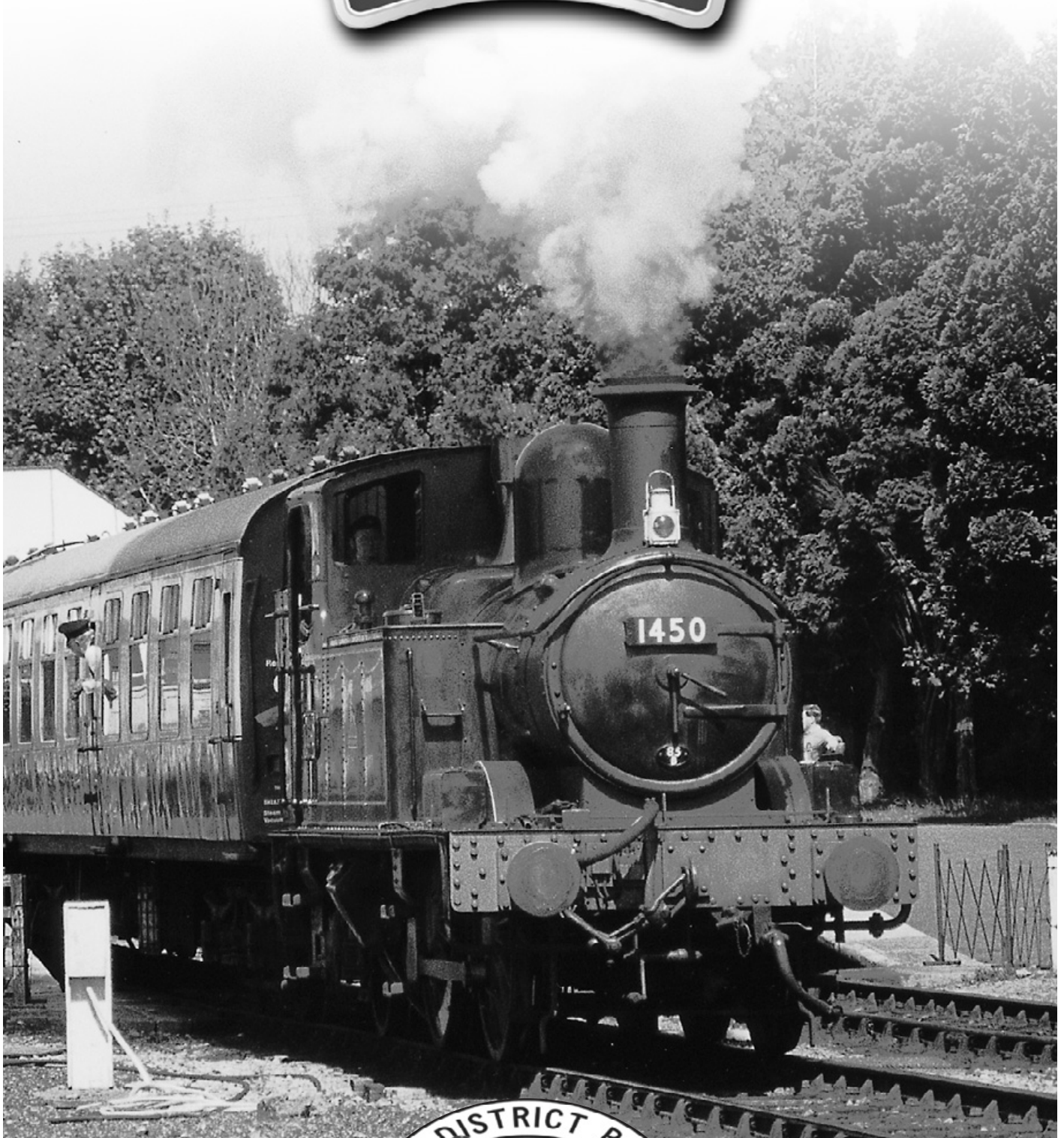


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

95

March 2001



Contents:

Drakensburg

High Speed Trains

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CONTENTS	page
TIMETABLE	2
WHAT'S ON	3
THE 'DRAKENSBURG' SOUTH AFRICAN STEAM SAFARI	4
HIGH SPEED TRAINS IN THE SUMMER OF 2000	6
SOME NORTH AMERICAN NARROW GAUGE	7
STANDARD GAUGE WEST OF DENVER	8
25 & 15 YEARS AGO	11

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH.

