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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: NFR 2ft gauge B 0-4-2ST No.783 blast through the streets of Kurseong. 1 January 1980.

Photo: Chris Waite. Article page 13.

Bottom main picture; 57602 Restormel Castle stands at Paddington. 28 July 2009. Inset picture: 57604 Pendennis Castle at Penzance. 29 July 2009.

Photos: Mike Walker. Article page 4.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.15 for 7.30pm or can be attended on-line on Zoom.

Thursday 19 September

BISCUIT TIN DISCOVERIES

Mike Dodd

Mike uncovered a biscuit tin a while ago, containing Black & White negatives of all shapes and sizes, including several glass plates. These negatives were part of the collection of the late Frank Saunders and ranged from the 1940's through to the 1960's both in the UK and Europe. This slideshow showcases some of the images found in that biscuit tin; a few of which still need identification - your assistance with identification during the show will be welcomed.

Thursday 17 October

PENDON MUSEUM - OXFORD'S AMAZING SECRET

Chris Webber

Founded 70 years ago by Royce England, an Australian who came to live here in the 1930s and fell in love with the Vale of the White Horse, Pendon has set out to preserve this rural idyll in miniature. Chris will be giving us a look at the background to the museum and an insight into how the incredible models are made.

Thursday 21 November

WORKING ON THE RAILWAY (FROM NOIL VANS TO THE JUNGFRAU)

Mike Romans

A personal journey through the fascinating world of 'working on the railway'. From a lowly start as a Temporary Clerk in the Station Manager's Office at Paddington via a variety of posts to Management Training followed by management posts over much of the WR running the everyday railway.

After the WR ended Mike went first to Trainload Freight and finally to an executive post at Eurostar UK - which took him literally to the Top of Europe.

Please note, this will not be an illustrated talk, just Mike recalling anecdotes from his long career.

Thursday 19 December

STEAM VARIETY IN NORTHERN CHINA

Peter Robins

Starting with a 1988 visit which covered from Nancha in the North East to Lanzhou in the North West, the show includes loco construction at Datong and Tangshan as well as the older JF/RM/SL classes at work. Later visits made between 1992 and 2004 include various industrial locations on both standard and narrow gauge including Anshan steelworks, Chengde and Hunjiang as well as mainline action at Zhongwei on the edge of the Gobi Desert, Yebaishou and the spectacular JingPeng Pass.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The people have spoken and to no one's surprise we have a new government which has already set in motion one of its election pledges, to take the passenger rail operators back into direct state control thus ending our quarter-century experiment with a 'privatised' railway. In truth, of course, it never was fully privatised in the way that the likes of British Airways or the bus industry was. Only the freight side of the industry was, and will, remain fully private.

What is being proposed is not a return to British Railways of 1948 to 1992 but rather to bring the remaining passenger train operating companies into the fold of the DfT's Directly Operated Railways as their existing contracts expire which means they will not have to compensate the owning groups such as First. They will join the existing DOR companies; LNER, Northern, SouthEastern and TPE. The existing open access operators such as Grand Central, Hull Trains and Lumo will not be affected and there will be no prohibition to others starting up in the future. Ultimately all the DOR operators along with Network Rail will come under the umbrella of Great British Railways which the government claims will be an 'arm's length' operation.

Among the first operators to be taken into DOR will be Chiltern Railways whose current contract expires in March 2025. Great Western's contract has a break clause in June 2025. Even if the legislation setting up GBR has not passed through parliament by then there is nothing to prevent the transfer to DOR.

www.mdrs.org.uk

However, due to the number of contracts coming to a close in a short period it may be that some existing contracts are extended for a short period simply to ease the pressure on DOR.

Will it work and make a difference? Well, there's more than one way to make a difference in any sphere. A lot will depend on just how 'arm's length' GBR turns out to be. Many of the issues surrounding the industry today stem from civil servants at the DfT who think they know more about how to run a railway than the likes of our President. Will they be prepared to relinquish the power they have grabbed in recent years? If time-served railway managers are in charge then it might.

Then there's investment. The past quarter century has seen a vast amount of private investment going into the industry. Will this continue and will the providers be willing to continue to invest? If not things appear bleak. The country is nearly broke and when it comes to allocating meagre public funding things like the NHS, social care, education and, particularly in the present climate, defence will be the priorities, railways will be way down the list.

The public seems to yearn for a return to BR. But ask yourself: was it really a halcyon period? Not all HSTs, it gave us things like Pacers and the ECML electrification done so cheaply it falls down if you sneeze loudly next to it!

Mike Walker

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

In June our former chairman Tim Speechley joined us in person rather than Zoom to present Looking Back in which he recalled his 60 years of railway photography. As always from Tim it was an excellent show which took in many other forms of transport other than railways including buses and ships.

Jeremy Harrison was our guest in July showing us the remarkable images in the Ken Nunn collection. These were taken as long ago as before the start of the Boer War in 1899. Taken on glass plate cameras, the sharpness of the pictures was stunning on a par with modern digital images only black and white of course. Jeremy says there are enough images in the collection for two more shows so this is definitely to be continued.

In August it was the turn of another member, Martin Stoolman, to entertain us with images taken during his time as a student at Exeter University in the 1970s when semaphore signals and the last Diesel-hydraulics ruled in the west. The university had a thriving railway society which managed to arrange many outings and visits. Indeed, there seemed to so much going on it's a wonder any time was available for serious study although Martin, for one, did come away with a reasonable degree. The city and surroundings made such an impact on him he's lived there ever since.

PENDON MEETING & VISIT

Following our originally planned speaker for October withdrawing Chris Webber has kindly stepped in and will be presenting a programme about the remarkable model landscape that is Pendon Museum in Long Wittenham. It is now 70 years since the museum formally opened to the public and around 90 years since its founder, Roye England, started making the first exquisite buildings for what would become Pendon Parva village, a recreation of a typical village in the Vale of the White Horse between Didcot and Swindon as it would have appeared in the 1930s.

It's still a work in progress, the joke is it's always "10 years from completion" but is well worth seeing even if you are not really into the modelling side of railways.

Before this enforced change of speaker for October, it had been our intention to make a visit to Pendon of 28th September but to ensure you get to appreciate the museum fully it is our intention to postpone this until after Chris's talk - he may whet your appetite to see for yourself even if you originally intended to join the party. A new date hasn't been set but it will be most probably be early in the new year and will be announced in due course in the newsletters and the December issue of the *Donkey*.

We hope our originally planned October speaker, Leslie McAllister talking about the railways of Ireland, will come at some point in 2025.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The format of our November meeting will be a little different from usual. Our guest, Mike Romans, will be presenting his talk unillustrated. Mike is a retired senior railwayman whose career took him from being a lowly temporary clerk to the very highest levels of management within the Western Region followed by time at Trainload Freight, Eurostar and finally

some international consultancy work. Along the way he gathered an encyclopaedic knowledge of the length and breadth of the old WR and picked up many amusing anecdotes which form the basis of his talk.

We will, of course, be relaying this presentation by Zoom but we do urge those of you who live close enough to attend in person as it will be a much more enjoyable experience.

APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

My thanks to all of you that keep a steady supply of photographs coming for the bi-weekly newsletters, please keep them coming.

Sadly the same does not apply to contributions for the *Donkey*. The file of forthcoming articles is currently empty. Fortunately the Long Island feature was prepared some time ago otherwise this issue would have been somewhat slim.

Our membership is now so large that if every member made a contribution I would be overwhelmed so don't leave it to somebody else. Contributions can be on any rail or even transport related subject and could be as simple as a portfolio of photographs if you don't feel capable of producing an in-depth technical article. But please submit something!

