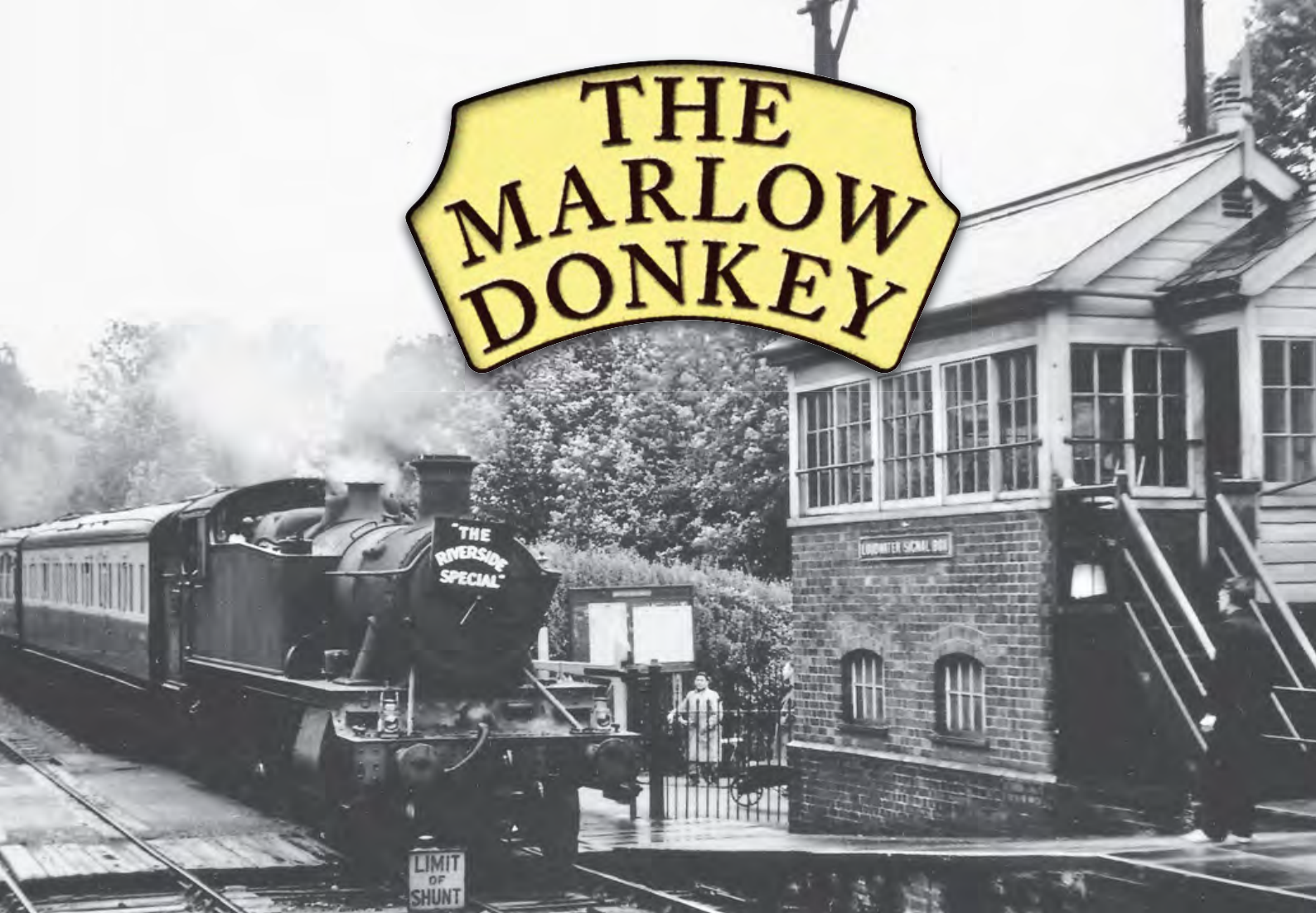


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

173

September 2021



Contents:

The GWR 61xx Tanks
Vintage Railfan Recollections
Boscarne Progress
Hymek Diamond Jubilee

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: An unidentified 61xx with a Riverside Special drawing into Loudwater up platform.
June 1953. Collection of David Gardner. (Article page: 5)*

*Bottom: Small Prarie 4569 approaches Boscarne Junction on Mike Walkers Boscarne Junction layout.
(Article page: 15)*

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

For the present, all meetings are being conducted on Zoom starting at 7.30pm.

Thursday 16 September **WAR AND PEACE** Simon Colbeck
Simon's presentation will include Steam in Bosnia and Sweden. Featuring 21st century real steam in the Bosnian coal industry and preserved steam in Sweden, including the Galve 100 celebrations with ancient Beyer Peacock's on passenger trains.

Thursday 21 October **TRACKS IN THE MIST** Colin Brading
Colin's presentation takes us to a selection of 'minor' railways long-lost in the mists of time. We shall explore the Wotton Tramway (Brill Branch), Wantage Tramway, Swansea and Mumbles Railway and the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead - all lines of unique character and pioneering spirit. Their stories of enterprise, colour and frequent quirkiness show how they served their communities with great charm and although few traces remain, they are remembered with affection.

Thursday 18 November **NARROW GAUGE ON THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT** Geoff Warren
Geoff's Presentation will cover over 6000 km of railway of gauges at or less than 2ft 6in that were built in the Indian subcontinent. Compared to those in post-independence India, the lines in Nepal and Pakistan were less easy to reach and received fewer railway enthusiast visitors. But in the early 1980s, almost all traffic was still steam hauled. The Janakpur Railway was an international route across the border from Nepal into India. It was steam worked until 1993 and closed in 2013. The narrow gauge railways in Pakistan were mostly constructed for strategic purposes, to provide access to the politically unstable regions bordering Afghanistan. In 1984, the lines from Kohat to Thal, and Mari Indus to Bannu and Tank, were still in operation.

Thursday 2 December **THREE DECADES OF CHANGE ON THE FOOTPLATE** Lee Davies
From an early age interest in Trains, via a Youth Training Scheme to starting on the Footplate in the Mid 80s up to the present day. Lee looks at the changes in the locos, and work from his perspective.
PLEASE NOTE THE NON-STANDARD DATE!!

Please note that you have to register for each meeting as a separate meeting ID and passcode is generated by Zoom. We send out an invitation to register a few days ahead of each meeting by e-mail. When you receive this please follow the link contained which will generate a further message containing the relevant meeting ID and passcode. Don't think that because you have registered for a previous meeting you don't have to register again and can reuse the same details.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I do hope you plug in to the Zoom talks the Society presents monthly to members and their guests. Our IT Hosts, Peter Robins and David Woodhead, do a first class job. I am particularly interested to see Simon Colbeck's "War and Peace" on 16 September and Colin Brading's "Tracks in the Mist" on 21 October. Of course this magazine 'The Marlow Donkey' edited by Mike Walker who also feeds out all the local steam timings as well as railway news from all around in his frequent Newsletters, helps to keep everyone informed. By the New Year we hope very much to be back to our regular get club together at Bourne End. So stay safe and follow the rules, as far as they apply to you.

