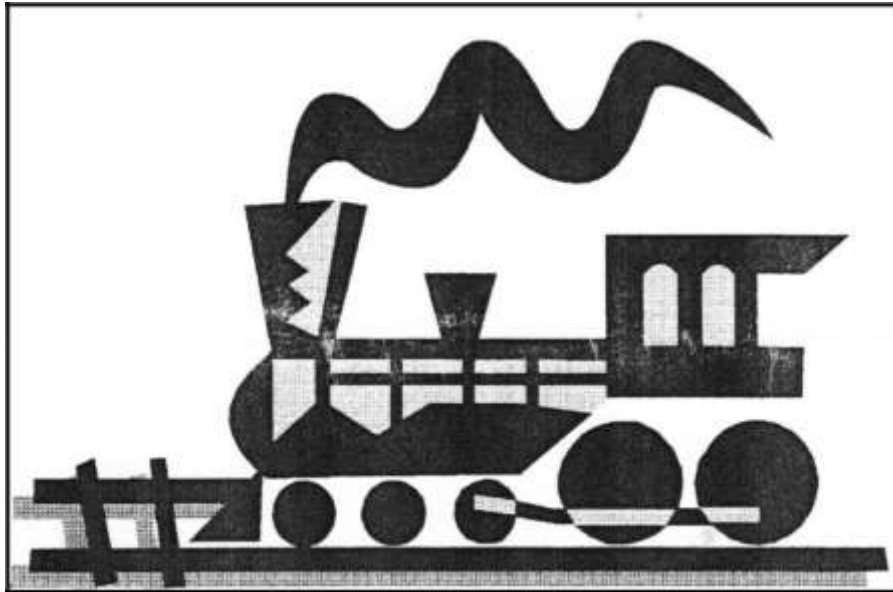


# TRANS PENNINE

## THE MAGAZINE OF THE PENNINE RAILWAY SOCIETY



### **No. 104 Summer 1998**

#### COMMITTEE BRIEFS

##### Meet the Committee

It is the Sandtoft Transport Gathering on Sunday 26 July. Always an interesting event, it will be well attended by members of the Committee. Come along and buy them a drink.

##### Skinner Stadium?

Uncle David Whitlam tells us it is possible that Chesterfield Football Club will move their home from Saltergate to a new ground in Clay Cross. It may be named "Skinner Stadium" after the rent rebels of the 1970's, a family equivalent to the Hooligans from Ireland, or the Krays of London.

##### Le What?

To the British it was meant to have just the right foreign flavour but unfortunately for the Channel Tunnel, the name Le Shuttle left the French giving that familiar shrug of Gallic incomprehension.

Research by Eurotunnel found that few French people understood what Le Shuttle actually meant so, rather than try to explain the brand name, it has been decided to scrap it.

Services will now be known simply as Eurotunnel.

##### Very Late Express

The most delayed train in history, the Heathrow Express is finally running from Paddington. The service. was planned 42 years ago.

Journey time is 15 minutes but the £10 single fare is nearly three times dearer than the Tube. The purpose built trains each seat up to 400 passengers.

### What Owners ?

Long suffering Doncaster Rovers fan David Bladen would like to know who are the "mystery Irish consortium" who are prepared to pour money into the club, now relegated from the league to the Conference.

He says he is looking forward to Visiting Rushden & Diamonds, if only he knew where they played.

### Mobiles 1

The Great Western railway company has added torment to misery. It is making mobile phones available to passengers on its London-Exeter service to let them make calls when their train is running late.

### Mobiles 2

Signal failures could be caused by electromagnetic interference from cell phones and other electronic devices which confuse signalling systems.

The situation is worst on London Underground's Central Line where a new £800m electronic signalling system is regularly being thrown into chaos. "Electronic smog" is a new phenomenon linked to the proliferation of cell phones, laptop computers, pagers and personal stereos. It is caused because every electronic device emits an electromagnetic field.

The danger has been recognised by airlines who ask passengers to switch off electronic devices during take-off and landing. They are already banned in hospitals where they could interfere with life-saving equipment and on garage forecourts where they could ignite petrol.