The editor's contact details are shown on page 1.

CHINNOR STEAM GALA

The Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway is planning its most ambitious event to date with its 3-day steam gala from Friday 13th to Sunday 15th September.

Three locomotives will be in action: 4555 which has been spending the season at Chinnor; 7820 *Dinmore Manor* from the Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Railway and Caledonian 0-4-4T 419 from the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway. An enhanced timetable will apply on each day which can be found on the railway's website.

RCTS MEETINGS

The Maidenhead & Windsor RCTS branch resumes its meetings in September following its summer break. The programme for the coming months is as follows:

Monday 23rd September

Mid Hants Line, 1973 – 1985 - Keith Brown

Monday 28th October

Behind Closed Doors; Back in Time Underground - Brian Hardy

Monday 25th November

Severn Valley Railway: history and current operation - Richard Morris

Monday 16th December

Story of British Rail Engineering Ltd - Richard Marks

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, SL6 3AX starting at 19:30 and like ours by Zoom. MDRS members always welcome. To register to attend by Zoom visit <https://rcts.org.uk/windsor-maidenhead> and follow the link there

TICKETS PLEASE!

Recollections of a Great Western Train Guard 1999 to 2018 (Part Eleven)

Martin Stoolman



So far in these articles I have only made passing references to the Paddington to Penzance sleeper train, otherwise known as the *Night Riviera*. However for us Exeter based guards it was an important element of our job as we worked it exclusively; in fact if an Exeter guard was not available to work the train, it didn't run. There was many a time when a frantic phone call had to be made by Swindon Control, because they were short of a guard for a sleeper job. Maureen, my wife, dreaded my work phone ringing while at home because a job that night wasn't covered. If it was on a rest day we could of course say no, but it was a matter of depot pride... and I cannot actually recollect a single instance of the train having to be cancelled through lack of a guard. One of us always seemed to step up to the plate.

Four jobs or "turns" were involved for us in the running of the sleeper train, booking on at various times of the day or night. I remember when I applied for the job of Train Manager one of the questions I was asked at my initial interview was "How do you feel about booking on at 03:35 in the morning?" I recall the interviewer carefully scrutinising my face to see my reaction, but I was careful to calmly answer "No problem," while my mind was secretly thinking "oh bloody hell!" The job in question was turn EX1072 which involved relieving a colleague at St David's who had come from Paddington with the down train; this would be at about 04:00 depending on timings. The sleeper was very unpredictable, not just because of delays on the night, but because of planned engineering works which could send it on all sorts of different routes between Paddington and Exeter. Only one route was available west of Exeter of course so departure could be anything between about 02:30 (on those occasions we were asked to book on even earlier, only to sit about at Plymouth for an hour and a half) and 05:30. When we reached Penzance we often did not have a very long break before we had to work an up HST from Penzance back to Exeter. In fact Penzance had a special "standby" turn for one of their guards in the morning, the purpose of which was largely to cover the train if the sleeper was either retimed or delayed. The

This time Martin looks at the workings of the Night Riviera sleeper. On the evening of 28th July 2009 57602 Restormel Castle stands at platform 1 at Paddington having worked the empty stock in from Old Oak Common.

all photos: Mike Walker

trouble was that occasionally that guard was used for something else, meaning that Control had no choice but to delay the HST pending our arrival. That was not nice for the passengers on the Paddington bound train, but it was also not nice for us, getting next to no break at Penzance after working since silly o'clock in the morning.

So how did the Exeter guard who I relieved on turn EX1072 get up to Paddington? Answer: by booking on just after 19:00 on turn EX1048 and working the last up HST of the day (loco and coaches in the early days) to Paddington all stations, arriving at about 22:30. Although you were always likely to get a few waifs and strays on that train because of the lateness of the hour, in truth it was usually very quiet with less than a hundred passengers, so, apart from all the stations, you didn't have to bust a gut. The sleeper itself left at 23:50 pretty consistently all the time I was there, so you did have over an hour at Paddington (assuming the up HST wasn't late). However you often needed that time if things on the sleeper were not well. Fitters attention might be required due to an air leak, or the air conditioning might not be working on one of the sleeper coaches. On a day coach the latter was not a problem; you could run with it. It was only a problem if you happened to be a passenger sitting in it on a sweltering July day! However a sleeper carriage was (and doubtless still is) not allowed to enter service without air con/heating. Frantic efforts would be made to fix it, although if that was done it would usually fail again before we reached Reading! More often the solution was to turf passengers out of that coach, finding them berths in the other coaches. This was okay on a Tuesday in January, but definitely not an option on a Friday in Summer when the train would be fully booked.

After an uneventful overnight journey which was routed via Badminton and Bristol Parkway, 57604 Pendennis Castle has arrived at a very wet Penzance on the morning of 29th July 2009.

As Martin mentions, between Paddington and Exeter the sleeper can take any possible route or combination of routes. It's worth trying to stay awake to see which the train takes!

Note the bilingual welcome. GWR is very keen to support the Cornish language and today the sleeping cars have bilingual exterior branding.



So much for the down sleeper. The up service left Penzance at 22:00 (earlier on a Sunday) thus demanding a 17:15 (or thereabouts) book on for turn EX1078; that involved taking over the 15:35 Paddington to Penzance at Exeter and working it down to Penzance arriving, if you were lucky, just before 21:00. I say "if you were lucky" because long distance down services such as the 15:35 had a habit of running late (and of course still do). To compound matters, on this job the driver (also from Exeter) came down with you. And as I've said before, whilst guards can questionably "get away" with not taking some or all of their break, drivers cannot. So you can see immediately that, given the loco on the sleepers often needs starting and checking over, and the train (in conjunction with the guard) requires a brake test, if the incoming HST was more than 30 minutes late, the sleeper was going to be late away. And it often was. That said, the schedule was so relaxed that the train could be over an hour late leaving, yet still make Paddington on time.

Turn EX1078 finished at Exeter when the up train arrived just before 01:30. So who worked it from Exeter to Paddington I hear you ask? Answer: it fell to the unfortunate guard doing turn EX1041, booking on at 00:50. You were generally rostered on this job for four nights in a row, and the way I used to play it was to go to bed at about 4pm. My wife Maureen would wake me up with a cup of tea at 11pm, at which point I would get up and she would get into bed. I would then wash, shave and have "breakfast", before setting out on the walk to St David's past all the drunk youngsters as they fell out of the nightclubs. This truly was the surreal life of a railwayman working shifts....

The consolation prize of taking over the up sleeper at Exeter was that all the work on it had been done (or should have been done) by the EX1078 man. What I hoped to take over would be a train with no mechanical problems, and with everyone on board (apart from the sleeper stewards) fast asleep. To help guarantee a peaceful journey, the trick at Exeter was to get down onto the platform good and early, and examine the tickets of the half dozen or so intending passengers, before they actually boarded the train. That surprise manoeuvre paid dividends as it meant that, in conjunction with the two members of station staff on duty, any ticketless troublemakers (the sleeper tends to attract them!) could be prevented from boarding in the first place. So long as the signaller was kept informed, nobody minded a slightly delayed departure through this cause, the train generally having make-up time through to Paddington.