We know that GWR and other companies are having a range of difficulties with new rolling stock and having to rely on older or borrowed in trains. Something more positive that gets the occasional press mention is the naming of trains. When reading the newsletter of the Gurkha Welfare Trust I was pleased to see GWR have named an IET 'Tulbahadur Pun VC' awarded for his service in Burma 1944. His son and daughter were present at Paddington together with GWT Vice Patron Joanna Lumley.

The national and local press still seem fixated by the arguments
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over HS2 and yet the project progresses with or without protesters. I was interested to read our old chum Phil Marsh's article in the current edition of 'Railway Magazine' on the HS2/EWR Interchange now developing close to Quainton Road.

Big Boy UP4014 has again featured on Youtube – worth a visit to see the giant in action. At the opposite end of the scale a film clip of the 'Watlington to Princess Risborough Railway' has also appeared with a blend of old and current pictures (mainly vegetation after Chinnor). You may have read/seen/heard that C&PRR have borrowed a former GWR auto trailer (auto coach) in strawberry and cream for a period. As I write a few matters inside and out need to be sorted but I hope it is operational for my next duty there. Work continues on reconstructing the branch line from Platform 4 to the Chinnor rails at Thames Junction thus eventually avoiding the use of the Network Rail part of the former Thame Branch. Seat Reservations are recommended but not essential for weekend visits. A marquee provides refreshments rather than in the Cambrian. Current loco is Pannier Tank 6412.

Mike Hyde

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

DECEMBER MEETING DATE

Please note that our December Zoom meeting will on Thursday 2nd December, that's the first Thursday rather than the usual third. Reminders will be posted near the time but put it your diaries now.

NEW MEMBER

Once again our numbers have increased with David Sharp from Sheffield joining the Society in May. A belated welcome and we hope you enjoy our activities.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Our meetings have continued to be conducted on Zoom and have been well attended by members and guests.

Our presenter in June was Nick Thompson, a board member of Southern Locomotives Limited who took us through the various locomotives in the company's care with a look at each, its restoration and operations.

David Pearce's July presentation, From Tebay to eBay, was an esoteric title for what turned out to be a superb evening of nostalgia as David shared images he'd acquired through a certain internet auction site, starting and finishing at Tebay.

As last year we added a bonus August meeting which provided another dose of nostalgia as David Postle took us through a selection of the excellent colour photographs held in the collection of the Kidderminster Railway Museum. It was unfortunate that some of us suffered a power cut!

TIM SPEECHLEY MOVES ON

Tim Speechley, our former Chairman, is moving away from High Wycombe to a small village in Northamptonshire to be closer to his grandson. The move should have taken place earlier in the summer but the legal side of things have been dragging on. Tim hopes to have moved by the time you read this. Those of you who take part in our Zoom meetings may have noticed that Tim's surroundings have been somewhat bare - he's been packed up and ready to go for months!

Tim will be remaining a member and hopes to attend occasional meetings once they restart.

CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED !!

Were it not for the contributions from David Gardner and Don Woodworth this issue would have been very slim indeed and Don isn't even a member of the Society!

Therefore once more I'm appealing for contributions for the December issue and beyond. There must be some stories you can all share. It doesn't have to be a technical paper but can be on any aspect, however remote, on the subject of railways if only a collection of photographs.

It is easy to leave it to others but that attitude leads to the situation I'm now in so, please, do help and don't leave it to the "usual few". If every member made one small contribution I'd have enough material to fill the 'Donkey' for years to come.

I hope you enjoy Don's memoirs, there are several more chapters to come and as editor I thank him for taking the trouble to compile them for you.

RELIEF COMES FOR GWR

The rail industry has rallied round to assist GWR with additional resources whilst the IET fleet remains reduced due to the continuing cracking problem.

Both c2s and Gatwick Express have loaned Class 387 Electrostars, the former providing three units, 387301 - 387303 and the latter six, 387201 - 387206. The Gatwick Express units have had their branding removed and will be staying with GWR at least until the Gatwick Express services resume - it is currently suspended whilst major works are being carried out at the airport station and the air travel market remains depressed.

The c2c units appear to mainly be confined to the Kennet Valley services to Newbury but the Gatwick units are providing a splash of colour on the main line working either on their own or with GWR units.

387s are now working some fast services to Bristol Parkway, which it is hoped, will soon be extended to Cardiff.

Peter Robins got 387301 at Theale on 2K50, the 16:12 Reading to Newbury on 14th May and 387202 passing Taplow on 5Z81, the 11:47 West Ealing to Reading TCD on 29th July



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The Marlow Donkey

BAHAMAS ON THE GREAT WESTERN

Jubilee 45596 *Bahamas* has been a welcome visitor to the south in recent months as it returns to main line rail tour operations for the first time in many years. It has operated three tours, a Steam Dreams trip from Paddington to Salisbury on 18th July and the Railway Touring Company's *West Somerset Steam Express* on 24th July and 21st August.

Chris Waite photographed the latter working passing the "Bridge to Nowhere" over the Kennet & Avon Canal between Bedwyn and Crofton.



NIGEL HUNT

At the end of July the Society lost one of its long-standing members, Nigel Hunt. He had a fall at his home in Furze Plat but it took him seventeen hours to summon help - a salutary lesson for those of us who live on our own and are advancing in years. When admitted to Wexham Park Hospital he was given a scan which revealed he was suffering from aggressive cancers in several parts of his body and unfortunately there was nothing that could be done and he passed away the following weekend. Whether he was aware of his condition we don't know but those closest to him had been concerned by his weight loss in recent months although Nigel, apparently, insisted he was fine.

A larger-than-life character in many senses, Nigel was born in Yorkshire in 1947, and developed a passion for railways at an early age but was also a keen sportsman at Leeds Grammar School where he rose to become head boy. After school he went in to accountancy and became a chartered accountant, a career which saw him leave "God's own county" for the bright lights of London and eventually settle in Maidenhead. His final positions before retirement was as Finance Controller for a couple of local hospitals.

In addition to the MDRS, Nigel was a member of many other railway societies and organisations. He served on the committee of the Marlow/Maidenhead Passengers' Association and was their chairman for many years and was made President on his retirement from the chair. Despite coming from "Oop North", Nigel was an enthusiastic working member of the Great Western Society and could be found at least one day a week working on the carriages or wagons. He was also a member of the Windsor & Maidenhead branch of the RCTS.

After retiring from accountancy, Nigel got involved with rail replacement buses; marshalling the vehicles, their www.mdrs.org.uk



drivers and passengers in the best traditions of Blakey. This took him to many parts of the network and he often related tales of what went on behind the scenes.