### Great Rail Slowdown

A study of Victorian railway timetables shows that many of its services were faster than today. Some examples of the slowdown are shown below:-

Nottingham-Liverpool	2hrs 56 mins (1998)	2hrs 55mins (1898)
Portsmouth-Southampton	44mins (1998)	35mins (1898)
Stoke-Stafford	32mins (1998)	28mins (1898)
Victoria-Uckfield	1 hr 42mins (1998)	1 hr 28mins (1948)
Broxbourne-Liverpool St.	38mins (1998)	35mins (1948)
Norwich-Yarmouth	36 mins (1998)	35mins (1978)
Bristol-London	1 hr 40mins (1998)	1 hr 25mins (1978)
London-Glasgow	5hrs 25mins (1998)	5hrs (1978)

### Tilting Trains

Virgin boss Richard Branson has ordered 54 160mph revolutionary tilting Italian Pendolino trains for the West Coast line. They will cut 90 mins off journeys from London to Glasgow, 45 off London to Birmingham and 50 off London to Liverpool. Built in Italy and Birmingham, they will enter service in 2001.

### Train Stopper; Wins Top Union Job

Left-winger Dave Rix, nicknamed Train Stopper has ousted Lew Adams as head of drivers' union ASLEF. He has been a General Election candidate for miners' leader Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party.

Lew Adams was dubbed "The Black Prince" in keeping with the union's tradition of nicknaming its leaders after steam locos.

### Derailment on ECML

On Tuesday 16 June the 17.50 King's Cross-Edinburgh derailed at 100mph near Sandy. Amazingly only 9 people were hurt. Derailment of the last vehicle was caused by a broken wheel adding to concern over the ability of train wheels to withstand long periods at high speeds.

Immediately after the derailment the fleet of 140mph trains were withdrawn for checks. The all-clear was later given by engineers.

### Red Light for Rails Fat Cats

Passenger Transport Authorities plan to stop fat-cat rail bosses from cashing in on the privatisation boom. The PTAs are banding together to block buyouts and takeovers of train operating companies such as the sale generated by seven directors of Great Western Holdings, yielding £16m.

The move will mean the loss of millions of pounds to leading City institutions, which earned massive fees for advising on the sale of Great Western and the subsequent £6.1m buyout of Thames Trains.

The train operators affected by the measures are run by managers who were awarded subsidised franchises by the last government and may now aim to sell them for massive profits. Of the 25 franchises, only Great Western and Thames have been sold on so far, creating overnight millionaires such as former BR booking clerk Brian Scott who saw a £50,000 investment in Great Western turn into £5million.

### Virgin Hitched To Stagecoach

Stagecoach has surprised the rail industry by becoming a partner in Richard Branson's Virgin Rail. The £158m deal will give Stagecoach a 49% stake in the company. The agreement has to be approved by the franchising director and the rail regulator. Stagecoach rail interests already include South West Trains and Porterbrook Leasing. Virgin Rail holds two franchises, CrossCountry and West Coast, until 2012. The long discussed upgrading of the West Coast route is now getting under way with Virgin in a revenue-sharing deal with Railtrack.

### Sinfin Closes

Passenger services on the Derby to Sinfin branch line have been formally withdrawn with the approval of John Swift, the rail regulator.

No trains had run since 1995 when they were replaced by a taxi service, latterly provided by Central Trains for the seven people a day who used the line.

The service ceased on Friday 26 June despite calls for the line to be upgraded to take modern trains. The stations at Sinfin North and Sinfin Central, in the Derby suburbs, have closed. The line remains open to freight.

### End of Edmondson's

Edmondson tickets, which were invented more than 160 years ago, will cease to be valid for journeys across the national network from the end of July. They have not been issued to the public since 1990. The last staff Edmondson's were issued three months ago. They are replaced by credit-card sized tickets.

A few companies may still issue Edmondson-type tickets for journeys entirely on their own services and many preserved railways still issue them. They were named after Thomas Edmondson. a

stationmaster on the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway. He invented the tickets, storage and dating system in 1856.

### East Coast Review

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott has asked the franchising director to report on options for providing extra passenger capacity on the ECML.