At Toddington station on the Gloucester & Warwickshire Railway, former Marlow branch loco 0-4-2T 1450 gets under way with the 13:30 train to Gotherington, 21 August 1999, Tim Edmonds

Please note that caption for the following in Edition 94 should have been dated 1999 and not 2000

*At the end of the long curve round the coast from Crag Hall, 56103 approaches Brotton with empty steel bogies from Skinningrove to Lackenby. Tim Edmonds
- 22 July 1999*

Latest Copy Date for next issue of The Marlow Donkey 10th MAY 2001

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TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held at: Royal British Legion, Station Approach, Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

2001

Thursday 19 April	STEAM ON THE MET	David Sexton
Thursday 17 May	GWR RAIL MOTOR PROJECT	Mr Timms
Thursday 21 June	PRE WAR COLOUR SLIDES	Chris Youett
Thursday 19 July	RAILWAYS OF THE CHILTERN	Roger Bowen
August	No meeting	
Thursday 20 September	TBA	
Thursday 18 October	INDIAN STEAM	Dr Brandham
Thursday 15 November	AMERICAN RAIL TOUR	Mike Walker
Thursday 20 december	CHRISTMAS GATHERING	

DAY TRIPS

Sunday 1 July	CRICH TRAMWAY MUSEUM	By Coach
Coach cost (provisional)	Entrance fee: Adult £5.90, Senior £5.20, Child £2.80	
Adult £12.50 Child £8.50		

WEEKEND TRIP

April 2002	BAYE DE SOMME	By car
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Please: NO TALKING DURING PRESENTATIONS

Please note: The above programme is subject to change



At Toddington station on the Gloucester & Warwickshire Railway, former Marlow branch loco 0-4-2T 1450 gets under way with the 13.30 train to Gotherington

21 August 1999

Tim Edmonds

WHAT'S ON

24/3/01 - 25/3/01 : 1960s Gala

Great Central Railway

25/3/01 : Mothers Day

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway

30/3/01 - 1/4/01 : Silver Jubilee Steam Gala

West Somerset Railway

Mark the 25th anniversary of train operation on the WSR and relive the days of holiday trains in the West Country. An intensive service of steam trains, including guest locomotives: B1 61264, 6024 King Edward I, 5029 Nunney Castle, 4936 Kinlet Hall and many others.

7/4/01 - 8/4/01 : War on the Line

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Travel back to 1940's occupied France! A dramatic and exciting re-enactment where you steam from occupied Tenterden to Allied-Controlled Bodiam.

13/4/01 - 16/4/01 : Easter Steamings

Didcot Railway Centre

Special events on Sunday & Monday: Easter Egg Hunt, Travelling Post Office demonstration, Radstock signalbox visits and vintage diesel railcar.

13/4/01 - 16/4/01 : Bank Holiday Steam Up

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Four or more engines will be in action working a frequent service of passenger trains, including engines and carriages dating from Victorian times to the 1960's to take you for a journey back in time.

27/4/01 - 29/4/01 : Diesel Gala

Severn Valley Railway

An intensive service of trains using some of our historic diesel locomotives. (on April 27, all trains will be diesel-hauled).

13/05/01 : Historic Fire Engine Rally

Kew Bridge Steam Museum

23/06/01 - 24/06/01 : Tower Open Days

Kew Bridge Steam Museum

Waterworks Railway also operating on this weekend.

Didcot SPECIAL EVENTS

Saturday 5- Monday 7 May:

Welsh Tank Engine Gala

Saturday 26 - Monday 28 May:

Meccano Hornby Trains Centenary



Three ex-class 121 Sandite units, including maroon-liveried example, in Aylesbury depot yard. Left a Turbo unit moves into the station to form a Marylebone via High Wycombe service.

26 April 2000 Tim Edmonds

THE 'DRAKENSBERG' SOUTH AFRICAN STEAM SAFARI

August 2000



*'Princess Alice' Garratt No. 2351 (Class GL) at Voorbaai.
September 2000*

There she stood, simmering gently in the midmorning sunshine and looking pleased to see me. What I had come over 6000 miles to see, touch, climb on and photograph, was standing right in front of me. Being lucky enough to be born in GWR/SR territory I had never seen such locomotives working the LNER and the LMS. In recent years I had travelled to Wales only to find their capture was locked away in a shed. 18 months ago in Sri Lanka I had seen a rusting hulk of one but it was never likely to be operational again.

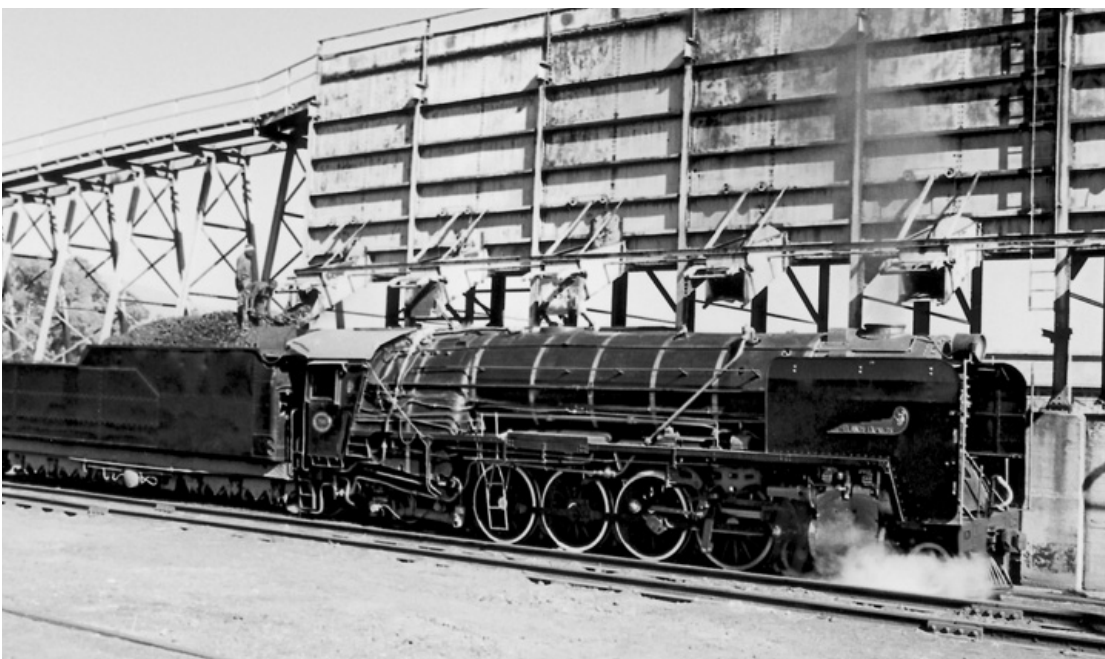
By now you will not have failed to appreciate that my quest and reward was a Garratt! There was that infamous boiler precariously balanced (so it seemed) between two strange powered wheel arrangements. A unique tender device at each end, the whole looking like a committee-designed antique engine and where the draughtsman had mixed up the drawings of at least two different locos or had simply become carried away with