Thus on most occasions, but not all, I could enjoy a peaceful ride up to London through the early hours, with the train stopping at just Taunton (SuX) and Reading. The presence of three sleeper stewards (having one for every two sleeper carriages was mandatory) meant I had no immediate responsibility for the passengers who had booked berths; all I had to do was make myself accessible by sitting in the lounge car with a strong coffee and a good book, leaving the driver to do all the work. Well that was the theory.... But even if that went right, there was of course a sting in the tail. Arrival at Paddington's platform 1 was usually just after 05:00, after which we had the chance of a bit of "shut eye" in the mess room if the early morning Paddington staff allowed it. The "sting" was then having to work the 07:30 Paddington to Penzance via Bristol all the way back to Exeter, arriving at around 10:15. In those days this was not only the first train of the day out of London through to the West Country, but it was also an important business service into Bath and Bristol and was extremely busy. And it was peak tickets only; no off peak tickets allowed, so plenty of opportunity for arguments especially in the days before ticket barriers. But that's all another story; for now, back to the sleeper train....

Looking back at my log books, in view of the importance of the sleepers in the life of Exeter's guards, I was surprised to find that my first sleeper duty did not come until 30th May 2000, just over three months from the start of my career. My memory is that, especially in the earlier years, certain experienced guards used to swap jobs with me because they preferred the sleeper workings. These were the "old guard" if you'll pardon the pun, who preferred to get their hands dirty rather than have to be polite to passengers. And you will notice that so far in this particular article I have been using the term "guards" as opposed to the title that management would have us known as, Train Managers. This is because on the sleepers you were much more like a traditional guard, and with the unreliability of the ageing class 47s pulling the trains at that time, you were indeed quite likely to have to "get your hands dirty".

Turn EX1078 on Tuesday 25th February 2003 provided me with plenty of opportunity to get my hands dirty. Having booked on, I was pleased to see that my 15:35 Paddington to Penzance HST was running more or less on time. We left St David's 3 minutes down, but had made this up by Plymouth. After an uneventful run through Cornwall we rolled into Penzance a couple of minutes early. As we entered the station we got a clear view of

the up sleeper standing in platform 4 with the experimental 57601 on the front end, in its striking purple livery and bearing the name of the leasing company "Porterbrook". One of the sleeper stewards, who lived in Redruth I think and was using my HST to get to work, was standing next to me when I uttered the immortal words: "O good, we've got the 57 on tonight, at least we know that's reliable."

All was well as we set off from Penzance on time at 22:00, Redruth being our first stop. We left there 3 minutes late for some reason but made up a minute into Truro. Platform work having been completed I received the tip from station staff and locked the doors. On receipt of the second tip I showed the driver a green lamp from the rear of the train... nothing. In the end the station staff walked up to the driver's cab and immediately showed me a red lamp, meaning "abort departure". I unlocked the doors and walked up the platform, and as I approached the loco I smelt diesel fuel in the air. Sure enough, under the engine, diesel was pouring out onto the track. We weren't going anywhere.

Now, unlike today, there were rescue options for the sleeper. The railway still had the mail contract with the Post Office, and it was established that 47750 was available at Par but with no driver. After much head scratching a taxi was found for my driver and off he went to collect the 47. Meanwhile a Rail Incident Officer (RIO) had arrived, along with the local fire brigade. Needless to say I was on the phone a lot to Swindon Control, but got a telling off from the RIO for using my mobile next to the loco as he felt there was a danger of the diesel fuel being ignited! It was early days for our understanding of mobile phones, and the Controller at Swindon thought it was hilarious. Less amusing was when the station staff went home at the end of their shifts, and all the station lights went out due to being on a timer. A fitter eventually arrived and began trying to stem the flow of fuel in the darkness, but to no avail, which was unfortunate as by this time serious concern was being expressed about

the effect on Truro's water conduits. Meanwhile I was trying to pacify the passengers while donning my overalls in preparation for the return of our driver with our rescue loco. Eventually they arrived, I got down and coupled up, but then the RIO told us that we couldn't move until the fuel on 57601 had stopped leaking. It did stop eventually, but probably only because all the fuel had gone! After that the 57 started leaking air so we couldn't move anyway.

To cut a long story short, the fitter eventually managed to cure everything and we finally departed Truro a massive four and a half hours late. We swapped 47750 and 57601 for 47813 at Plymouth, and with no more problems reached Exeter St Davids 22 minutes after the train should have reached Paddington! And I would have got home just as Maureen was thinking about getting up! As for my earlier remark about 57601's reliability, I have since found an entry in a log book from just over a year earlier, for the 05:08 Penzance to Paddington (which I took over at Exeter) on Thursday 10th January 2002. We left St David's 18 minutes late, and I quote, "after train had to make additional stop at Totnes in lieu of 06:30 Plymouth to Paddington cancelled at Totnes following a fuel leak on 57601". Now there was a portent for the future if ever there was one. I really should learn to keep my big mouth shut!

On an occasion when it managed to reach Paddington without failing, 57601 heads the 06:30 Plymouth to Paddington past Ruscombe on 4th December 2001. This was the prototype passenger version of the Class 57 rebuild and despite its chequered time with FGW led the company to acquire its own quartet 57602-605. Today, 57601 is part of the West Coast Railways fleet.



THE LONG ISLAND CHRONICLES

Mike Walker



For several summers in the late eighties and into the nineties I visited Long Island during which I got to see the local railroad up close and personal thanks to a great friendship with Reggie Tony who was, at the time, the second most senior Engineer (or Driver) on the Long Island Rail Road.

The origins of this friendship go back to 1979 when Roger Bowen, my late mother and I were crossing Canada on VIA Rail's *Super Continental*. Among our fellow passengers was a group of American tourists who were being shepherded by a chap called Ron Chapman. He had quickly spotted that Roger and I had more than a passing interest in railways and introduced himself as a fellow enthusiast and former LIRR employee – a Station Agent. Approaching Edmonton we got word that a freight train had derailed between there and Jasper so the train would terminate at Edmonton and we would have to be bussed to Jasper where the eastbound *Super Continental* would also terminate and be turned. Ron arranged a dedicated bus for his party and offered to give us a lift to speed things up. Both his party and ourselves were planning to spend a couple of days in Jasper so it worked well. After this, Ron and I kept in touch and a few years later I visited him at his home in East Moriches on Long Island. During this, Ron introduced me to his fellow East Moriches resident Reggie Tony. Reggie and I hit it off at once, we've been great friends ever since and I would stay with him and his wife Vera at their home overlooking the bay towards Fire Island and the Atlantic.

The Long Island Rail Road is the oldest US railroad still operating under its original name. It was founded in 1835 and expanded to cover the whole of the island through a combination of new construction under its own name or by absorbing other companies mostly as a result of failure. It was largely unprofitable itself and in 1900 became a subsidiary of the mighty Penn-

Reggie Tony standing alongside Long Island Rail Road Auxiliary Power Control Unit 614 at Montauk NY on 25th June 1987 prior to working train #21 westwards. It started life as an ALCo FA1 1500hp freight locomotive with the Great Northern Railway in 1949 but following rebuild by the LIRR it lost its traction motors and the engine was replaced by a smaller unit driving an alternator supplying electric power for the train lighting and air-con.

All photographs by the author.

sylvania Railroad but this didn't save it as the LIRR declared bankruptcy in 1949. This prompted the State of New York to start subsidising the operation and in 1968 it took the company over putting it under the control of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) which remains the situation today.

Long Island itself is that chunk of land shaped rather like a fish anchored to the bottom end of New York City's Manhattan. It's about 115 miles long and a maximum of about 23 miles wide. The west end of the island is the densely populated New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. Moving east we enter Nassau County, a more suburban area, and finally at the east end is Suffolk County still rural in part and including areas such as the *very* wealthy Hamptons. The LIRR today has around 320 route miles with 125 stations four of which are New York City terminals headlined by Penn Station in midtown Manhattan. The western part of the network in Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau is electrified using the 750V dc 3rd rail system with Diesels used on the east end. It is the busiest commuter railroad in the USA carrying something like 350,000 passengers a day. Perhaps modest by our standards but considerably better than its nearest rival.