Last October GNER asked Mr Prescott to extend its franchise from seven to 15 years so it could justify further investment in rolling stock to meet a passenger boom.

### Pendleton

Pendleton station in Salford, Greater Manchester has been given a reprieve from closure after Salford City Council asked for time to put together a rescue package.

### The Big "N"

Regional Railways North East has adopted a new name and a new look for its trains. Its services now run under the Northern Spirit banner, although the Trans-Pennine Express brand remains for the company's principal trains between the North East and the North West.

A new Trans-Pennine Express livery of burgundy with a large gold "N" is being applied to the service's Class 158s which now have a first class section. A Pacer has been repainted in Northern Spirit local livery of all-over green with a lighter green italic-style full body-height "N" on the side of each car.

Inside, the Pacer has been restyled with high-backed seats replacing the old bus seats. Classes 155 and 156 are also to be painted in two shades of green. Trains operating West Yorkshire PTE services will keep the Metrotrain red and cream livery.

### Luton Airport Parkway

The new £ 12m station at Luton Airport Parkway is unlikely to open before December. Although trackwork and the alteration of signals and electrification equipment have been completed and the platform outlines are in place, work has yet to start on the three-storey station building.

### Scots Freight

Railtrack Scotland has overhauled its main Highland route from Perth to Inverness to take containers up to 8ft 6ins high. Other projects to increase freight traffic include a feasibility study to reopen the Stirling-Alloa route and the completion of work on the Forth Bridge so that it can take trains of up to 2000 tonnes compared with 1400 tonnes now.

### Editor's Notes

Welcome to the Summer 1998 issue of 'Trans Pennine'. (Yes, it's still me!) Those members of a nervous disposition are advised to be very careful when reading the last few pages. Why?

Mrs Skinner's little boy, (that's Robin, not his brother Tim!) has kindly offered to prepare a new section of the magazine, to be known as 'The Back Pages'. I don't wish to steal any of Robin's thunder, so curious readers are directed to the relevant section, where all will be revealed! Suffice it to say, I am very grateful to Robin for his contribution to the preparation of 'Trans Pennine'.

David Bladen

## A Green Engine

by Paul Slater

I arrived at Loughborough station, headquarters of the Great Central Railway, just after eleven o'clock, and joined the fringe of the crowd gathered round a green engine which was standing, gently hissing steam, at the platform. This was the Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust's engine, 4-6-0 no. 1264, and today it was going to haul its first proper train since the completion of its restoration. A long-standing member of the Trust, I had been invited - along with many others - to be present at the ceremony to mark the engine's return to steam and then to ride on its first train.

Speeches were made, but I could not hear them properly, as there was no public address system. I did, however, see a bottle being broken against the engine in the traditional manner, and managed to take two photographs of no. 1264 before I moved away to another part of the platform. While waiting for the engine to collect its train from the yard, I thought back to when I had first joined the group dedicated to its restoration. I cannot now remember exactly when I joined the group, or why; I think it was in the mid-70's. at the same time as I joined the Great Central Railway itself - or rather, its predecessor, the Main Line Steam Trust. The only steam locomotive I had driven and fired, in 1963 while I was a student at Cambridge, was a B1, but, that apart, they were not my favourite engines, and I think I joined the Thompson B1 Locomotive Trust because I saw - or was sent - some of their literature, and the idea of assisting in a long term restoration project and so becoming part of the burgeoning railway preservation movement appealed to me. The restoration of no.1264 proved to be a very long-term project indeed. The locomotive had major deficiencies which at times made it seem that bringing it back to working condition was an impossible dream. I renewed my subscription annually, purchased shares in the locomotive, made donations, and bought raffle tickets. I read the reports in the Trust's journal "Thompson Steam", looked at the dismembered hulk of no. 1264 whenever I visited the Great Central Railway and wondered if I was foolishly wasting my expectations and my money.