excitement.

But the Garratt was exactly what I expected, both in style and in performance. And I was to see dozens of these mythical creatures over the next two weeks. Classes 14A, GB and 26 GCA (2-6-2+2-6-2), Classes 16A (2-8-2+2-8-2), GF (4-6-2+2-6-4), GO, GL, GEA, GMAM (4-8-2+2-8-4). Fortunately many working, some resting, others out of service, yet more in desperate need of attention, even in one case only a boiler remaining! Whilst I had seen several (GF 2401, GMAM 4070 and GO 2575) in store at Dal Josafat shed the previous day, what I now saw at Voorbaai was GL No. 2351, Princess Alice. She was coaled up and waiting to take our train out, together with class 19D 3693. In addition, resting in the shed yard were GEA 4023, GMAM 4122, 4128, 4072, Classes 16a 615 and 14a 508.

Later, GMAM 4128 with class 19B.1412 was to take us on from

Graaff Reinet and over the Lootsberg Pass. A magnificent performance from the front over a difficult and twisting climb, with 1412 banking. More Garratt sightings were made at Bloemfontein Shed including blue nosed 4129 (ex-Zimbabwe?), Pretoria (Capital Park), Whitbank (2 unnumbered wrecks), and a possible G boiler at Waterval Boven. Although I was in paradise with these magnificent beasts, I did come to enjoy the whole steam scene and of which there was a surprising amount to hand. In addition to



*Coaling up at Waterval Boven is Class 15F No. 2985 'Elands Express'
August 2000*



*Class 7A & 7B No's 1007 & 1056
on a mixed train in Montague Pass
September 2000*

tourist/preserved loco stock at George, we even witnessed steam, class 24. 3668 (with tender), shunting timber and mineral wagons. An every day occurrence.

I came to admire, in particular, the classes 25NC (4-8-4) and 15F (4-8-2). Very different engines but the majority of both built by NBL. The 25NC were the kings of the road, being big and powerful, immaculately kept both by Transnet, the state tourist



*'Above' ZASM 230 'Jan Wintervogel' charging the coal
ramp at Waterval Boven
September 2000*



*'The Union Limited' leaving Cape Town behind Class
25NC No. 3407 at Kentemade
September 2000*

railway company, and the several preservation groups. The 'Elands Express' class 15F 2985 and 25NC 3476 were, in my view, the outstanding examples of their respective classes. It was just a pity that although we had booked class 26 No. 3450 'Red Devil' to run, it was out of service due, I believe, to defective tubes. We certainly saw it under repair at Dal Josafat.

So for steam fans, there is a lot to see in South Africa. For the present, a trip to Zimbabwe might be inadvisable but there a further treasury of steam (with Garratts) awaits. Lead me to it! Our RTC tour this year took in Cape Town, the Garden Route to the Wilderness by Knysna, inland to Oudtshoorn, Graaff Reinet and Colesberg, thence Bloemfontein, Kimberley and Pretoria. Finally to Nelspruit and Hoedspruit before a sojourn to the Drakensberg mountains and a game reserve next to the Kruger Park. Return was the reverse to Kimberley then De Aar and Worcester to the Cape. Travel was on the 'Union Limited's full-board luxury train with company locomotives and/or locally preserved engines as mentioned. The first ever run including such a blend. Just a few legs were with diesel or electric, where necessary. Photo opportunities abounded (including chasing by helicopter!) and visits made to sheds/yards en route.

Mike Hyde.

HIGH SPEED TRAINS IN THE SUMMER OF 2000

Keith Brown

Not another HST I hear you say as it screams past your watching vantage point. Boring, yes, I suppose they are, but our rail transport would be in a very sorry state without these go anywhere machines. On a weekday the power cars between them, travel the equivalent of more than four times around the world and in a full week travel over three times the journey from earth to the moon. Not bad considering they are all over eighteen years old and the earliest production power cars are fast approaching their 25th birthdays. Built between Feb. 1976 and August 1982 there were 197 originally but one (43173) has been scrapped due to the Southall tragedy in September 1997. Two are off lease and may not see revenue service again (43011 and 43104) leaving 194 to carry the intensive diagramming that they now perform.