Despite being a friendly sort always willing to stop and chat or share a joke, Nigel was a private person and seldom let others into his own world. This presented more than a few challenges to his brother who had to come down from Yorkshire to sort out his affairs, arrange the funeral and track down his many friends. Fortunately, the railway fraternity's "jungle telegraph" was soon put into action and representatives of the many organisations he was associated with attended the funeral, including five from GWR.

He will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure to meet him.

One final thing. Something that emerged after his passing was that Nigel was the "voice" of Henley Royal Regatta for many years, doing the commentary and announcements. Who knew that... ?

THE GWR 61xx CLASS TANKS

David Gardner



Almost anyone who lived or travelled by train in the Thames Valley area in the period from 1931 would have been familiar with the 61xx class Prairie tanks.

These handsome locomotives were introduced between April 1931 and November 1935 to replace the 2221 class 'County' tanks and 2-4-0 'Metro' tanks which had previously worked suburban services from Paddington to Reading, Oxford, Hungerford, High Wycombe and Aylesbury. The GWR board became aware by the end of the 1920s that it needed faster services to combat road competition (yes, even then!) and the 4-4-2s with their boiler pressure of 195lb/in² and 20,010lbs tractive effort were just not up to any increased demand.

Three of the 5101 class 2-6-2T were tried out in London area, being allocated to Old Oak Common, Reading and Oxford.

*6149 posed at Aylesbury Town in October 1936. As it was built in January 1933 it would originally have carried **GREAT WESTERN** on the tank sides and it would appear it had already returned to Swindon for an overhaul and repaint, gaining the "shirt button" monogram in the process.*

Colour-Rail GW20

These had a boiler pressure of 200lb/in² and 24,300lbs tractive effort and were an improvement on the County tanks. However, the 61xx had an increased boiler pressure of 225lb/in², giving a tractive effort of 27,340lbs. Wheel sizes were the same as the 5101 class at 3' 2" for the leading pony truck, 5' 8" for the coupled drivers and 3' 8" for the trailing wheels. The 61xx or "Tanner Ones" were an instant success, speeding up services as well as taking on bigger loads. They took over almost all of the

work carried out by the County tanks and replaced the 2-4-0Ts on the electrified lines. In January 1931 no.6116 was experimentally fitted with smaller wheels, 3' pony, 5' 3" drivers and 3' 6" trailing. This increased the tractive effort to 29,510lbs but no more of the class were altered. It was allocated to Slough depot until transferred to Didcot in September 1951, spending



6111 in plain BR black livery, on a south-bound local probably to Princes Risborough at Oxford in 1951.

Patrick Kingston / author's collection

An unidentified 61xx with a Riverside Special drawing into Loudwater up platform on a very wet June day in 1953.

Author's collection

two years there, then in October 1953 it went to Tyseley. It stayed there until July 1962 before going to first to Goodwick (87J) then to Cardiff (88B) in April 1963. After spending 8-9 months working for the Briton Ferry Steel Co. it was finally broken up Cohens, Swansea in May 1966 making it the last working survivor of the class apart from the preserved 6106.

Modifications to the rest of the class were minor, apart from the near or fireman's side bunker steps being fitted from 1952 which was completed within three years following visits to Swindon Works.

Allocation of the class was entirely in the London Division until October 1951 when four were sent to Bristol Bath Road (82A) but the largest number were allocated to Slough with at least 26 in 1950 although, at that time, two were in theory allocated to Neasden although I suspect these may also have been serviced at Slough.

Even towards the end of 1959 there were eighteen 61xx locos at Slough (81B) but this dropped by a half a year later and Reading (81D) had the largest number by then at thirteen and eleven at Old Oak Common (81A).

From new they were painted in unlined green with **GREAT WESTERN** on the tank sides, replaced by the "shirt button" monogram from 1935, but many received plain black during the war with **G W R** on the tank sides, a lettering style retained when green was restored after the end of the war.

BR adopted the plain livery with the lion-on-wheel although many retained their GWR livery, green or black, for several years. I do not believe any of the 61s were painted lined black like some of the 5101s. Some were painted in unlined green



from 1956 then in fully lined out from late that year with both the lion-on-wheel and later crests. Lining out was dropped once more from around 1960 as an economy measure and a few carried black livery to the end.

The first locomotive to be withdrawn was, appropriately, 6100 in September 1958 but it was only with the influx of DMUs in 1960 that mass withdrawals began to take place and, apart from 6106, the class was extinct by 1966.

6106 has been preserved at the Didcot Railway Centre in Great Western livery although, with bunker steps and boiler grab rails, this is strictly not correct so it would be quite nice to see it in BR livery again – though others might not agree.

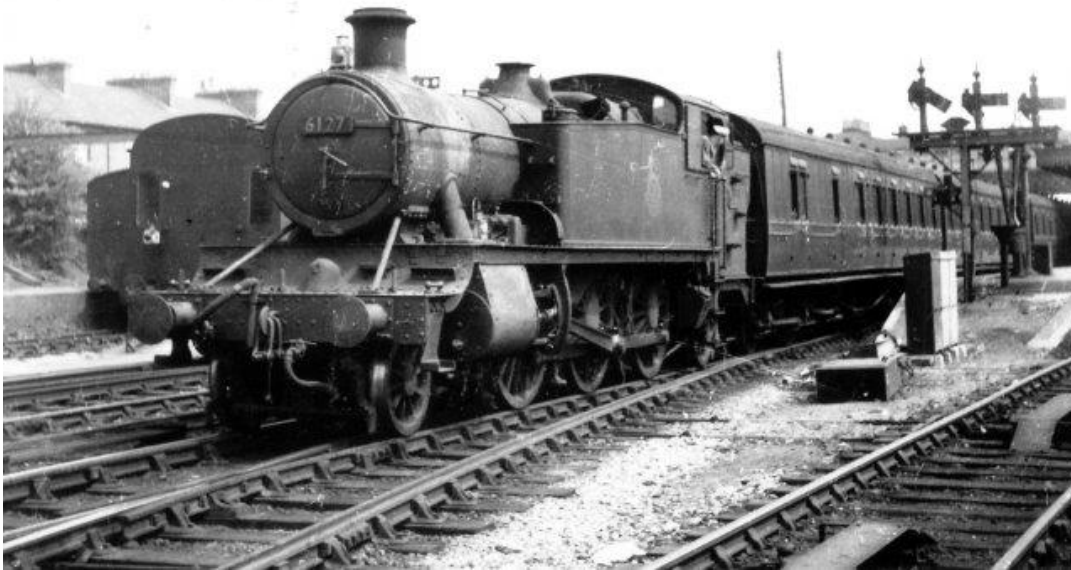
6124 near Langley on a Paddington-bound service formed of a 6 coach 'C' set plus a BR Mk1 non-corridor coach on 25th August 1956. Note NO lamps are displayed!