In the late 1970's I began writing articles for railway magazines, and "Thompson Steam" was one of the first to print my pieces. Soon I had a new hobby, and my membership of the group restoring no. 1264 took on a new interest. "Thompson Steam" was at first hardly more than a flimsy newsletter, but eventually it became quite a handsome little magazine. I contributed reviews of railway books as well as articles on a variety of railway subjects. "Thompson Steam" gave me a number of successes to report at monthly meetings of the North Lincolnshire Writers Circle, and it was one of the magazines which I lent for displays of the Retford Writers' published work. My first article in "Thompson Steam" recounted a long train journey I made in Canada during the summer of 1977, and two other substantial pieces which appeared in the magazine were a detailed account of a shed-visiting trip to South Wales with my school railway club back in the all-steam days of 1958, and a description of a ride from Dublin to Belfast to visit the Irish Transport Museum in June 1983.

My final piece in "Thompson Steam" appeared in the early months of 1985, and was a description of a ride on the Isle of Man Steam Railway the previous summer. I had further articles submitted, but the magazine reverted to a newsletter format, and no more of my work was published in it. I continued with my membership of the Trust, and began to contribute a small amount of money by monthly standing order in addition to my other payments. Eventually, the reports from the restoration team began to sound more hopeful, and it seemed that what had once appeared impossible might indeed happen in the not- too-distant future; the major repairs to the engine had been successfully completed, and now there was talk of when the locomotive might actually be steamed.

At last came the final appeal for money, and, not long afterwards, a letter of acknowledgement and a notification that members and shareholders would soon be invited to ride on no.1264's first train. Now, on Good Friday 1997, I watched the engine, gleaming in its bright new apple- green LNER livery, as it backed down into the yard at Loughborough to collect its train. When it had hauled a single guard's van down the Great Central Railway a few weeks earlier, it had been the first time it had moved under its own power for thirty-two years.

No. 1264 brought its train into the station, and a crowd of us got on board. The ride to Leicester North and back was free, but the buffet lunch set out in two of the carriages was not; I paid up cheerfully and was soon enjoying my picnic-type meal as, whistling triumphantly, the green engine hauled us through a countryside which, under a bright sun and cold wind, was itself becoming coloured by the first fresh green of spring.

I watched no.1264 run round its train at Leicester North, finished my lunch, and enjoyed the ride back to Loughborough. The train stopped at Rothley where, I am told, my grandmothers family originated, and Quorn & Woodhouse, the terminus of the line when I first going to the Great Central Railway. I saw the engine run into the yard at Loughborough, then went to my car and drove to Woodthorpe to see no.1264 pass with a second special train. I followed a footpath across the fields to a bridge over the line, once a favourite viewpoint of mine. While I waited for the train, I thought back over the twenty and more years that I have been visiting the Great Central Railway. The early days of railway preservation are themselves historical now, and to recall my first interest and enthusiasm is to remember a considerably younger me.

Soon I heard a whistle from the direction of Loughborough, and then no.1264 came in sight. It looked and sounded very good as it hauled its train up the slight gradient, a cloud of white steam blowing away in the wind. As I watched it pass, I felt pride and satisfaction. The long years of restoration were over. Now a green engine would steam through the Leicestershire countryside, and in due course it might give pleasure to passengers and spectators further afield; there has already been talk of no.1264 working the summer steam trains over the spectacular stretch of line between Fort William and Mallaig.

I watched the train stop at Quorn & Woodhouse and the re-start, and not until the white plume of steam had disappeared did I turn away from the railway and begin walking into the cold wind.

#### The Pennine Quiz No.94

By Ian Shenton

Ian has set a quiz with locomotive names and numbers as the theme.

Answers to the editor by 30 August, please! Offers to set quiz 95 also gratefully received!

- 1) On what date was 60002 named 'High Peak'?
- 2) Which preserved railway has a steam loco named 'Repulse'?
- 3) Which loco carries the unofficial name 'Billy Boy'?
- 4) What is the name of 87006?
- 5) What is the name of Great Orme tram no.7?
- 6) What is the name of 47370?
- 7) Who named 156477?
- 8) What is the name of the loco with works number E2007?
- 9) Who named 43098 'Lady in Red'?
- 10) What was the name of 08629?
- 11) What was the name of 14522?
- 12) What was the number of the loco that carried the name 'Clan Mackinnon'?
- 13) What was the name to be given to D226 but not carried?
- 14) Which loco carried the name 'Lady of Quality'?
- 15) Name 158702
- 16) What did 47831 and 47807 have in common?
- 17) How many BR standard locos were built?
- 18) What is the name of the loco based at Woking for "Thunderbird" duties?
- 19) What was the number of the loco designed by C.W.Paget?
- 20) What was the name of the 4000th loco built at Crewe Works?
- 21) Which loco carried the name 'Lady of Avenel'?
- 22) Which GWR loco carried the name 'Pioneer'?