There are many diagrams requiring power cars to exceed 900 miles in a day but ten power cars exceed 1000 miles in the course of one day. The highest mileage diagram (1047 miles), is for GNER's two cars that leave Aberdeen at 0800 and return there at 2306 having been to Kings Cross and back. Running this a very close second is FGW's 0605 departure from Bristol to Paddington. A Paddington to Bristol and back to Paddington is followed by a Paddington to Plymouth and return to Paddington. Completing it's day work is a single journey to

Plymouth arriving at 2248 which accounts for 1032½ miles. The only MML diagram of over 1000 miles is a Saturdays only one with a set leaving Derby at 0505 and travelling to St. Pancras. Two further trips to Sheffield and back to St. Pancras are made and then finally a trip to Leeds makes a total of 1001½ miles in a day for each powercar.

The longest single journey is the Aberdeen to Plymouth via Manchester Piccadilly and Crewe which in each direction is 658½ miles beating by four miles the Dundee to Penzance, which avoids Manchester on its journey down the WCML from Carstairs to Birmingham.

Between the fleet of 194 cars they travel in excess of 811,000 miles in a week or an average of 4180 miles each. Bearing in mind some are out of service due to servicing, repaints etc., the British travelling public would be extremely short of trains if these boring HST's were not with us. The table below does not take into account of any empty stock movements such as Craightinny to Edinburgh Waverley, Leeds to Hull or Bristol to Cheltenham and Hereford etc, etc.

TOC	MILES & CARS REQUIRED BY DAY						FLEET TOTAL	AVERAGES (MILES PER CAR)		
	WEEKDAYS		SATURDAY		SUNDAY			W/DAY	SAT	SUN
FGW	51690	64	43399	66	39137	66	86	601.1	504.6	455.1
GNER	14041	16	15597	16	11621	16	21	668.6	552.3	553.4
MML	20245	26	18212	24	12300	22	31	653.1	587.5	396.8
VWC	3553	4	2708	4	3919	6	6	592.2	451.3	653.2
VXC	32182	42	34646	46	24582	42	50	643.7	692.9	491.7
TOTAL	121711	152	110563	156	91559	152	194	627.4	569.9	472.0

FGW First Great Western.

GNER Great North Eastern Railway.

MML Midland Main Line

VWC Virgin West Coast.

VXC Virgin Cross Country

On a Saturday VXC hire a MML set to operate the 0604 Leeds – Newquay and 1408 return to Leeds.

The respective dates used for the above table was Wednesday 26th, Saturday 29th, & Sunday 30th July.2000

Keith Brown

SOME NORTH AMERICAN NARROW GAUGE

by Mike Hyde

Colorado abounds in stunning scenery, as those who have been there will know. But to railfans the scenery of mountains, cliff edges, river gorges and forested slopes would not be complete without the sight and sounds of a narrow gauge railway. Even their names conjure up excitement and anticipation. So it was when I recently found myself in Chama, NM, the home of the 'Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad'. It runs on 64 miles of what was once a part of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway. It claims to be the finest example of narrow gauge mountain steam railroading in the USA and the highest and the longest! I was certainly impressed and won over as a fan. The line runs to/from Antonito, Colorado, where the C&TSRR created a yard in 1970 whereas the Chama yard has existed since 1881 (current Depot, machine shop and roundhouse erected 1899). The route was formerly used for livestock, lumber, oil, coal plus passengers and mail but is now a tourist line. Having recently gone through a management take-over, the C&T seems to be in good hands, the Friends of the RR, albeit still in its early days. The Chief Engineer kindly showed us around. Much work on overcoming earlier lack of investment and maintenance, as well as overcoming bad or, at least, uncertain press reports needs to be done but the will is there and the local area recognises its dependence on the future success of the C&T.

The line has examples of three classes of 2-8-2 "Mikado" steam locomotives. The first is the K-37 of which only No497 is operational, plus no 492 (494? 495?). Interestingly their boilers

Another high mountain historic enterprise is the Durango & Silverton NG Railroad running between those named places. The line along the Animas River was completed to Silverton in 1882 by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway but in the late 1960's the easterly link from Durango to Antonito was severed leaving the D &S isolated. The railway uses coal fired, steam operated locos of 1923-5 vintage with rolling stock indigenous to the line. An 1880 Parlor Car 'Alomosa' is on hire for discerning customers with open gondola cars for the more hardy types. As well as stopping to put down or pick up hikers en route, the railway can provide accommodation in a Railcamp Boxcar at Cascade Canyon Wye for a 5-day stay in the remote mountains. The single full journey takes 3.1/2 hours and ends street running in the old mining town of Silverton set in a valley bottom and surrounded by spectacular heights of 14,000 feet. Nos 480, 481, 482, 486, 493, 498, 473, and 478 were seen in use or in the yard. No 476 was accompanied by No 42 in the museum at Durango whereas No 315, a class C18 loco, was plinthed in a local park. Once more a fine and fantastic railway with lots to see if more commercial than the C&T. Both are well worth a visit with coach options from the other terminus if a return ride is not required. After our ride, we line-sided where possible.