Author's collection



6127 leaving Slough with a 'Q' set forming a local in the mid-1950s

*Lens of Sutton /
Author's collection*



6127 again on a westbound PW train in the mid-1950s. Note the clerestory coach.

Author's collection



6136 in lined green on shed, probably Southall, circa 1960.

*PM Photography /
Author's collection*

TANNER-ONES in colour

The now preserved 6106, still in original condition, simmers at Aylesbury Town having brought in a train from the Princes Risborough direction in 1938.

CCQ 148



Wearing BR lined green 6117 runs round at Marlow having arrived with a peak through train on Tuesday 31st July 1962.

Colour-Rail MDRS collection

6122 climbs across Cock Marsh from Bourne End with the 18:50 High Wycombe to Maidenhead on 17th August 1961. The locomotive wears the final "economy" plain green BR livery.

Gerald T. Robinson



Vintage Railfan Recollections

Colonel Don Woodworth, USAF (Retired)



My long-time friend Mike Walker noted in one of his more recent newsletters that the hopper was becoming rather empty of articles for future issues of the *Marlow Donkey*. I thus offered to help but, living in the States, wasn't sure of a possible subject. Mike suggested that members might find an article on Vintage Railfan (Gricer) Recollections of possible interest. Since, at age 77, I can now likely be considered "vintage," I agreed to put something together.

I have liked trains for as long as I can remember. Why? I don't know. There were no railroad enthusiasts in my family and only one railroader – a tolerant uncle to whom the railroad was just a job but not an avocation or interest. My paternal grandfather, who emigrated from Canada, was for several years a conductor on trams that ran in several small towns/cities near where I grew up. By the time I was old enough to know him, he had become a skilled pattern maker at a heavy equipment manufacturing company but would indulge my youthful interest in trains and trams with sketches he'd draw as I sat on his lap during short vacations to his home. He would sometimes bring home oddly shaped pieces of wood which had been used to produce moulds for castings for me to play with – and, on occasion, wooden toys he'd made for me during off times at work. My favorite was a pull toy train – locomotive, tender, and a few freight cars that I dearly wish I still had. My only other exposure to trains would have been at about age three when I can recall (just barely!) going with my mother and paternal grandfather to meet the train bringing my father home from WW II. Scared as heck of the big hissing steam engine, I would kill to now repeat the episode with the benefit of 70+ years of hindsight.

Gricers in Britain are extremely fortunate to have had mainline steam last into 1968. Seems like an age ago but I'd have been only 25 years old to have enjoyed the spectacle. In my part of the state of Connecticut (CT) tucked away in the southwestern corner of New England (a region akin to East Anglia), steam was gone for me in 1952 – so I barely remember it at best. Steam

New York, New Haven & Hartford RR (NH) a trio of Alco RS3 road switchers led by 537 head up Train ND-2 north-bound for Waterbury through Seymour CT on the morning of 17th December 1968, just 14 days before the New Haven RR lost its identity after 93 years and was rolled into the ill fated Penn Central RR. ND-2/DN-1 was a daily freight that ran from the great Cedar Hill Yard (largest in New England) just north of the city of New Haven, CT west over the busy 4-track electrified Shore Line to Devon, CT and then north along the Housatonic River to Derby, CT and the along the Naugatuck River to Waterbury, CT. In my time, the train would often move 60 to 70 cars. The train was normally powered by three Alco 1600 hp road switchers, which would be taken off at Waterbury and used to power three locals that would work in various directions out of Waterbury to deliver and pick up cars that would be reassembled late in the day/early evening and return south down the Valley as Train DN-1. By the date of this photo, interlopers in the form of EMD GP9s had begun to infiltrate the historically all Alco consists.

All photographs by the author.

lasted longer on the Central Vermont RR (until about 1957), a subsidiary of the Canadian National Railways, over in eastern Connecticut where a line penetrated south from Canada to the port of New London on Long Island Sound. As I was still too young to drive, and my father had no interest, this last stand of steam was totally unavailable to me. I thus grew up with diesels – mostly muttering, stuttering Alco diesels as this builder was the major supplier to my favorite railroad, the New York, New Haven & Hartford (NY, NH & H).

There were three lines that strongly affected my early interest in railroads – two abandoned and one (at the time) quite active. My Dad loved automobiles – he never met a car that he didn't like – both foreign and domestic: a Morris Minor, an English Ford, a Volkswagen Microbus, a Saab 93, a Renault 4CV, and

other sorts of exotica. I am the oldest of six children, so the Microbus was often used for family outings on Sunday afternoons to the area of northwestern Connecticut where my father grew up. He never had to worry about us misbehaving at the back of the microbus, especially in winter, as the heater was so poor that he'd have to drive 25 or so miles for the temperature to come above 40 degrees Fahrenheit and we'd simply sit in frozen stupor!

The highlight of these trips for me was traveling down a long, steep hill into the center of the very small town of Washington Depot, CT and bouncing over a still rough railroad crossing where the tracks had been torn up in the summer of 1948 when the 31 mile New Haven RR branch line between Hawleyville and Litchfield (formerly the Shepaug, Litchfield & Northern) had been abandoned. My only recollection of this line in "service" was a semi-distant view of a diesel on a wrecking train taking up the tracks at Roxbury Depot, 6.88 rail miles south of Washington Depot, in the summer of 1948 while along with Dad for an exciting afternoon of looking at tombstones in a nearby graveyard as he was compiling genealogical information.

I still maintain a great interest in this line and have hiked the remnants of it still open to the public and have given several presentations on its history to local historical societies. Four stations on the line still exist – one torn down due to its deteriorated condition and rebuilt as an exact replica and three others that have been repurposed for other uses and require close attention to identify. The station at Washington Depot was moved about 100 yards from its original site when the railroad was abandoned and repurposed as an American Legion (akin to the Royal British Legion) and senior center. It was here that I was privileged to give my second presentation of the SL&N in July 2018. Who'd a thunk it when I was a 10 year old kid bouncing over the abandoned railroad tracks in my Dad's freezing microbus in 1953?

My other favorite abandoned line is a segment of the former New York & New England RR that was built through my home town of Oxford, CT in 1871 and abandoned in sections between 1937 and 1948. It connected the city of Waterbury, CT, where my mother grew up and where I went to high school, and the hamlet of Hawleyville, CT where it joined a major main line of the New Haven RR. Until 1917, the line through my little town was the major main line to the west and saw some of the largest locomotives in New England pass through – 2-10-2s and, for a short time, a 2-6-6-2 on trial from the Maine Central RR. Much of the right-of-way is now heavily overgrown with trees but, when I was young and foliage hadn't had a chance to obscure the recently abandoned right-of-way, significant parts of the line remained readily visible when one took the back roads from Oxford to Waterbury (which I always pestered my parents to do!)