- 23) Which SR loco carried the name 'Dinard'?
- 24) What class of loco was 'Helmingham Hall'?
- 25) What was the name of LNER loco no.2003?

### Pennine Quiz No.93

#### the answers!

- 1) Raised lip on front of chimney
- 2) Norwich
- 3) Class 34
- 4) 1952
- 5) 2-8-2
- 6) 119, class T9
- 7) Taff Vale
- 8) Calling-on arm permitting a train to pass a stop signal at danger
- 9) The Tower Subway, linking Tower Hill and the south bank of the Thames. (It opened in 1870 as a 2'6" gauge cable-operated line)
- 10) 100
- 11) Coventry
- 12) 'Gatwick Express' class 73/2s
- 13) Class D30 No. 62426
- 14) He was a man with a wooden leg (honest!) employed to ride up and down the first escalators installed in 1911 at Earls Court. The aim was to give the public confidence in the new mode of travel
- 15) Miniature Buffet Car with Trolley
- 16) D1062 Western Legionnaire
- 17) Midland Railway (the question was inadvertently typed as Harrington Viaduct, not Harringworth Viaduct, sorry!)
- 18) Mirlees MB275T and Ruston RK270T
- 19) Garstang and Knott End Railway
- 20) Mechanical
- 21) Desert sand
- 22) Bristol
- 23) County of Lancashire
- 24) Rose Grove
- 25) 1986

Winner overall was Ken King, with Ian Shenton gaining second place and Malcolm Bell in third.

Well done gentlemen.

#### What the Papers say!

*And now for something completely different! The Guardian has been running a series called 'Doing the Sites' about interesting websites to visit. Paul MacInnes has produced this brief guide to railway-related sites.*

#### Strangers on a train

"Prepare yourself for a magic carpet ride into the best-kept secret in the World today," claims Rob Dickinson of Monmouth (<http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/steam/java1997.htm>). Certainly Rob's website is enthusiastic enough, and the pictures of the surrounding scenery are undeniably beautiful, but you wonder how many people are going to take up the offer of riding around the narrow gauge railways of Indonesia this summer.

It is surely just an eerie coincidence that users of the Internet also happen to be devotees of the train, but there is no doubt that there are a lot of sites like Dickinson's on the net. There are thousands of fan sites, dedicated to specific journeys, and hundreds more specialising in the romance of rolling stock.

Even the sites devoted to the more mundane aspects of rail travel have this element to them. UK railways on the net (<http://www.rail.co.uk>) is no exception. Built in association with Railtrack, "UK Railways" does give you everything you need for rail travel around these sceptered isles. The timetable covers all journeys throughout the country and will save you the multiple phone calls you used to need to extract the correct details from BR staff. However, it is possible to be put on electronic hold, thus recreating to some extent those glorious moments of yore.

At the Eurostar site, (<http://www.eurostar.com>) there is not even a hint of inefficiency, and not even much smoke damage in sight. The site contains everything you would expect: timetables, prices, and the obligatory flashy pieces of animation. But while Eurostar can make it possible for trains to dart from every corner of the page, there is still no way of buying tickets on-line.

You can, however, buy rail passes from Eurail (<http://www.eurail.com/>) and there are quite a few to choose from. The roster includes the Bulgarian flexi- pass which, in a perfect world, would be a piece of body-building equipment. Moving a bit further away from home, China Railways (<http://severn.dmu.ac.uk>) asks if you like steam trains - if you do, this is the place to see them. As well as extolling the virtues of the Chinese railway system, this is a practical site too and contains information on how to get around on a network that is becoming ever more popular for British holidaymakers. Harnessing the most information for travellers with a trainspotting zeal hardly seen outside of Guilford, is the European Railway Server (<http://mercurio.iet.unipi.it/home.html>). Guides to different railway networks are written by the enthusiasts who know them best, combined with more than enough timetabling and other sundry information to satisfy the keenest desire for loco-knowledge. The European Railway Stock List by Marco van Uden is my personal favourite. Finally, for those who like the thought of trains but don't particularly want to pay to ride in them, there is an enclave of the net just for you. There are several sites dedicated to train hopping (<http://www.catalog.com/hop/> is one of them) and the lifestyle of the hobo.