The current LIRR network map. East Moriches where Reggie and Vera lived is on the south coast roughly midway between Mastic-Shirley and Speonk. Its station closed in 1958.

Just taking pictures

It didn't take long before Reggie was inviting me to join him on his shifts and over the years we had many adventures together. Reggie's regular routes were the main lines from the city out to the east end of the island, to Greenport on the North Arm and Montauk on the South Arm. He usually ran Diesel services but was no stranger to the fleet of 'Metropolitan' EMUs.

One of our first "adventures" involved a late night trip into Manhattan's Penn Station on one of these stainless steel units. We were approaching Harold, the junction where the LIRR meets the Amtrak line coming in from Boston before burrowing under the East River. This isn't actually a river but is a channel which separates Long Island from Manhattan which is itself an

island. Reggie suggested the view from the cab here was one of the best of New York's spectacular sky line by night being virtually opposite the Empire State Building. So he simply stopped the train across the junction to let me take pictures out of the front window! We'd been stood still for a couple of minutes before the radio crackled into life: "Harold Tower to Long Island train (I forget the number). Do you have a problem?". "Negative" replied Reggie "we've just stopped for pictures, we'll be moving shortly." Sadly, my pre-digital night photography skills had not been perfected at that time (I'd yet to meet night photography guru Jim Boyd) and the results were appalling!

LIRR 'Metropolitan' EMUs passing Hall Tower at Jamiaca on 5th July 1987. Formed in 2-car sets, 770 cars designated M1 were built by Budd from 1968 followed by 174 M3s (seen here) with minor differences from 1985. All the M1s have been retired and the M3s are currently being retired.





East end Diesel services were worked by these EMD GP38-2 2000hp locomotives represented by 251 at Montauk on 16th August 1985. When operating push-pull the locomotive would be found on the east or country end of the train.

Want a go?

On another 'Metropolitan' bound for The City, Reggie suddenly asked if I'd like a go. I was somewhat lost for words – this was a service train with a good number of paying punters aboard. Reggie responded to my reticence by saying that his six-year old adopted daughter, Jessica, can run these. That was it. I was not being upstaged by a six-year old girl! So I took the controls for a short distance. On the way back from Penn I took control again and on the four-track section between Harold and Jamaica

(the Clapham Junction of the LIRR). We ran non-stop and I was encouraged to give it a go. We actually hit the ton before the speed control cut in. We were both surprised it took so long as the maximum permitted speed anywhere on the LIRR is 80 mph. From then on I became an honorary, but very unofficial, LIRR Engineer!



The typical American control stand found in a GP38-2. The red handle is the automatic brake (engine and train) with the independent (engine only) brake below. The lever to the right is the throttle in its idle/off position with the reverser below, its handle removed. Between them are various switches including the lights with the brass knob of the bell ringer. The gauges at the top are for the brake pressures and ammeter with the speedometer on the right by the front window with the markings for the cab signalling. The all important horn is the handle next to the gauges.

By contrast the cab of a Metropolitan is little more than a cupboard with much simpler controls. The prominent lever is the combined power-brake controller (PBC) which has to be depressed for the deadman's. To its left is the forward/off/reverse selector.



Running the Montauk

The east end of the island, both the Greenport and Montauk lines were what is known as “Dark Territory”. That is to say, there are no signals and trains are regulated by verbal instructions sent over the radio which crews write down on dedicated forms provided. To someone coming from a land where you almost need a signal to blow your nose, it seemed strange and off-putting particularly as the radios are “open channel” and more than one conversation might be going on simultaneously. “You just hope you’ve heard it right” was how Reggie replied when asked. A regular assignment was on the Montauk line which came under the jurisdiction of PD Tower at Patchogue whose regular day shift operator was Joanne Sunderland. She soon became completely unfazed when I read back her orders or reported clear over the radio. Messages like: “Long Island train 10, 266, five cars and a pack in the clear MS, switches lined and locked” which translated means train 10 hauled by engine 266 and formed of 5 cars with an auxiliary power and control car on the rear had arrived at Mastic-Shirley and the road was set for our opposing train. Joanne would repeat it back as would the engineer of the other train. We none of us cared that all radio traffic was recorded.

Set your own pay

A regular assignment for Reggie was the morning shuttles between Patchogue and Babylon which marked the eastern extremity of electrification on the Montauk line. I liked it because there was a very nice deli opposite Babylon station that did an excellent breakfast which we regularly frequented. One morning, on arrival, I was ready for my breakfast but Reggie had other ideas and we went to the other end of the train and set the cab up despite there being nearly an hour before our departure. He then called Babylon Tower and said he wished to wash the train. This was agreed and the road set accordingly.



Reggie grabs the paperwork for Train #10 hooped up by PD Tower operator Joanne Sunderland on 25th June 1987. The Montauk line east of here is unsignalled “dark territory” and this is the authority for the train to proceed. PD Tower at Patchogue supervises operations over the whole line.

Normally only a Form K Clearance Card (below left) will be issued which authorises the train to pass specified Block Markers as though they were clear block signals.

However if the train is to meet another then a Form A Clearance Card (centre) is issued along with a Form 19 Train Order (right) which is raised by the Train Dispatcher at Jamaica and copied by the operator then handed to the crew. Not visible here but Joanne will have a second hoop in her left hand for the conductor to grab. You will note that the orders are addressed to “C+E”, that’s Conductor and Engineer, the former is the senior man.

On this occasion #10 was to make its regular meet with westbound #19 at Mastic-Shirley (MS) plus an extra work train hauled by 229 at Westhampton (WH). Because of the length of the latter, #10 had to take the siding at WH to allow the work train to pass.

The Form 19 would have been issued to all three trains but each would receive its dedicated Form A and K. In the case of the other two, these orders would have been relayed to them by Joanne using the radio and copied down by the Conductor and Engineer on blank forms.

It seems a strange system by our standards but it works.

FORM K LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD CLEARANCE CARD FORM K

PD Station 947 AM June 25 19 87

Train 10 Engine 266

Proceed at BO

As though CLEAR block signal were displayed.

Report clear at NONE

Report arrival at NONE

Repeated M by Sunderland Block Operator

The block operator may issue this card only when authorized by the train dispatcher. Before issuing it, the block operator must have a proper understanding with any other block operators having authority over the blocks mentioned, and must know that such blocks are clear of both opposing trains and trains that may not be followed in the same block by the train addressed. If no report clear or arrival is required, the word NONE must be shown in the spaces provided.

Trains receiving this card properly filled out and signed, or trains authorized by the block operator to fill it out, may proceed as directed above.

FORM A LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD CLEARANCE CARD FORM A

PP Station 947 AM June 25 1987

Train 10 Engine 266 At PP

I have 1 train orders for your train. (If no train orders, operator must write "no" in space provided above).

Order numbers 19

All regular trains due at up to M have been represented except

*This is your authority to pass Stop-block signal at at RESTRICTED SPEED TO DO STATION WORK, BUT YOUR TRAIN MUST NOT LEAVE WITHOUT Clearance Card Form K or proper block signal indication.

Repeated M by Sunderland Block Operator

*To be used only in Manual Block Signal System territory. Copies must be made for each conductor and engineer and block operator, the latter retaining a copy.