Most people don't think of the dinky little state of Connecticut (just 5,005 square miles and about 50 x 70 miles square as compared to the UK's largest county of Yorkshire at 4,596 sq. mi.) as being a difficult place to build railroads. If one were building north to south, it wasn't generally a problem as one could follow the river valleys using fairly gentle grades. If, however, one was building east to west, the significant hills that lay between the river valleys presented great challenges. Helper (banking) engines were kept at a place called Sandy Hook to boost eastbound freights up the tough 1.2% (1 in 83) grade toward the summit of Towantic (located in the northeast corner of Oxford) en route to the aforementioned city of Waterbury. In the fall, winter, and early spring, there was a wonderful section of line east of Towantic where the line emerged from a deep cutting and ran along the top of a large embankment (now sadly overgrown). Coming upon the embankment was akin to coming upon the Devil's Ditch on the A11 just southwest of Newmarket, Suffolk. I was always glued to the car window as we drove

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through this area, imagining a steam train on freight. After I became a bit older, I would hike over this line and ultimately covered its entire 24.09 miles (in sections) from Hawleyville to Waterbury.

My favorite "live" line was the former Naugatuck RR (a part of the New Haven RR by the time I was a kid) – one of the earlier railroads in Connecticut built in 1849 and still operating over the majority of its original length. It was double-tracked early in its life because it served what was likely the most industrialized valley in Connecticut and carried immensely heavy freight traffic. As a teenager riding the morning bus from Seymour, CT (the town with public bus service closest to my home in Oxford) to my high school in Waterbury, my treat for the day would be when New Haven RR symbol freight ND-2 would come up the valley behind triple-shotted Alco RS3 road-switchers with some 60-70 cars in tow around 0715 and we could pace it north up the valley to Waterbury – highway on the east side of the Naugatuck River and railroad on the west.

My home town, Oxford, was very small at the time. Dairying was still a significant industry and we might have had more cows than people living in the town. Seventy years later the dairies are all gone and the town has turned into a wealthy bed-room commuter community of about 12,700 people with all the amenities that one might desire. When I was growing up, it was a lot more rural with one general store cum post office and four widely dispersed filling stations. Shopping was done in nearby Seymour, where there was a barbershop on Main Street. My Dad never had to ask twice if I wanted a hair cut as the barbershop was located directly across the street from the Seymour railroad station – now long-gone and replaced by a pathetic little shelter. I would sit in the barber chair and hope that the barber wouldn't do his job too quickly as I was always hoping for a train to pass before the big plate glass windows at the front of the shop.

In addition to the daily road freight ND-2/DN-1 and the follow-on local freight that operated as far south as Seymour as NX-15, there were five scheduled round-trip passenger trains scheduled daily, which kept this line very busy. It was double-tracked until circa 1955 when a huge flood devastated the Naugatuck Valley. When rebuilt, it was single-tracked as an economy measure with sufficient passing loops to keep traffic fluid. This became progressively easier as sources of freight traffic dried up over the years but in the 1960s it was still a busy line.

By the time I started gricing, conventional passenger trains had given way to diesel-hydraulic, self-propelled Budd cars, which held down all passenger schedules. The Budd cars shuttled 32.6 miles between Waterbury and Bridgeport on the Shoreline, where passengers transferred trains for onward movement – usually to New York City. Mid-day trains usually saw only a single unit but morning and evening trains conveying passengers to/from New York City often had two units. I usually rode the bus to/from high school in Waterbury but every so often the need to remain after school would see me riding a Budd car home – always a treat!

If I wasn't getting a haircut, I would often wander over to the railroad station while the rest of the family was shopping. I'd sometimes peek into the station, which seemed quite cavernous to me but totally bereft of passengers, but the real treat was if the local NX-15 was in town. When northbound freight ND-2 got to Waterbury, it would be split up and the three locomotives used on three different locals fanning out from the city to deliver and collect cars to be reassembled into train DN-1 to run back south in the evening. The crew of the local would often leave their unit parked by the station while they went to lunch. Alco RS3 locomotives were powered by 12-cylinder, 4-cycle diesel 244-D prime movers which, at rest, had a habit of idling down almost



to the point of stalling, whereupon they would cough back to life. It was fascinating to prowl around the locomotive while its prime mover continuously cycled between life and death.

Sadly, there is now (2021) almost a total lack of freight activity in the Naugatuck Valley, with most of the factories I remember as a kid either closed or torn down. Interestingly, passenger service still survives uninterrupted since 1849 on upgraded heavy continuously welded rail (cwr) track. It has come full circle from conventional locomotive hauled trains when I was a kid to self-propelled Budd cars when I was a teenager to push-pull locomotive hauled trains of today.

Freight traffic was still strong and passenger service operated by Budd cars in 1965 when I graduated from university and began my career of 26 years in the United States Air Force. Fifty five years later, freight traffic has virtually disappeared with only one customer left on the line that ships very heavy rolls of specialized cable using large depressed-center flat cars. Aside from that, the once busy freight yards in Ansonia and Waterbury have disappeared – the one in Ansonia literally and the one in Waterbury figuratively – with all the tracks out of service and in terrible states of disrepair – a sickening comedown from the days of 1959 when I sat in a 3rd story classroom on my nearby high school half-listening to my English teacher trying to drum the finer points of Chaucer into my head whilst watching New Haven RR Alco S1 diesel switchers busily working the then highly active freight yard. Now (2021), just a single track leads to an ugly and ill-maintained high-level platform and shelter where push-pull trains shuttle back and forth between the hollow shell of Waterbury and Bridgeport, where passengers change for onward travel to New York City. The ride up and down the Naugatuck Valley is smooth and fast – almost from nowhere to nowhere – with all the factories and industry gone. Depressing!!

I left home and my (then) cozy little valley for active duty with the US Air Force in 1965, having been commissioned as a

Budd RDCs 45 and 121 are getting out of Seymour at 08:24 as Train #451 southbound (going away from the viewer) headed for Bridgeport. At this time, the station still had an operator and order boards to control train movements. It wasn't many years before the operator and the order boards disappeared and, in a few more, the station itself, to be replaced by a small, unstaffed shelter. While disappointing, I suppose the miracle is that passenger service on this line still continues unabated since its inception in 1849. Shelter or not, Seymour remains in my heart as the place where I debarked from the train on my trip home from Vietnam in October 1967.

second lieutenant in June of that year upon graduation from the University of Connecticut. I had the summer off before having to report for active duty, so I rode the train to Canada to meet my family in Moncton, New Brunswick. My Dad took the family there every two or three years to visit family, as his father had emigrated from Canada to the United States circa 1910 and there were still plenty of relatives to visit up north. Come September, I again took the train, this time in uniform, from New Haven, CT to Savannah, Georgia (GA) en route to my new and first duty assignment at Hunter Air Force Base (AFB). The military Transportation Management Office that provided my ticket was mildly non-plussed that I did not elect to fly south (after all, what else do Air Force people and birds do in the fall?). I was traveling in a wool, dress-blue uniform so it was more than a little bit of a shock when I stepped off the air-conditioned train that I'd boarded on a cool, crisp New England afternoon into a 90+ degree Fahrenheit southern afternoon with humidity so high that it could be wrung from the air. Welcome to the sunny south!

