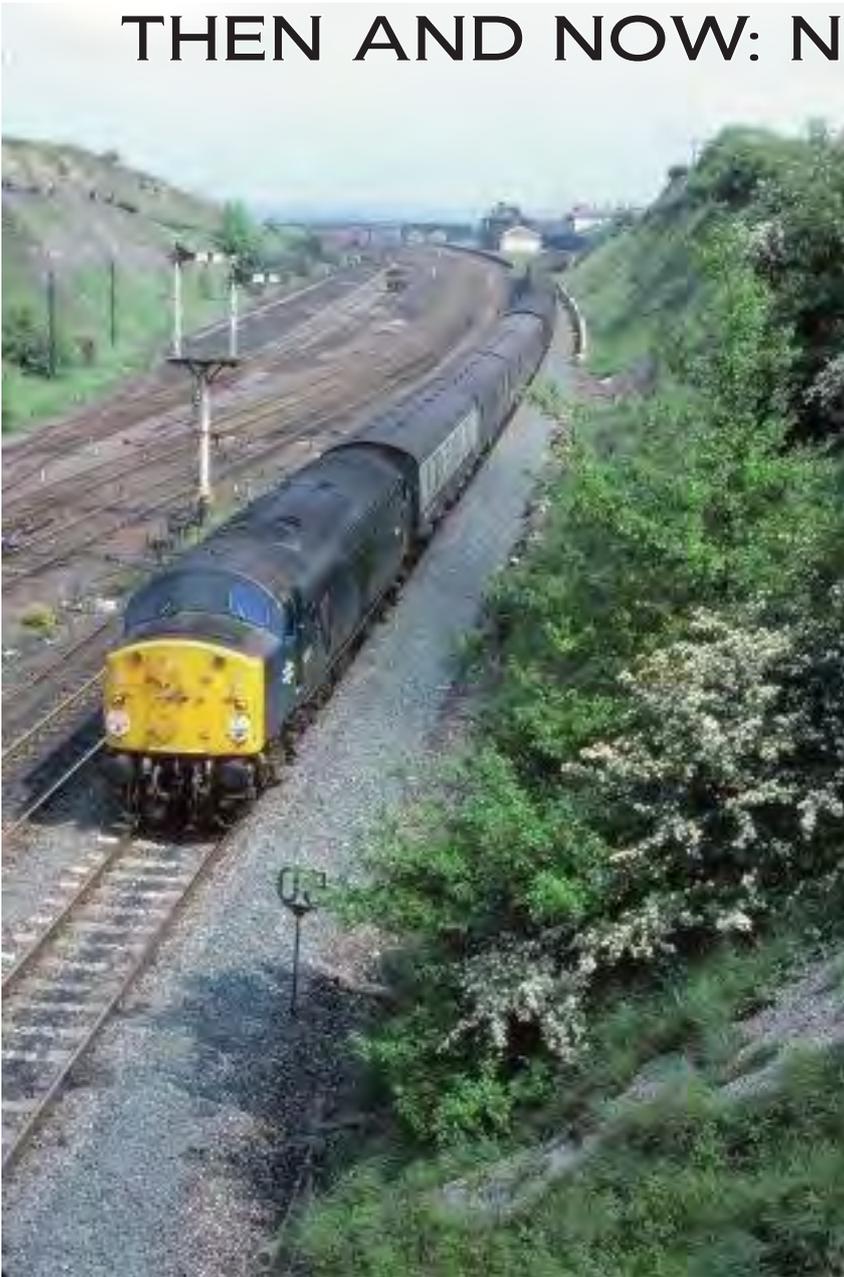
With these trains coming and recent investment the future of the Isle of Wight's railway seems secure. At the same time the line will keep its charm and distinction of running hand me down rolling stock from the mainland, no stock or locomotives have been specially built for the island. Plus, it retains the delightful quirk of being the retirement home for Underground trains.



A reminder that second-hand stock from London was not confined to electric trains. The Isle of Wight Railway bought eighteen former Metropolitan Railway carriages in 1914 and, remarkably, most of the bodies survive reused as beach huts at St Helen Duver, near Bembridge as seen in 1999. They survive but are threatened by redevelopment plans. Hopefully the IoWSR will rescue them.

Photo: Tim Edmonds

THEN AND NOW: NORMANTON



During our July Zoom meeting, **Tim Speechley** showed some images of Normanton taken back in the early 1980s such as this one of 40069 heading south from the station towards Goosehill Junction with a parcels train on 28th May 1981.

Even then the once extensive yards to the left, which continued north of the station beyond the bridge in the distance, had fallen into disuse with the closure of St. John's Colliery which was out of frame to the left. There was also a large MPD with both an enclosed roundhouse and straight shed on the up side north of the bridge. It closed on 1st January 1968 by when it had become the last steam shed in Yorkshire. The station was notable in that it had a long, wide single island platform with bays at both ends.

Conicidentally, the day after our session, the picture below was posted on the WNXX website showing Colas 70814 on an engineers' train in almost the same spot but barely recognisable. The track has been reduced to a plain double line and a forest seems to be taking over much of the platform as only half its original length is still in use for the Sprinter-formed Northern services, mostly between Leeds and Sheffield, which call here whilst Goosehill Junction is just a fading memory.

Photo: G Yates/WNXX