FORM 19 LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD TRAIN ORDER NO. 19 FORM 19

OFFICE OF CHIEF TRANSPORTATION OFFICER

June 25 1987

To C+E NO 10 Eng 266 and OFR AT PD

C+E NO 19 Eng 609 AT Mastic-Shirley (MS)

C+E WORK EXTRA 229 WEST

At PG VIA PD

NO 10 Eng 266 meet

NO 19 Eng 609 AT MS

AND

WORK EXTRA 229 WEST

AT WH

NO 10 TAKE Siding AT WH

Made Complete Time 947 AM Block Operator Sunderland

Approaching the washing plant the operator radioed to ask if we wanted to wash. “No”, so we passed by on the by-pass line and parked up in an empty siding in Babylon Yard. In due course, the move was repeated as we returned to the station, again by-passing the wash. Somewhat miffed at missing breakfast, I just had to ask:

“Unscheduled switching move – an extra day’s pay”.

“But you asked to do it...”

“You know that, the tower man knows that, but the pay office doesn’t”

You may think there are strange practices in this country but even we can’t create our own bonuses if we find ourselves a tad boracic!

Independence Day

One fine 4th July we worked a passenger train from Jamaica to Greenport. We actually started empty from Richmond Hill Yard and I kept a low profile in the cab until we were well clear of Jamaica after which I took control. The LIRR HQ overlooks Jamaica station and even on a bank holiday you never know who might be looking out of a window. The train was a standard push-pull with 266, a 2,000hp EMD GP38-2 road-switcher leading (266 became “my” engine as it often seemed to turn up for my jaunts) some former EMU cars and, on the “city” end, auxiliary power and control unit (APCU) 619 converted from a former Milwaukee Road F7A – the classic American streamliner. We were non-stop from Jamaica to Hicksville so Reggie and I exchanged places at around 60 mph.

As we rolled into Hicksville I spotted a guy with a clipboard on the platform looking at us.

“Reggie, who’s this guy?”

“Don’t worry about him.”

“Reggie, he’s climbing on the engine.”

“Don’t worry.”

The cab door opens and he enters. Pleasantries exchanged and he’s introduced as a Road Foreman of Engines – the equivalent of a Footplate Inspector in the old days or possibly a Driver Team Manager here today. Reggie introduces me as “his friend from England”. Remember, I’m sat in the driving seat. The RF asks: “Oh, do you work for Brit Rail (sic)?” Before I get chance to attempt to lie my way out of a situation Reggie replies: “No, he’s just a visiting railfan.” Ever wished the ground would open up and swallow you?

By now Charlie Del Vecchio, Reggie’s regular conductor, was giving us two to go and Reggie shouted “Right away, driver!” – explaining to the RF it was British for “Highball”. Don’t cock this up I thought to myself. Both Reggie and I had spotted a flashing red aspect on the signal outside the station telling us that Divide Tower had written orders for us which Reggie kindly said he’d grab for me – I would probably miss or drop them! He handed them to me, I read them out, passed them to Reggie who also read them out before passing them to the RF who did likewise. The orders were then returned to me to place prominently on top of the control stand. Rules executed to perfection!

I successfully accomplished further station stops before we reached Ronkonkoma. Approaching there the RF announced he would be leaving us. Reggie tried to persuade him to continue to Greenport with us (I was just wishing he’d go) but the RF said he had a party to go to. “We’ve all got parties to go to, it’s the 4th July”. We drew up at Ronkonkoma and the RF departed quickly followed by Reggie leaving me in the seat. I got up and looked out of the left side. There was a huddle on the platform between the loco and first car, Reggie, Charlie and the RF. After a minute or two Reggie bounded back onto the loco and cried “Let’s go!”

“How many laws have we just broken? Never mind parties, we’ll be spending tonight on Ryker’s Island.”

“Just remember two things: I’m past president of the local BLE (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers) and he’s a reforming alcoholic. I can make things far more difficult for him than he can for me and he knows it. Anyway, Charlie asked if you were running the engine saying he thought so as the ride was too smooth to be me.”

The rest of the trip to Greenport was uneventful. Approaching our destination Reggie said I would have to make sure I stopped well down the platform at Greenport to ensure our back end was clear of the crossing – we wouldn’t be popular if the barriers stayed down all through our stay of over an hour. Greenport station is right on the water’s edge. In olden days the tracks continued onto a pier to connect with steamers across to Connecticut but that has long since vanished. The tracks just finish, no buffers or anything. I took Reggie at his word and inched 266 along the platform. As you know, American locos are tall and have prominent noses, by now all that was visible ahead was water. Reggie’s hand hovered above the emergency brake but his intervention wasn’t needed.

We climbed down and admired 266 sitting up to its axle boxes in weeds. Charlie joined us and after noting about 15 feet of rusting, overgrown track between loco and water asked in his Brooklyn-Italian drawl: “So what’s wrong with that piece of track?” With that we adjourned to an ice cream parlour – another new experience for someone used to a choice of vanilla, strawberry or chocolate...

That evening, Reggie and Vera took me to a neighbour’s house where a party was being held to celebrate Independence Day. I became a guest of honour but it was a little odd attending a party celebrating your countrymen being thrown out of the country!



Reggie with regular Conductor Charlie Del Vecchio and “our” 266 at the extreme end of track at Greenport on 4th July 1987.

Unsocial hours

One of the drawbacks of railway life is it isn't 9-5 which is why I've never signed up – I firmly believe the hours of darkness should be spent in bed. This didn't stop Reggie from hauling me out at the most God-awful wee hours to run a train even if I was on "holiday". Typical of this was one Monday morning in August 1985 when we had to work train #4031 starting from Speonk well before dawn and bound for Jamaica. Unlike most LIRR Diesel services which were push-pull with the loco on the "country" or east end, 4031 was a proper loco-hauled train which included first class parlour cars popular with those who'd spent the weekend in the Hamptons and were returning to spend the week working and living in the city. On this occasion there was an added bonus that the train was double-headed by GP38-2s 268 and 264 coupled "elephant style" – that's both facing the same way, nose to tail. Speonk station had been converted to a deli so breakfast could at least be obtained taking our turn in line with our expectant passengers.

Having been "fuelled" we climbed aboard 268 and Reggie set up the cab before heading back to discuss business with the train crew – we didn't have the pleasure of Charlie Del Vecchio's company that day. I remained in the cab and was asked by an arriving commuter to confirm which train this was and where it was bound for. Quite why I don't know as ours was the only train present. His face was a picture of confusion on receiving a reply in an English accent!

Train 4031 was also noteworthy in that it was one of only a handful of trains each day that traversed the link between the Montauk Line at Babylon and the Main Line at Bethpage. By now it was light and this gave us a chance to view the surroundings as we made a fast dash down the multi-track main line between Hicksville and Jamaica overtaking numerous Metropolitans on the slow lines. West of Babylon, the Montauk is generally only double track to Jamaica and the heavy commuter-traffic would impede the progress of an express like 4031. We

were living up to the LIRR's one time self-styled "Route of the Dashing Commuter".

Having deposited our passengers at Jamaica to continue to their preferred city terminal by connecting Metropolitans, we took the now empty train forward to Richmond Hill yard and then moved the locos across to Morris Park – the LIRR's main locomotive depot and workshops. This is reached through a curved tunnel under the Montauk Line to Long Island City followed by switch-back move. One signal only was cleared so we came to a stand and waited. Nothing happened so Reggie grabbed the radio. "Long Island 268 to Rich Tower. If you were to get off your fat butt and look through those filthy windows you will see I have two engines today and need the second signal." Shadowy movement could be seen within illuminated by a 5W bulb and the second signal cleared. Yes, the windows really were filthy and that's being polite!