All of my previous gricing had been perforce limited mostly to the southern New England environs of my Connecticut home and locations that I could easily get to/from in a day's outing using my Dad's car. This quickly changed once I was settled in my new quarters on base and able to buy a car. A whole new

The Marlow Donkey



Atlantic Coast Line RR General Motors Electro-Motive Division (EMD) E6A passenger units 520 and 522 lead southbound Train #75, the New York City-Jacksonville, Florida (FL) *Gulf Coast Special* past North Tower at 14:37 on 25th May 1966, just 8 minutes prior to their scheduled stop in Savannah, GA. North Tower controlled traffic on the busy parallel lines of the Atlantic Coast Line RR and the Seaboard Airline RR, merged on 1st July 1967 to become the Seaboard Coastline RR. EMD only built a total of 92 of the 2,000 hp E6As between November 1939 and September 1942 and by 1965 these old war horses were getting rather long in the tooth, almost lost in a sea of 946 more modern E7A, E8A, and E9A passenger units bought by American railroads following the restrictions of WW II. The E6s had a slanted, chiseled nose quite distinct from the more common ‘bulldog’ noses of its later contemporaries and it was always a great treat to see an E6 on the point of a train. Train #75 was a secondary day train that departed New York City at 20:45 in the evening and arrived in Savannah, GA the next day at 14:45 and terminated in Jacksonville, FL at 17:30 where it was broken into separate sections serving the cities of Tampa, Fort Meyers, and St. Petersburg. The train ran from just after the end of WW I until 30th April 1971 when it was annulled with the inception of Amtrak the next day. In its later years, it carried a mix of reclining seat coaches, a café-lounge, diner, the usual head-end cars, and several 10 roomette-6 double-bedroom Pullman sleeping cars.

world opened up in an environment totally different from where I'd grown up 880 miles to the north. While the long-distance passenger train was in the beginning of its long decline in the United States during this time, Savannah lay on the long-distance, heavily travelled New York-Florida route that still saw heavy passenger service provided by the competing Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line railroads. These lines later merged to become the Seaboard Coast Line (now part of today's huge CSX system) but, at the time, they both fielded smart, long

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distance trains that routinely passed through Savannah. This opened whole new vistas of streamline passenger trains; freight trains loaded with fragrant pine logs destined for the huge paper mills around Savannah, Spanish moss draped by ways, and Central Junction interlocking tower (now long gone) staffed by a friendly operator who invited me into his domain and kindly provided me a ton of information on the local rail scene.

After about three months in Savannah, I was sent to a school in Wichita Falls, Texas (TX) for a three month introductory course for newly minted USAF Transportation Officers. This provided another wonderful opportunity for gricing on the rolling plains of north Texas and the opportunity to explore the great city of Dallas and nearby Fort Worth. Wichita Falls was located in the rolling prairie land of north Texas and was still served by four passenger trains per day. Trains #1 and #2, *The Texas Zephyr* were handsome trains usually headed up by unique Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (CB&Q)/Fort Worth & Denver (FW&D) EMD stainless steel, named, E5 passenger units. Most railroads in the United States did not name their locomotives so it was a treat to see such units come through Wichita Falls. Un-named Trains #7 and #8 were plug runs that usually had more head-end cars than passenger cars and drew whatever power the railroad had available.

Upon return to Savannah, I was smitten with a bit of guilt as I drove through the main gate one evening upon return from a party, thinking about the fun I was having while the Vietnam War was really heating up overseas. Perhaps misguidedly, I soon volunteered for duty in Vietnam – but was told that, as a second lieutenant, I had insufficient experience and could not be assigned there. Guilt assuaged, I continued to happily go about my duties (and gricing!) until directed to report to Charleston AFB, South Carolina (SC) some 107 miles to the north as part of an advance party aimed to managing the movement of AF operations from Hunter AFB in Savannah to Charleston AFB in Charleston in conjunction with the transfer of the air base in Savannah to the United States Army. Fat city – a whole new



CB&Q E5A 9550A *Silver Racer* and companion on the point of Train #2, the *Texas Zephyr* at Wichita Falls, TX en route from Dallas, TX to Denver, CO on 10th January 1966. This train often drew unique CB&Q/FW&D named, stainless steel E5 diesels. I consider this one of my sadder railroad photos. In addition to trains, I have a passing interest in bird spotting, and one of my favorites is the attractively colored meadowlark. In this case, poor Mr. Meadowlark had an encounter of the unfortunate kind with the E5 at speed and ended up being an unfortunate hood ornament on the diesel's prow.

area had opened up for gricing!! I took about a week's leave to go from Savannah to Charleston and explored a good deal of new railroad activity en route. Strangely, upon arrival at Charleston, I'd barely had time to unpack my suitcase when I received instructions to return to Savannah as I had orders for Vietnam. So much for lack of experience!

It is a straight shot of 106 miles between Savannah and Charleston. I could have made the trip in about two hours. Instead, I took about six days and a very circuitous route in order to visit the Graham County Railroad in far western North Carolina and other railroad delights along the way. The attraction – Shay geared steam locomotives operating in passenger service on the GC in the guise of the Bear Creek Scenic Railroad.

The Graham County cum Bear Creek Scenic RR was short of traffic but long on scenery, as depicted by this photo of three-truck Shay 3229 (Lima 1926) hauling a train of rather ugly tourist cars along the edge of the great Nantahala Gorge on 4th September 1966. The Shays were oil burners and the fireman must have been sanding out the flues to create this great pillar of smoke as the train worked its way back to the Bear Creek Junction Station near Robbinsville.



The 12.3 mile Graham County RR was chartered in 1905 as a logging line to connect Robbinsville, North Carolina (NC) to the Southern Railway at Topton, NC. Through great travail, the line finally became operational in 1925. It began operations with a second-hand rod engine which was lost during a flood and never recovered. Thereafter, the line was operated with Shay locomotives, better suited to the line's steep grades and poor track.

The line began running excursions in 1966 using Shay #3229, with Shay #1925 handling freight traffic. In 1967, the Bemis Lumber Co. in Robbinsville, a primary customer, burned and when re-built turned to using trucks. The railroad continued with local freight on an as-required basis but by this time the track was in such poor condition there was a derailment about every third day. On 14 Aug 1970, with freight traffic dwindling and the carpet mill closing, the railroad ceased all operations.