Most are concerned with passing on information to other potential hobos, the most notable tit-bit being often the same: "Never jump on a train when its moving". Just how many potential hobos there are with Internet access is questionable; a site far more likely to get a reasonable number of hits is the Dead Train Bums page (<http://www.deadtrainbums.com/>), but that's the Internet for you.

Overheard on the radio : The French tried to get a more efficient organisation to handle World Cup ticket phone lines, but National Rail Enquiries said they were too busy!

*Private Eye continues its acerbic look at rail privatisation in its "Signal Failures" column*

InterCity RIP Performance statistics for the privatised railway reflect how the once famous InterCity system is falling apart.

The latest bulletin from the office of passenger rail franchising (Opraf) shows that in 1997/98 punctuality worsened on every one of the seven former InterCity franchises except the southern half of Virgin West Coast (where punctuality is still worse than in the last year before BR's fragmentation).

All bar the Gatwick Express and Midland Main Line failed to meet even the soft passengers charter target (90 percent of trains to arrive at destinations no more than 10 minutes late; while figures overlook Sundays and one-off timetable changes), let alone passengers' expectations of an express service with high fares.

The only big ex-InterCity franchise to have retained the old branding is Great Western Trains. Sadly, its performance last year was a disgrace to the InterCity concept and the memory of Brunel's Great



Western Railway. Even John O'Brien, spin-doctor general to the passenger train companies, had to admit that GWT's average of 84.7 percent of trains "on time" was unsatisfactory.

The franchisees seem to regard punctuality as an optional element of the overall package and keep finding more pressing things to tackle. Management time is spent on new staff uniforms, train liveries and gimmicks in first class, while the biggest area of concern to passengers, punctuality, is slipping.

GWT is considering a massage service for first class passengers; Great North Eastern Railway frets about uniforms, new bags and negotiating with unions over who has to wear a hat and the vital matter of when to wear the waistcoats that come with their new summer uniforms. Meanwhile, punctuality is down to 87.9 percent - a shameful figure for a wholly modernised route.

Midland Main Line, whose punctuality dropped to 90.2 percent, has devoted management resources to upsetting first class customers by serving free meals only to passengers who have bought a new alternative ticket- which costs the same as first class.

But passengers ain't seen nothing yet. The dumping down of InterCity will enter another dimension when some franchisees take possession of the new trains they have ordered. To save money and keep open their competitive options for the future, GWT, MML and Anglia Railways chose a type of train designed for local services or cash-strapped provincial ones. Passengers accustomed to comfortable InterCity carriages may find themselves assailed for hours on end by noise and vibration from the whopping great engines strapped under the carriage floors.

## Great Western Railways Re-visited

by Martin Hall

In June of this year I had a week's annual leave booked and was wondering how best to fill the days when I had a chance telephone conversation with my close friend Geoff Broadhead. As some of you will know, Geoff is a professional railwayman and it just so happened that he was not rostered to work for the majority of the week I had booked as annual leave.

Following our telephone conversation, plans were drawn which would enable us to make a tour of the following preserved railways, all with a Great Western theme, The Severn Valley Railway, The West Somerset Railway and The Paignton and Dartmouth Railway. The plans were completed by Geoff arranging two nights accommodation at the Forester's Arms in Williton, a short distance from Williton Railway Station on the West Somerset Railway.

Geoff drove the hundred miles from Doncaster to my flat in Edgbaston, Birmingham on the Tuesday and that afternoon we made our way by car to Kidderminster on the Severn Valley Railway. This was familiar territory to us both and myself in particular, as I work on the SVR as a volunteer most weekends.