We spent the next couple of hours exploring Morris Park. The works part was busy carrying out work of the fleet ranging from routine maintenance to full overhauls whilst outside 226, an ALCo C420, was being run at full power on the load bank – impressively noisy! We then made our way back to Richmond Hill yard and climbed aboard GP38-2 263 which we ran back to Jamaica to pick up passengers for train 4004 which ran back Montauk with Reggie in charge as far as Speonk.

To be continued...

GP38-2's 268 and 264, coupled in what Americans call "Elephant style", awaiting the pre-dawn departure of Mondays-only #4031 from Speonk NY on 18th August 1985. This is not a push-pull and includes Parlor or first class cars for the benefit of those wealthy individuals who have spent the weekend in the billionaire's playground of the Hamptons and are returning to the city for the working week.



MY NEXT OVERSEAS ADVENTURE

Chris Waite



Lallaguda

Chris's adventures continue starting with a visit to the famed Darjeeling-Himalaya Railway.

Tuesday 1st January 1980

The *Darjeeling Mail* arrived on time and the stock for North East Frontier Railway's 1D, the 07:10 to Darjeeling, was waiting, but there was no sign of a locomotive. Eventually, 'B' class 0-4-2T No.783, built by Sharp, Stewart & Co. in 1899, was attached and we departed about an hour late.

This was one of 30 such locos built between 1889 and 1925. Sharp Stewart built the first nine. Of the others, three came from Baldwin in the USA, three were built locally at Tindharia and the rest from North British.

Sister loco No.800 (NB/1925) soon appeared with 3D, the second (and last) train of the day, which would now be only about 30 minutes behind.

On the journey, No.782 passed in the opposite direction with an engineers' train and was soon followed by 791 on 4D, the first downhill train. Two more B class were at Tindharia and three at Kurseong.

There were several zig-zags where the train stopped in a siding then reversed into another before continuing. This meant it was often possible to jump off, run ahead of the train, take a photo and jump on again. In addition, at Kurseong, we arranged with the crew that we'd go ahead in order to photograph the street running and that they would slow down to let us on again. We succeeded, but their idea of slowing down and ours were not quite the same - it was a close thing!

It was already dark by the time we reached Darjeeling. I had hoped we'd be heading for the renowned 'Windamere Hotel', but I was outvoted on this by my companions on grounds of

Northeast Frontier Railway 2' gauge B 0-4-2ST No.783 (Sharp Stewart 4562/99) with Train 1D, the 07:10 New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling at Chunbhati on 1st January 1980.

All photographs by the author.

cost. Needless to say, on arrival, there was no shortage of hotel touts and two of us, me included, went to inspect one of the hotels, leaving the rest of the group at the station looking after bags.

Superficially, the hotel seemed OK, but when we got back our group was nowhere to be seen. When we eventually found them, they said they'd been told to move by an 'official' as the second train was due. It was then I realised that my zoom lens, purchased just before we left the UK, had vanished. No doubt by this time it was being advertised on the black market by the 'official'.

In some ways worse was to come, for we later realised that the bedsheets in our chosen hotel were damp. The proprietor said they could be dried with electric fires, but when these were plugged in, the fuses blew – the joys of travel!

Wednesday 2nd January

We had been invited to rise early to take a jeep in order to see sunrise over Kangchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world, but I declined as it was foggy outside. Those who did go reported that the clouds parted for just a few seconds, so they did see Kangchenjunga, but not for long enough to obtain a photo.

It was still foggy in Darjeeling when we got back to the station to retrace our steps to New Jalpaiguri by 2D, this time behind No.788 (NB/1913) as far as Kurseong, where 788 was replaced by 790 (NB/1914). We duly reached New Jalpaiguri in good time, for our onward connection on 43Dn, back to Sealdah.

The Marlow Donkey

NFR 2' gauge B 0-4-2ST No.782 (Sharp Stewart 4562/99) on a down-hill works train passing No.783 (Sharp Stewart 4562/99) with Train ID, the 07:10 New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling on First Reverse below Tindharia on 1st January 1980.



NFR 2' gauge B 0-4-2ST No.783 blasts through the streets of Kurseong – note the ubiquitous Hindustan Ambassador (based on the mid-1950s Morris Oxford) and the passenger clinging to the outside of the train.

The driver opened the regulator fully - hence the use of 'blasts'. Chris had some difficulty trying to get back on!

Thursday 3rd January

We woke to find that the train was more than an hour late, which meant we'd miss our planned train to Ranaghat, which would have used an HPS 4-6-0 for part of the journey. Near Dum Dum, about 7km from Sealdah, we did, however, notice two elderly 0-6-0s, one of class CH, the other an SGC2. Just nine CHs were built, all by Hanomag in 1902, while there were 136 SGC2s built between 1905 and 1915, mostly by Vulcan Foundry and North British, with a few from Kerr Stuart and Armstrong Whitworth.

On arrival at Sealdah, the taxi driver who had taken us from Howrah to Sealdah on New Year's Eve was waiting for us - perhaps we'd been too generous on the previous journey. Anyway, we quickly crossed town to Howrah and decided to fit in one of the depot visits we'd missed three days earlier. First, though, it was Howrah station.

Howrah station is a little like London Victoria in that it is two stations in one, with one side used by the SER and the other by the ER. The SER's trains were exclusively hauled by modern traction, which, much to my regret nowadays, I failed to record
www.mdrs.org.uk

or photograph, though a 2-8-0 of Class HSM, built by Armstrong Whitworth in 1925, was a station pilot. On the ER, expresses used modern traction and locals were emus, but some secondary services were hauled by WP 4-6-2s or WG 2-8-2s.

After an hour or so at the station, it was time to visit the ER broad gauge Howrah depot. It was arranged that our transport there would be tender-first WG 9319 (Chittaranjan/56) which had earlier brought 336Dn from Rampur Hat and was going for servicing. The footplate on a WG is very commodious, and it needed to be, because in addition to the 3 crew and the 7 of us, another 9 members of staff climbed aboard - 19 people in all!

I recorded 23 locos on shed - 12 WPs, including 1 WP/P, 3 WGs, 3 XCs (2 in steam), 2 WT 2-8-4Ts, also in steam, and, out of use, an SGC3 0-6-0 and 2 HGS 2-8-0s.

The WT was a class of 30 large, modern locomotives, all built at Chittaranjan from 1959 to 1967. In contrast, the SGC3 was one of about 700 SG 0-6-0s built between 1906 and 1925, mainly by Vulcan Foundry and North British, with a few from Armstrong Whitworth, Hawthorn Leslie and Kerr Stuart. The later ones

were built with superheaters and were classed 'SGS' while other were converted to superheating and became SGC.

A contemporary of the SG/SGS, many of the 500 or so HG/HGS 2-8-0s were built by VF and NB, but around 100 came from Kitson and 30 from Beardmore.

We returned to Howrah station aboard WP/1 No.7653 (Chittaranjan/1965), which later made a very smoky exit with 345Up, bound for Barharwa. After a good afternoon's photography, we boarded the South Eastern Railway's 2 Down *Bombay Mail*, which departed at 20:40 and which we would take as far as Nagpur.

Friday 4th January

En route, at Raipur we photographed one of the almost 200 broad gauge IRS XD 2-8-2s. XD's were mainly built by North British and Vulcan Foundry between 1928 and 1946, apart from ten by Armstrong Whitworth in 1929 and a further ten by Škoda in 1938. Later, while making a slow approach to Gondia, we were overtaken by ZE 2-8-2 No.41 (Krauss Maffei/1954) with the Jabalpur to Gondia *Somnapura Express* on the parallel 2' 6"

gauge track. Judging by the smiles and the frequent use of the whistle, the enthusiastic crew seemed very pleased to be going faster than the *Bombay Mail*.