However, there are more sights than just these two lines. The 'Georgetown Loop' must not be missed for its stupendous climb to Silver Plume utilising the Devil's Gate Bridge. We took it and enjoyed the sight and noise of the low-g geared Shay loco pounding up the tortuous valley route.



*C & TS Rail Baldwin 2-8-2's No's 463 & 497 Departing Chama
September 2000*

were made in 1902 for standard gauge locos but were put onto new narrow gauge frames in 1928/30. Then there is the K-36 class which number most and are 50% of all the class built in 1925. Nos 483, 484, 487, 488 and 489. Finally the 'baby' K-27 class No463 one of only two survivors of 15 built in 1903. An ex USN 47ton diesel No19 built by GE in 1944 is used for switching and light load haulage. A variety of hoppers, gondolas, tank cars and flangers exist in the yard. And not least for this mountain area, 2 rotary snowplows are on hand for winter.

Unfortunately we never made the Cripple Creek & Victor NG Railroad so it will necessitate another visit. However, an examination of the lower station of the 100 year old Pikes Peak Cog Railway in Manitou Springs gives me another reason to return and next time ride to the top at 14,110 feet, if I can take a breath at this altitude. The latter is a real factor in all travels in this area of the Rockies where you are seldom below 5,000 feet and often over 10,000 feet.

A visit to the 14 acre Colorado Railroad Museum was well worth it as 3-foot NG and SG are featured. Quite a stock collection

from a Pikes Peak cog engine (one of 3 we were to see on our travels) to a well turned out pair of 1955. F9 diesel units. My greatest pleasure was the first sight of a 'Galloping Goose', in fact three; Nos 2, 6 and 7, each different and most appealing. Unfortunately, none was in action so a ride is on a future shopping list. Other NG steam locos included RGS 4-6-0 No20, DRGW 2-8-0 No 318, both built for the Florence & Cripple Creek RR (what a great name!), Denver Leadville & Gunnison 2-8-0 No191 ex DSP&P, DRGW 2-8-0 No346 the first of the



*Durango & Silverton No. 481 Baldwin 2-8-2 at Silverton
September 2000*



*Manitou & Pikes Peak Railway No. 5
1893 Baldwin 0-4-2 (out of use) September 2000*

collection of some 50 cars and locomotives, and said to be the oldest operating loco in the Rocky Mountain West. Finally DRGW 2-8-2 No.491 built in 1902 as standard gauge and rebuilt to NG in 1928. Several DRGW passenger cars (plus a Uintah Railway coach) are held together with many freight, box cars and cabooses(?) from the area. The circular track was not operating on the Sunday morning we were there but the museum, model layout and shop were first class.

Standard Gauge requires a separate report, but for now NG lives on in Colorado and the Rockies.

Mike Hyde Sept'00

STANDARD GAUGE WEST OF DENVER

by Mike Hyde

Start with the principal players, I thought, such as SP, UP, ATSF, BN and combinations by merger and take-over. Sprinkle some AMTK on top and there you have it. But dig a little deeper and old timers like D&RG, plus W or S and CS, frequently appear with occasional SFSD, DSPP, or RGJ. Some of the old trackage was NG so should not concern us here; some was converted to SG but most lifted. However, it is worth noting the 'preserved railways' and museums which abound in the area.

Perhaps the most well known of the former would be 'The Grand Canyon Railway' on its 65 mile run across the North Arizona from Williams to one of the seven wonders of the world. Hopefully, the occasional train robbery will not put you off savouring the vintage steam or diesel motive power. The railroad was originally built to transport ore from the Anita mines but ran out of business in 1899. The ATSF took over the line for tourism and extended it to Grand Canyon 2 years later to compete with an expensive 8-hour stagecoach journey from Flagstaff.

Strangely, modern road coaches now do the same but quicker run with worldwide tourists but the line still maintains a daily service. The Santa Fe developed the South Rim, all construction supplies coming in by rail. All water came by rail until 1926 and the line was also used by ranchers to transport stock and to carry lumber. Use declined and the line closed 1969 until 1989 but now is seen



*Grand Canyon No. 4960,
1923 Baldwin 2-8-2
September 2000*



*1955 GP9 Leadville C & S No. 1714
at Leadville, Colorado
September 2000*

forests and features a 680-foot tunnel. These then, are just some of the preserved/tourist lines but there also museums to see.

Two I visited included the Colorado Railroad Museum at Golden (of Coors fame). Here the depot is a replica of an 1880 style depot and houses hundreds of artefacts. Outside there are over 60 NG and SG locos and cars exhibited in 12 acres of ground. My pleasure was 3 versions of the 'Grey Goose', Nos 2,6,7, built from used Buicks, Pierce Arrows and other spare parts, They were used 1931-

51 as inexpensive replacements for steam trains. Their nicknames were inspired by their motion over the tracks and their distinctive horns. The CRM also has well turned out Rio Grande F9-Units Nos 5771 and 5762, CB&Q 4-8-4 No 5629, UP 0-6-0 Switcher No 4455 with Rotary Snowplow, and the only surviving D&RGW standard gauge steam engine, 2-8-0 No 683. Plus one

as an environmental benefit by reducing numbers of private cars (a case argued by the WHR!). On our visit 2-8-0 No.4960 was in charge but with F Unit B Car in support. At this point I do strongly recommend a flight over the canyon to experience the whole 'ditch' and the scale of things.