There was just time for us to pay a visit to Captain Cod's fish bar and enjoy a pint of Bathams in the King and Castle which adjoins the SVR station at Kidderminster, before joining our train, the 14.00 Kidderminster to Bridgnorth. Our locomotive for the round trip was GWR 2-6-0 number 7325. The journey to Bridgnorth took us through the pleasant countryside surrounding the border between Worcestershire and Shropshire, the latter being entered around the midpoint of the journey between Arley and Highley.

Once at Bridgnorth, a wait of about 40 minutes was required whilst 7325 took water and ran around its train and in the meantime, further refreshment in the form of a pint of Hobson's bitter was taken in the Railwayman's Arms on the station. It was soon time to make the trip back to Kidderminster and thence to Birmingham where the delights of Al Mougali's Balti and Tandoori Restaurant were sampled before retiring to my flat for an evening in front of the box with some beers.

The next day saw us leave Birmingham by car and make the two and a half hour journey to Williton. On our arrival there we introduced ourselves to the landlord of the Forrester's Arms before driving on to Minehead. We were somewhat pressed for time if we wanted to make the first train available to us, the 12.10 Minehead to Bishops Lydeard, so a swift visit was made to the local chippy before obtaining day rover tickets and joining the train. Our locomotive was 7820 Dinmore Manor which we took as far as Watchet. We had considered a cross at Williton but as neither of us knew the precise timing of a crossover there and did not feel particularly athletic, the safer option was chosen.

Some twenty minutes later, 4920 Dumbleton Hall eased the 12.20 Bishops Lydeard to Minehead into the station and we boarded the train for the journey back to Minehead. Both Geoff and myself agreed that the condition of the permanent way on the WSR was considerably better than that which we had experienced the previous day, with the trains in both directions running consistently at between 20 - 25 mph. Our journey, the previous day, on SVR metals had been somewhat bedevilled with 5 mph slacks in a number of places.

On arrival at Minehead we had just under an hour to wait before the next train and so we made the short walk across the road from the station to The Head of Steam for a couple of Worthington's and a frame of pool.

Our arrival back at the station was awaited by 4920 Dumbleton Hall and 7828 Odney Manor at the head of the 14.25 Minehead to Bishops Lydeard. This time we made the journey the entire length of the line to Bishops Lydeard, our train hugging the northern coastline before traversing the Quantock Hills. The "Hall" and the "Manor" made easy work of the seven coaches which consisted our train and we arrived at Bishops Lydeard on time, in the rain.

A change of motive power resulted in our having 7820 Dinmore Manor and 7828 Odney Manor on the 16.05 Bishops Lydeard to Minehead the full length of the line, passing the DMU service, which we had successfully managed to avoid, at Williton. Once at Minehead we made the eight or so mile journey by car back to Williton and the Forester's Arms, our base for the next two nights. The pub is located on the Williton to Bridgwater road some 200 yards from Williton Railway Station and comes equipped with a range of Cotleighs ales and an alleged resident ghost. Geoff and myself wasted no time in getting stuck into numerous pints of Cotleighs Tawny Owl and a mixed grill, retiring to our room shortly after 11.00pm.

After a good night's doss, despite the squeaking pub sign which was suspended immediately outside our window, we took breakfast early at 7.30am. Breakfast was not due to be served until 8.30am, but we had to make an early start that morning and the landlord obliged by starting proceedings an hour earlier than usual in order that we could get away. Our objective today was to take in the third GWR railway of the trilogy, The Paignton and Dartmouth Railway.

Following our thirteen or so mile drive to Taunton, the information screens on the station greeted us with the news that our train, the loco hauled 07.12 Wolverhampton' to Plymouth was running some 85 minutes late. This placed us in something of a dilemma. Why was the train so late? Had there been a locomotive failure and if so, was something "big" likely to have been used as a means of rescue. We decided that the wait would not be preferable, firstly because it would throw our schedule for the day into disarray and secondly because it was raining stair-roads and neither of us considered the prospect of a 90 minutes fester at Taunton to be a particularly attractive proposition.