In 1973, the railroad reopened when Burlington Industries bought the line. The #1925 took over Bear Creek Scenic

Railroad excursion runs and a General Electric 70-ton diesel handled most of the freight operations which ceased in March 1975 when a flood washed out a bridge. In May 1975, #1925 ran the last steam-powered revenue freight train. In 1982, the railroad re-opened operations with an ex Atlantic Coast Line EMD SW8 diesel locomotive but insufficient traffic forced a final shut down in 1983 with the tracks lifted in 1987.

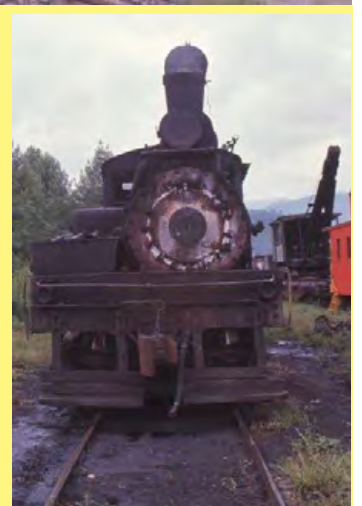
Following receipt of my surprise orders in Charleston, there followed a quick trip north to Connecticut to see my family and friends and sell my car (no use for a hopped up Plymouth Barracuda in Vietnam) and then a flight to Travis AFB, California (CA) - with a short side trip into San Francisco for some sight-seeing - cable cars and trams you know! - and then on to sunny Saigon.

In Part 2, in the next issue, Don recalls how he continued "gricing" even whilst under fire!



Graham County Shay 112 at Robbinsville, NC. Outshopped by the Lima Locomotive Works in Lima, OH on 17th October 1923, builders number 3241. Retired 1970. Built as Frost-Johnson Lumber Company 112. Sold to the Louisiana and Pine Bluff Railroad in 1926. Sold to Frost Lumber Industries in 1935. Then sold to the Conasauga River Lumber Company in 1950. The engine was sold to the Bear Creek Scenic Railroad in 1966 as their 1923 "Old Cliffhanger". Operated as 1926's replacement in 1969. It was then sold to the Oregon Pacific & Eastern Railway in 1972. Sold to the Center for Transportation and Commerce in Galveston, Texas in 1978. Now at the Galveston Railroad Museum. A mountain of lumber, the lifeblood of the Graham County RR, is visible behind the locomotive. The loco had been treated for schizophrenia as it retained the number #112 with which it began life but had the number #1923 painted on the side of its cab by the Bear Creek Scenic RR (Graham County).

Front view of Graham County 1925. Note the boiler offset to the left (from the engine driver's position) to offset the significant weight of the cylinders mounted on the right side of the locomotive's frame. Bevel gears, couplings, and connecting shafts, of course, ran along the right side of the locomotive as well. The left side of a Shay was typically a lot less interesting, clearly showing one of the fish-belly girders that comprised the frame of the locomotive.



BOSCARNE PROGRESS

Mike Walker reports on his modelling project.



Back in the March 2019 issue of the *Marlow Donkey* I outlined my plans to build a model of Boscarne Junction in Cornwall. Since then there have been a few passing mentions in the e-newsletters but perhaps a more detailed progress report might be of interest.

I'm pleased to report that progress has been good helped in no small part by the various lockdowns of the past 18 months which have provided the opportunity to "crack on". Indeed, the whole model railway trade has seen a resurgence and boom in business during this period despite the best efforts of one of the biggest retailers who wanted the trade to shut up shop for safety at the very beginning - fortunately, the rest blew a loud "raspberry" in the direction of Merseyside and carried on filling boots...

The point has now been reached where all the track is down, wired up and ballasted plus about 80% of the basic scenery is in place. The only outstanding area is the front of the layout at the east or Bodmin end where the ground drops away from track level towards the River Camel (not modelled.)

Having worked the daily trip up to Wenford and left the loaded clay wagons for collection by the WR, Beattie Well Tank 30585 sets out for Wadebridge under the watchful eye of the signalman.

One of the things that attracted me to Boscarne Junction was its simplicity although operationally it can become quite a challenge. This simplicity extends to the buildings or, rather, lack of them. All are now in position.

The signalman's cottage was built for me by Ron North who wanted a lockdown project and an excellent job he did too. I built the accompanying ramshackle outbuilding and both are now installed and the garden created around them with a good crop of vegetables coming. Some more detailing work is needed but that can wait until the basic scenery is finished.

At the front of the layout is a semi-derelict stone-built barn which I also constructed to a standard that hopefully complements Ron's excellent cottage. This barn is a part of the former Boscarne Mill (the rest of which is "off layout") and survives today converted into a holiday cottage.



It's the 24th July 1964 and the last steam-worked goods to Bodmin North (SR) rumbles past the east end of Boscarne Junction behind 1368.

In reality it was 1369 that had charge of that working but the rest of the train replicates the real thing and, yes, that (loaded) tank wagon really was marshalled next to the locomotive.

In due course this Heljan model will be renumbered once the layout is largely complete and I can turn my attention to the motive power and rolling stock.

Boscarn Junction Signal Box is a “ready-to-plant” model made in resin by Bachmann as a special commission for the Kernow Model Centre. It is in some ways a typical LSWR ‘Box but has a unique overhang at one end. Quite why Kernow chose it I can’t say but I’m glad they did as it saved a lot of time. But...

When I came to plant it I had trouble getting it to fit realistically, either it was too far from the level crossing or the foot of the steps were too close to the fence. It was some time before the penny dropped. The model is too high in the ground floor; a detail proved by it having two more steps than the real thing. I could have cured it by chopping a section off the bottom but haven’t plucked up the courage to do so yet. It’s no longer available so if I did it and cocked it up I’d have to resort to scratch-building which I might yet do.

There are three small prefab concrete huts around the site, typical products of the SR’s Exmouth Junction concrete works. Through the good offices of the *RMweb* forum I made contact with someone who marketed a 3D-printed kit of the larger version aimed at L&B modellers. I ordered two and asked if it would be possible for him to do one of the smaller half-size ones. “No problem” and I got it in a few days for less than a fiver! *RMweb* has been a godsend with this project providing inspiration, ideas and advice from fellow modellers always willing to answer “how to” questions.

At the east end, the small ground frame hut is another Bachmann /Kernow commission - no issues this time - whilst the platelayers hut is my own scratchbuild. I’m not happy with the chimney and have plans for a better one but that’s down the “to do” list.

The scenery is constructed using sculptured expanded polystyrene blocks over which wire mesh is used to form the basic contours. This is then covered with plaster bandage (the stuff the NHS uses when you break an arm or leg) and then finally a coat of Polyfilla to smooth everything out.

Once painted, the fun begins. Ground cover is applied using a technique called “static grassing”. Nylon fibres of varying lengths and colours are placed on the layout (which has had a coat of PVA glue) applied using an applicator that applies a high-voltage static charge to the fibres causing them to stand up when they hit the glue. Different lengths and colours in multiple applications gives the desired effect. Subsequent layers are applied after spraying with Boots “extra firm hold” (unscented!) hair spray which is also used as a final coat to fix everything.