On this trip few made it to the Canon City & Royal Gorge Railroad. Their 24 mile round trip by F-Unit takes you from the Santa Fe depot at CC through the Arkansas river gorge and over the UP (exD&RGW)'s famed 'Hanging Bridge'. Another time! However, what we did see, but not travel, was the Leadville, Colorado & Southern RR. Leadville at over 10,000 feet is the highest incorporated city in the USA. The 2.1/2-hour return journey from Leadville towards Climax provides spectacular views of Fremont Pass and Mt Elbert, the state's highest peak. It is in the heart of mining territory with workings all about and uses the trackbed of the old Colorado & Southern high line. Steam loco No.361 is plinthed at the station and in the yard were 2 GP9's Nos 1918 and 1714. We also called on the Santa Fe Southern Railway at Santa Fe. Expecting something very grand the station was a disappointment. The line runs through New Mexico's high desert to the town of Lamy on a round trip of 3.1/2 hours utilising GP9s SFS Nos 92 and 93 plus early coaches and a later domed car.



*1974 GP16. SFS No. 93 at Santa Fe with Vista Dome Car
September 2000*

Worth a call next time is the Verde Canyon Railroad and its FP7 Units. The Wilderness Route from Clarkdale, Arizona, one hour south of Flagstaff, to Perkinsville and back provides a 4 hour return railtrip. It follows the Verde River between 2 national

of the remaining Manitou & Pikes Peak Railway SG Cog locomotive No1. (Later we were to see No2 in Colorado Springs and No5 at the M&PPRA all plinthed. More modern Swiss built diesel railcars now travel up the cogs to the 14,110 foot summit). A variety of passenger cars are on show including a GWR (!) Baggage/coach used on the line from Loveland to Eaton and Longmont (was that anywhere near Chippenham?), a 1950-71streamlined coach UP 5442, and 1937 ATSF Super Chief stainless steel sleeping/observation car 'Navajo'. Also worth seeing but not as organised or effective as CRM is the voluntary collection at Pueblo. Here at the Union depot a few former sidings/loops are home to AT&SF 1944 4-8-4 steamer No2912 and a small collection of diesel locos plus coaches/wagons belonging to the PL&RHS Inc. It is hoped to run the Northern Class by 2002 but there is a lot to be done. A new Center will be set up shortly with other historical groups in the 1924 D&RGW freight depot next door. Plans for short runs and possibly a