Seventy-one ZEs were built. The first two by Naysmith Wilson in 1928, followed by 14 from Hanomag in 1931, 12 by Corpet Louvet in 1950, 25 by Krauss Maffei from 1952 to 1954 and 10 by Kawasaki, also in 1954.

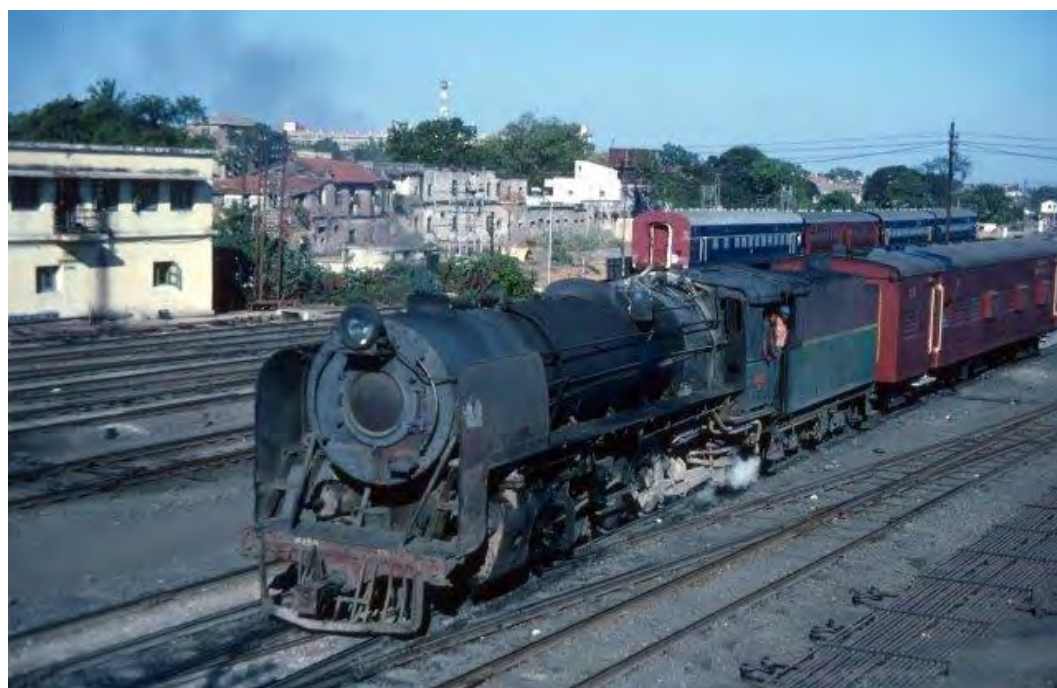
The purpose of the trip to Nagpur (due at 16:05) was to see the 2'6" gauge locomotives of classes BC, BS and CC. There were 17 BC and 27 of the very similar BS 2-8-2s, mainly built by North British between 1908 and 1920, but 12 BS came from Naysmith Wilson, seven in 1915 and five in 1922, while the last four BS were Yorkshire Engine products of 1924. The 23 CC 4-6-2s all came from North British between 1906 and 1908. We saw locos of all three classes, but as the day wore on, the weather had become increasingly gloomy. I was using Kodachrome, so the photographic results were not what I'd hoped for.

That evening we left Nagpur at 21:40 aboard Central Railway's 124 Up *Andhra Pradesh Express*, for an overnight journey to Secunderabad.



A general shed scene at Lallaguda in Secunderabad with, straight ahead, the metre gauge tracks containing various YP 4-6-2s and YG 2-8-2s and, on the right, the broad gauge tracks with two withdrawn XD 2-8-2s either side of an XB 4-6-2. Not a good photo, but this the only dual gauge shed visited

Metre gauge YG 2-8-2s were built all over the world – No.4155, seen shunting at Secunderabad, came from the Lenin-Werke in a place better known for beer - Pilsen, Czechoslovakia in 1956



Saturday 5th January

After arrival at Secunderabad, we presented ourselves at the stationmaster's office as we had been granted permission to visit the South Central Railway locomotive works. We gathered that the shed and works were some distance from the station and, after a mercifully short 'tea ceremony' we were soon aboard the footplate of a metre gauge YP 4-6-2, which was due to depart for the shed. This short journey was enlivened by the crew's desire to get there before a WG 2-8-2 which was hauling a single parcels van on a parallel broad gauge track.

On arrival at the shed, we were much amused by the slogan above the shed entrance/exit: 'Did I justify my wages for today?' - hmm.

The shed was host to both mg and bg locos. On the metre gauge side were 11 YPs, 15 YGs, 1 YD 2-8-2 and all 12 YM 2-6-4Ts, built by Nippon (Japan) in 1956 and which had recently been displaced from service on the local suburban services. On the broad gauge were 5 WPs, 21 WGs, 7 XDs in steam and 7 recently retired XB 4-6-2s that were ostensibly stored. The XB was a handsome IRS design from the late 1920s, yet again built by Vulcan Foundry and North British, but which had needed numerous modifications to improve poor riding. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that they were to see no further use.

Next was the much anticipated works visit, but to make up for the short tea ceremony at the station, here it was to last the best part of an hour as the CME, a friend of Mr Kapur in London, had chosen to give us his time and it would have been rude to make excuses.

In the end, the works was perhaps disappointing, as there were just eight locos under repair, all of class WG.

When it was time to leave, we enquired whether there would be any loco heading for the station, but evidently this was unlikely, it being Saturday lunchtime. We learnt, however, that one of the local bus routes started from just outside, so we paid our fare, the

equivalent of about ½p, and travelled back with the locals, who were intrigued by our presence. They were, however, kind enough to give up seats for us.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent watching the metre gauge station pilot, another YD 2-8-2 and the frequent local metre gauge services, hauled by a mixture of YPs and YGs. At 16:35 we left aboard broad gauge 54 Down to Kazipet, changing there onto 16 Up *Grand Trunk Express*, behind WDM2 No.17391 (DLW/1973) overnight to Madras Central. While at Kazipet, we visited the nearby shed, which held 11 WPs and 9 WGs.

Sunday 6th January

Following arrival at Madras, we took the first available Southern Railway emu to Basin Bridge, about 3km away, so as to visit the depot. There were 25 steam locos on shed – 8WP, 2WG, 4XD and 11 HPS2. We were to stay there most of the morning and at the adjacent station until early evening. The highlight came just before sunset when XD 22430 (North British/1927) stormed past with a rake of empty coaching stock.

That evening, we were booked on 5 Down *Nilagiri Express*, the 21:00 to Mettupalaiyam, where we'd intended to take the narrow gauge line to Ootacamund, referred to by all as 'Ooty'. The air-conditioned coach on this train was one of the few remaining pre-1955 first class broad gauge coaches still in service – they were all phased out within a year or two of our trip. Rather as BR abolished 2nd class in 1956, Indian Railways abolished 1st class in 1955 and reclassified the old 2nd class as 1st. This coach was built as 1st class with a locally made wooden body on a 1947 Gloucester RC&W underframe and consisted of a central lounge, with settees that converted to beds and 2 2-berth 'coupés' at either end. As with other ACC coaches, it came with an attendant. We were the only ACC passengers that night, so had the entire coach to ourselves. It was exceptionally comfortable, though probably not very crashworthy.



SR broad gauge WPI 4-6-2 No.7100 (Chittaranjan, 1963) with Train 311 the Jolarpettai Express, 17:25 Madras Central to Jolarpettai, approaching Basin Bridge on 6th January 1980.