Bushes and hedgerows are from a variety of materials including rubberised horse hair and a natural product called seafoam. These are covered with various ground foam materials to represent the foliage. A similar technique is used for the trees of which there are many. Most are created using plastic armatures supplied by Woodland Scenics or in some cases their previous white metal versions salvaged off the old layout along with some old trees made by Britains many, many years ago. All are covered with Woodland Scenics foliage and other dressings and look quite realistic particularly when crammed into the “Wild Wood” at the Bodmin end.



Small Prairie 4569, a long-time performer in the area, approaches Boscarn Junction with a B Set forming a Wade-bridge to Bodmin Road train. The signalman has the token ready.

Lineside fencing consists of matchsticks and thread. I did try a commercial version but my fingers and eyesight weren’t up to it! There are numerous other details including lineside signs which I created by photographing those on the Mid-Hants and printing them out to the correct size.

A full set of LSWR signals has been obtained, hand built by Stephen Freeman who specialises in that sort of thing and “found” through *RMweb*. However, because they are extremely delicate, apart from test fitting, they remain firmly packed away for now for fear of damage as construction continues.

Alongside layout construction I’ve been collecting the required locomotives and rolling stock. I now have the full set of locos: Beattie Well Tanks 30585 and 30586, O2 30200, N 31874, 2MT 41272, Panniers 1368 and 4666 plus Prairies 4569 and 4592. Diesels are represented by 03 D2183 and Class 22s D6320 and D6325 backed up by Bubblecars W55000 and W55028 along with Railbus W79977. There’s also a complete fleet of appropriate SR and WR passenger stock plus an expanding selection of goods vehicles. Once scenic work is “complete” attention will turn to detailing and weathering the stock.

This collection will allow me to replicate operations at any time in the 1953-1965 period and prototype-based working timetables and locomotive/stock diagrams have been created - amazing what’s on t’web!

So that’s progress so far. Perhaps sometime I’ll invite some of you along to see it. Oh, and I’m already planning the next, a portable model of Wenford which can appear at exhibitions - if they ever resume and anyone is kind enough to invite me!

Now you see it, now you don’t. In 1964 a small halt was built at Boscarn Junction to provide an interchange between the main Bodmin Road to Padstow service worked by a “Bubblecar” and a Boscarn Junction to Bodmin North shuttle worked by a Railbus. To allow me to work the layout at various periods, I’ve created two scenic modules that allow me to instantly build the halt.



HYMEK DIAMOND JUBILEE

Sixty years ago this autumn saw the delivery of the first production batch of the versatile Hymek Type 3 diesel-hydraulics to the Western Region.

Built by Beyer-Peacock who set up a special company, Beyer Peacock (Hymek) Ltd (hence the name) in partnership with engine builders Bristol Siddeley (who assembled the Maybach MD870 engines under license) and Stones who likewise supplied the Mekydro transmission, it was originally envisaged that more than 300 would be built to replace the various GWR mixed traffic 4-6-0s. In the event production ran to only 101 examples.

Sadly they were short-lived, victims of the National Traction Plan but the last survivors soldiered on until 1975 and four are preserved.



They were among the neatest looking of the BR diesel fleet thanks to the styling by Wilkes-Ashmore and the original two-tone green livery set off by the pale grey window surrounds as illustrated by a brand new D7000 in a publicity shot taken at Avonmouth in June 1961 when a month old. As delivered, the first two had the horns mounted below the buffer beams the cowlings of which were painted black.

Photo: British Railways

Starting with D7002 the horns were moved to the cab roof and the buffer beam cowlings were painted light green to match the skirts as modelled here by D7003 fresh out of the box at Swindon Works on 30th July 1961 - it did not enter service until the following month.

Colour-Rail 213361

By 1962 the yellow warning panels were being added in the interests of safety but in the case of the Hymeks it didn't look like an afterthought.

Here D7060 passes Slough with the 07:30 Swansea to Paddington on 13th April 1963. Perhaps not the kind of work for which they were originally intended but they were pressed into service on the South Wales expresses in an effort to banish steam traction from the Severn Tunnel as quickly as possible when diesels became available.

Whilst schedules were pedestrian compared to today, this work certainly didn't do them any favours and some of their later failures were attributed to this early thrashing.

Photo: Alec Swain





The arrival of the corporate blue livery was enthusiastically adopted by Swindon and both Hymeks and Westerns were early recipients of the new livery - except they got it wrong in several cases!

A small number of Hymeks got this all-over blue livery as modelled by D7051 seen at Salisbury on 11th August 1968.

The initial specification for painting locomotives blue predated the adoption of the full yellow front and the also called for the BR symbols to be on each cab side with the numbers behind the doors. However, as the Hymeks displayed their numbers with aluminium characters, Swindon chose to ignore that detail.

Colour-Rail 213378

The all-blue scheme, which was also carried by D7004 and D7007 at least, obviously didn't find favour and very quickly Swindon returned to painting the window surrounds pale grey or possibly didn't bother repainting them if still in good condition.

Swindon also used a non-standard shade of blue sometimes called "Chromatic Blue" which was a little lighter than the official Rail (or Monastral) Blue.

Both these are seen to good effect on D7027 pausing at Oxford with a Worcester to Paddington train in October 1969 by when the Hymeks were the usual power on those trains.

Photo: Graham Wareham



The final standard scheme of blue with the yellow ends extended around the cab side windows is shown by a well-worn D7026 on a parcels train at Didcot on 20th April 1974.

By this time the centrally placed BR logo had become the norm for all locomotives with the numbers under the driver's windows only but the Hymeks continued to carry their raised numbers to the end, albeit with the D often painted out or torched off after 1968.

This style of blue livery was eventually carried by all of the class with the exception of D7024 which went to the graveyard in January 1972 still in very scruffy two-tone green.

Photo: Mike Walker

THEN AND NOW: LOUGHBOROUGH

Three views this time all taken from the vantage point of the Beeches Road bridge at the south end of Loughborough Central station.

First, from track level we see BR Standard 9F 92094 heading a south-bound mixed freight out of the station in April 1965 only 18 months before BR closed the major part of the old Great Central main line.

Colour-Rail BRE1920



Of course there was to be life after death for a part of the GCR and moving up onto the bridge itself for this 10th July 1994 view we see Rebuilt West Country 34101 *Hartland* setting out with a passenger train for Leicester North. At this time the whole length of the reopened line was single track.

Noteable as one of only two Eastleigh-built Bulleid Light Pacifics in preservation, *Hartland* is currently undergoing a major overhaul on the Noriks Moors Railway.

Photo: Mike Walker

Moving forward to 9th October 2016, double track has been restored and a BR Standard 9F once more heads south with a freight. This time its 92214 doing the honours in pouring rain with *Britannia* 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* waiting to take out a following passenger train.

Photo: Mike Walker