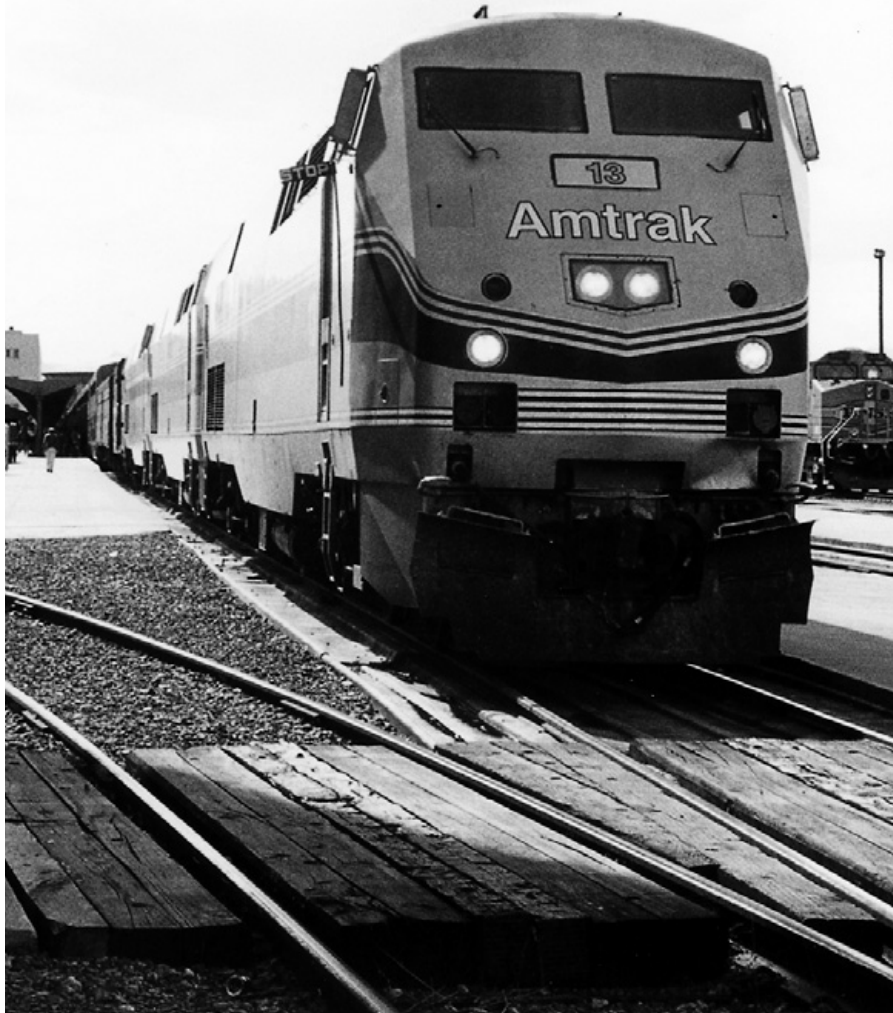


*1974 GP40-2 DRGW No. 3128 at Alamosa
September 2000*

Colorado and Southern 'City of Trinidad' was plinched with an old Pullman and a caboose. Nearby at BNSF control 126 brand new but empty aluminium coal hoppers, in numerical sequence, under the charge of 9961 and 9920 took off. The yard at Pueblo had RG 3155, CB 9602 and RG 3154 in action alongside SP301 UP8176, UP6595, SP200 and UP8102. At Dawkins EMD 9015 joined with LMX 8512 on a mixed freight. There were other sightings, of course.

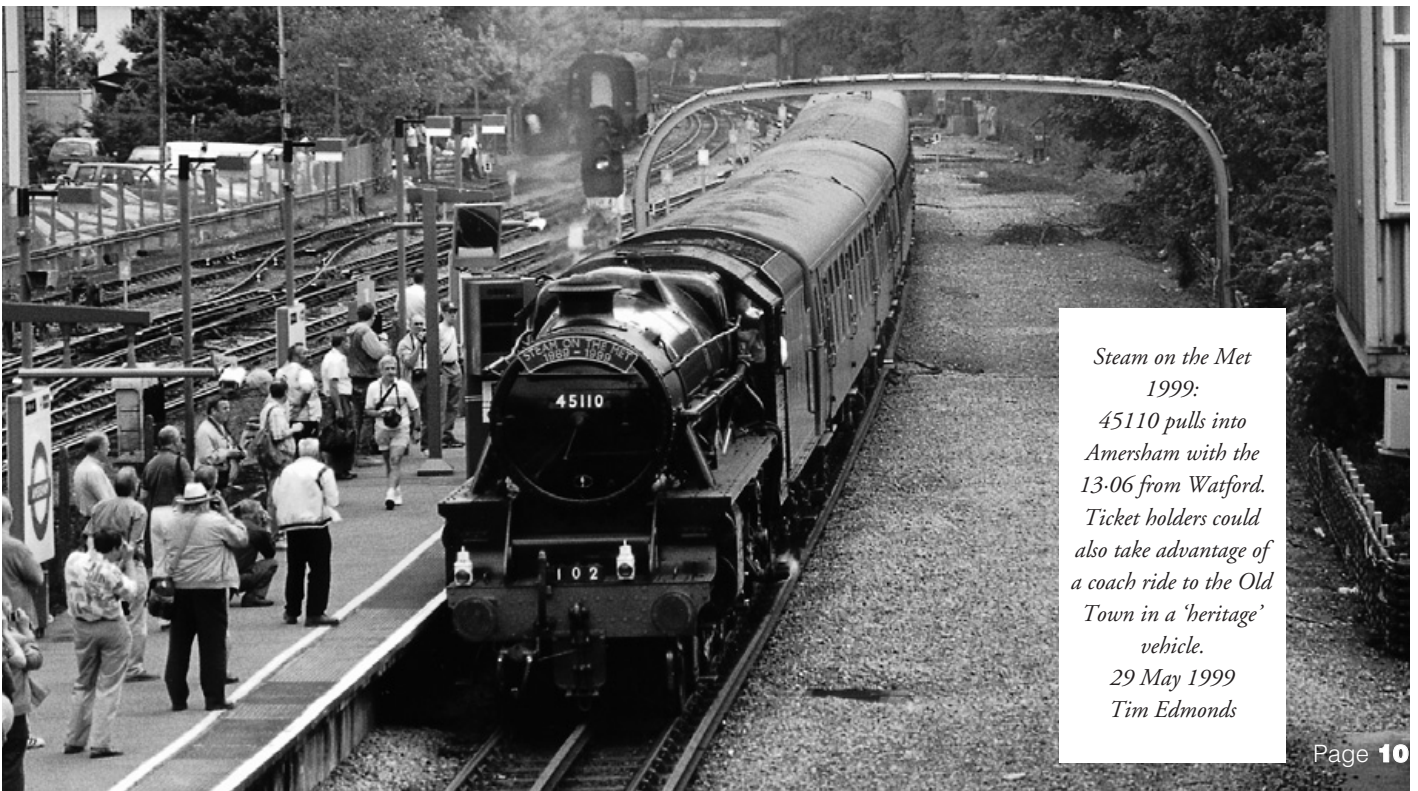
A few hours stay (due to line closure) at Palmer Lake resulted in a visit by SF869 and BNSF 4980 heading north. Then BNSF 4303, SF 6500, SF854 with BNSF 9226 and 8039 on the rear but both detached at the lakeside to return light engine towards Denver. Last but not least, sightings at Denver produced freight and the California Zephyr with Amtrak's Genesis 13, 5, and 44 up front after BNSF 4450 brought the train into the depot. A final glimpse off the Interstate en route to the airport, of Big Boy 4005 with 444, sealed this marvellous and exciting visit to (nearly) all points west of Denver.