Primitive coaling of SR broad gauge HPS/2 4-6-0 No. 24384 (Vulcan Foundry, 1950) at Basin Bridge depot, Madras on 6th January 1980. WP 4-6-2 No.7612 (Canadian Loco Co., 1956) is on the left.



Glinting in the early morning sun is metre gauge station pilot YP 4-6-2 No.2704 (Tata, 1966) at Coimbatore on 7th January 1980.

With the Nilgiri Hills in the background, broad gauge pilot at Coimbatore on 7th January was AWC 2-8-0 No.22615 (Baldwin, 1944) - essentially a 5'6" gauge USATC S160.



Monday 7th January

During the journey, we learned that the Ooty line had suffered a washout with no service and decided we would alight early at Coimbatore, which had both broad and metre gauge tracks. We arrived shortly after 06:00 and soon noticed AWC 2-8-0 (Baldwin/1944), one of sixty broad gauge S160s, acting as pilot, and a super-clean YP 4-6-2 doing a similar job on the metre gauge. While taking a photo of the AWC we became aware of what looked like a volcano erupting from the metre gauge platform. This proved to be equally clean YP No.2699 (Tata/1966) departing with 149 Down, the 07:00 to Tuticorin.

An hour or so later we took the short trip to Podanur on 511 Down behind WP No.7500 (Montreal/1949). Here we got our first photo of a WL 4-6-2, No.15074 (Chittaranjan/1968) before returning to Coimbatore on 752 Up, a late running metre gauge local from Pollachi, hauled by YP No.2034 (Krauss Maffei 1952).

That afternoon the group split. Some went to Mettupalaiyam on a local train behind WP No.7477 and were rewarded on arrival with a view of one of the Swiss-built X class 0-8-2RTs, though not in steam, while others, me included, took the diesel-hauled 76 Up 'Kovli Express' to Erode arriving there in time for an afternoon shed visit. The shed was a full-roundhouse containing ten WP, ten WG, five WL, four AWC plus two of the large XE/1 2-8-2s, built by Vulcan Foundry in 1945 to a 1920s IRS design. The station pilot at Erode was another of the AWC 2-8-0s.

The group reunited that evening in time for an overnight journey on 25 Down *Island Express* to Bangalore City.

Tuesday 8th January

We deliberately built in a free day in Bangalore, at the time possibly the most pleasant city in India, to unwind. We did, however, visit Cantonment station (2 XD, 1 WG and 1 WT), then City station and shed (3 XD, 1 WG, 12 YP, 4 YG, 1 YL and 1 WD).

Wednesday 9th January

Having mainly travelled on the broad gauge up to this point, the next two days would involve metre gauge travel. This was, however, to prove to be a very long and rather disappointing day.

We had requested a visit to the Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Company's plant at Bhadravati, which had various metre and narrow gauge industrial locos. To get there, it was an early start aboard 203 Up, the 06:55 *Mahalaxmi Express*, which we took as far as Birur and which ran 25 minutes late throughout. Fortunately, we were still in time for a photo of YD No.30241 and for our connection onto 296 Up, the 11:30 to Shimoga Town, hauled by YP No.2057 (Krauss Maffei 1952), which would take us to Bhadravati.

We soon found the steel company site, but we were not expected. A telephone call was made to the duty manager, who agreed to see us. Unfortunately, it was lunchtime and the outcome was we spent the best part of three hours sitting in his office.

Eventually he decided he had authority to let us visit the depot, but couldn't allow photographs to be taken.

In all we saw eleven locos, four metre gauge - an Andrew Barclay 1951-built 0-6-0T, two Orenstein & Koppel 0-8-0Ts from the 1930s and an ex-Southern Railway FM 0-6-0 built in the 1880s, plus seven narrow gauge - six 2-8-2s, three by Kerr Stuart in 1922, three by Bagnall in the 1950s and a plinthed 1919 Baldwin 2-6-4T.

We had a long wait for train 1121 Down back to Birur at 18:17 during which time we became something of a novelty, judging by the vast number of locals who had come to watch our every movement. What they thought of our rendition of 'The Banana Boat Song' can only be imagined.

On arrival at Birur, we had hoped to take 218 Down to Arsikere and join 207 Up *Karnataka Express* there, but 218 Down was delayed and so we had to wait for 207 at Birur for over 4 hours, finally boarding at 01:30 for a 6-hour journey to Hubli!



2704 was not the only 'supershine' YP at Coimbatore, sister loco 2699, (also Tata, 1966) departs Coimbatore with Train 149, the 07:00 to Tuticorin, on 7th January 1980.

Slightly more modern coaling than at Basin Bridge - a steam crane being used at Hubli for metre gauge YD 2-8-2 No.30293 (Ajmer, 1932). YDs continued in use in nearby Goa until 1992 and in Burma until 2008.



A view from the train near Londa of metre gauge YP 4-6-2 No.2685 (Tata, 1966) with Train 201 Miraj Mail, the previous day's 21:30 Bangalore City to Miraj. The mail coach is the 2nd vehicle in the train, painted in 'Royal Mail' red.

Thursday 10th January

Hubli was a major metre gauge junction served by Southern Railway trains to/from the south and South Central Railway trains in other directions. It was also the site of a large shed and workshop. We did not have permission (or time) to visit the works, but the shed was busy with 13 YP, 17 YG, 3YD and 5 YB 4-6-2s.

This was our first encounter with YBs, another IRS design, and seemingly one of the better ones. 139 were built for India and 50 for Burma (Myanmar). The first was built by Naysmith Wilson in 1928 and another 30 followed, but 5 other builders became involved: Vulcan Foundry built 73, including all 50 for Burma, RS/RSH 32, Škoda 9, Schwartzkopff 20 and Ajmer 20.

Soon, we were on our way again, this time to Miraj on 201 Up *Bangalore Mail*, which, despite the impressive title, was an all-stations service, hauled on this occasion by YP 2685 (Tata/1966).

At Londa, we noted YD No.517. This was one of a batch of 5 built by AEG (!) in 1931 for the Madras & Southern Mahratta Railway. Four of these, including 517, were later transferred to the West of India Portuguese Railway. When Indian Railways were formed, ex-WIPR locos were, for some reason, not re-numbered into the All-India system.

We arrived at Miraj at 21:11, giving us just 90 minutes there before departing on Central Railway's bg 304 Up *Mahalaxmi Express* to Bombay, a train which had started its journey at Kolhapur.

Friday 11th January

When we woke, the first locos we noticed were a few AWD/CWDs at Kalyan, followed by some elderly WCG1 electrics, twenty of which were built in 1928-9, ten by SLM at Winterthur, Switzerland and ten by Vulcan Foundry. We realised, though, that our train was around 2 hours late. We had intended to stay on 304 Up to Bombay Victoria Terminus, known to all as 'VT', and then take a taxi across the city to Bombay Central. The late running meant, however, that we needed to alight at Dadar, a junction served by trains to both VT and Central, in principle rather like Clapham Junction, but in practice even more bustling, and continue from there on a suburban emu to Central. We were perhaps lucky that the worst of the morning peak was over, but one of our party suffered a back injury as a result of trying to cram onto an already crowded train with a backpack.

Despite the injury, we made our connection and travelled on the broad gauge 10:50 25 Down *A-C Express* to Vadodara (formerly Baroda), crossing the boundary between the Central and Western Railways en route. Arrival at Vadodara was 15 minutes later than the scheduled 16:56 and, as darkness was approaching and we had no hotel booked, we abandoned the railway till the next morning.

To be continued...