Mike Hyde.



permanent rail museum set in a park are in hand.

Naturally our travels included unofficial yard visits and line siding, which often meant leaving the Interstate in a hurry to fine a by-road. For example, Glorieta Pass produced a BNSF/SF lash up -732,4973,4680,7874,9270 and 1080, LMX8357 mid-positioned. The 1919 Rebuilt 34 road Roundhouse (but track removed) in Las Vegas together with the Castaneda Hotel was interesting. Road work south of Watrous prevented a good shot of the SW Chief but between Levy and Colmor we saw a lash up of 4+3+3 hauling BNSF coal hoppers south. At Trinidad 2-8-0



*Steam on the Met
1999:
45110 pulls into
Amersham with the
13-06 from Watford.
Ticket holders could
also take advantage of
a coach ride to the Old
Town in a 'heritage'
vehicle.
29 May 1999
Tim Edmonds*

25 YEARS AGO

... a look at the early months of 1976 On 26 January Birmingham International station was opened to serve the new National Exhibition Centre at Bickenhill, between Hampton-in-Arden and Marston Green on the main line from Euston to Birmingham New Street. First train to call at the new station was the 06.20 EMU from Coventry to New Street.

London was hit by a series of IRA bomb incidents, several of which affected the railways. On 4 March there was an explosion on the empty stock of the 07.49 Sevenoaks - Cannon Street shortly after some 1,200 commuters had left the train and it was being shunted onto a siding near Borough Market Junction. On



Former L&NWR 2-4-0 790 'Hardwicke' at Silverdale with a returning shuttle service from Grange-over-Sands to Carnforth. 9 May 1976.

Wearing his grandfather's top hat, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu formally reopened the first section of the preserved West Somerset Railway, from Minehead to Blue Anchor, on 28 March - five years and three months after BR had closed the line from Taunton. The first train was the 10.27, hauled by Bagnall 0-6-0ST Victor. Starting in April, L&NWR Precedent class 2-4-0 'Hardwicke' (built at Crewe in 1873) had several outings on the main line, based on Carnforth.

This included working a series of shuttles between Carnforth and Grange-over-Sands on 9 May, as well as double-heading with 4472 'Flying Scotsman'.



The overall roof and loco shed have long since disappeared but the station building has survived at the terminus of the Alston branch, as a DMU waits to return to the junction on the soon to be closed branch from Haltwhistle. 21 February 1976.



The death throes of integrated rural transport at Alston, where the bus in the station yard is connecting with the train that has just arrived from Haltwhistle. The branch was less than three months away from closure. 21 February 1976.

15 March a bomb exploded on the 16.34 Metropolitan Line service from Barking near West Ham station, shortly after which the driver was shot dead by a man on the train who was believed to have left the device. The next day there was an explosion in an empty Piccadilly Line train at Wood Green at 21.12, and the following day an unexploded bomb was found on a train at Neasden Depot.

The former NER branch from Haltwhistle to Alston closed completely on 3 May, and with it were closed the magnificently named intermediate stations at Featherstone Park, Coanwood, Lambley and Slaggyford.

All pictures taken by Tim Edmonds.

A glance at 1986 ... was it really 15 years ago?

On 22 January the four Foster Yeoman class 59 GM Co-Co diesel electrics were unloaded at Southampton Docks. Two days later 59001/2/3/4 were towed by 47294 to their newly-built depot at Merehead. On 27 January they travelled to Derby for a series of test runs before returning to Somerset and beginning revenue earning service by 22 February.

After a nine-month restoration programme at the National Railway Museum, on 25 March LNER A4 4-6-2 'Mallard' made its first appearance on BR metals since 1963. After working a special from York to Scarborough, the loco then went to Doncaster Works for repainting. Following a formal opening ceremony by the Prince and Princess of Wales on 1 April, the Piccadilly Line extension to Terminal 4 at Heathrow Airport

opened to fare paying passengers with the new terminal on 12 April.

Several electrification schemes were completed for the inauguration of the new timetables on 12 May. Some electric passenger services began after power was energised on the Southminster branch on 17 March, whilst the juice went on for the Harwich branch on 24 March so that test running could take place. The Queen Mother formally inaugurated the electrified Tonbridge - Hastings line on 6 May in a modernisation scheme that saw the end of the narrow-bodied 'Hastings' DEMUs.

Compiled by Tim Edmonds

All pictures taken by Tim Edmonds.



Less than two months before full electric services were introduced on the Harwich branch, a class 105 DMU calls at Wrabness station with the 10.46 local service from Manningtree to Harwich Town.

15 March 1986

(Right) Running under the wires nine days before the power was switched on for test running, 47543 approaches Wrabness with 'The Day Continental' from Liverpool Street to Parkeston Quay. 15 March 1986.



It is the last month of diesel working on the Tonbridge - Hastings line as a class 202 DEMU passes Bopeep Junction signal box on leaving West St Leonards station for Hastings.

19 April 1986.