In the end, we took a HST on the Great Western Trains' 06.30 Paddington to Plymouth service along the famous South Devon coast route to Newton Abbot. Along the route the changes from semaphore to colour light signalling were most apparent in the lack of signal boxes which once adorned this part of the world. Exminster box was still there, although apparently bereft of its frame. The box at Teignmouth had gone completely. With the exception of these interventions by modern man, Geoff and I both agreed that in all other respects the line appeared as it must have done a century ago. Further changes in the name of progress were evident at Newton Abbot, the old carriage sheds on the down side of the station were in the process of being demolished and the Up Relief platform had been filled in to accommodate additional car parking space. A further sign of the

times was witnessed by us both as we stood on the Down platforms awaiting the arrival of the branch train to Paignton, the arrival and departure of a two carriage sprinter on a Paddington to Penzance service, operated by Alphasine, I couldn't help but think, "My God! has it really come to this! "

My thoughts were disturbed by the arrival of the branch train, a two carriage sprinter operated by South Wales and West. We made the eight mile journey to Paignton and crossed platforms to the Dartmouth and Paignton Railway. Our train, the 10.30 Paignton to Kingswear, was headed by GWR Prairie Tank locomotive 4555 and in extremely well maintained coaches with a running commentary from a well spoken guard, we made the brief journey down to Kingswear. On our arrival we noticed diesel locomotive 50 002 in Network South East Livery, standing at the bottom of the engine release road as we passed down the ramp to the ferry which would take us across the river to Dartmouth, the home of the naval college and the only GWR station without any track-bed.

A visit to the maritime museum was made before a luncheon interlude of Cornish pasties was taken on the side of the marina. Shortly afterwards we crossed the river by ferry once again and sought the comforts of the Ship Inn above Kingswear station whilst awaiting the departure of the 15.15 Kingswear to Paignton service which was also hauled by 4555.

On arrival at Paignton we spent some time looking at the somewhat forlorn carriage sidings to the south of the station before boarding the train back up the branch to Newton Abbot. This particular journey was disturbed by a large number of school children who boarded the train at Torquay, with apparently one goal in mind, to avoid the "grip". Sadly, for them, their antics were brought to a swift conclusion just as we entered Newton Abbot station. As we left the train, we could hear their entreaties to the TTI who had collared them and one small voice was heard to enquire "Do you accept Graeme Le-Saux?" whilst offering the TTI a football swap card ..... Desperate!

Our journey back to Taunton was behind 47 807 on the 15.55 Plymouth to Manchester Piccadilly. On the latter part of the journey we spent time identifying locations which occupied somewhat infamous places in railway history, the site of Norton Fitzwarren Station, where the accident of 4 November 1940 occurred and, between Silk Mill Crossing and Taunton Station, the location where the Penzance to Paddington sleeper train, which caught fire in the early hours of 6 July 1978, came to a stand.

After watching the train pull away from Taunton on its journey north, we returned to the car and drove back to Williton for a further night at the Forrester's Arms. The evening, spent consuming the landlord's excellent ales, ensured yet another sound night's sleep.

During the three days which had elapsed, we had travelled exclusively on former GWR metals and, with the exception of our use of the National Rail Network, had been hauled exclusively by GWR locomotives. Truly a Great Week of Railways !

## Rail Ale 5

### An East Anglian Update

by David Bladen

Bit of a short one this time, I'm afraid! Editorial wanderings have been curtailed of late, however, I did manage to make my annual pilgrimage to the Airshow at the American airbase at Mildenhall in Suffolk. Regular readers of this column may remember that last year's expedition, which formed the basis of an earlier 'Rail Ale' article, was not without incident in the transport department! Happily, there were no such problems this year, but the Airshow itself was a disappointment. The weather was poor which curtailed the flying display, and there were few interesting aeroplanes to be seen on the ground. What made matters worse was the absence of barriers around many of the aircraft in the static line-up. This made photography rather awkward and led to the reappearance of a phenomenon known as the "intake Spotter". This rather curious creature had almost vanished from

the Airshow scene, as the laudable trend of physically separating the general public from multi-million pound aircraft has spread.

So what exactly is it? The "Intake Spotter" is usually, but not exclusively, male. Their ages and their dress sense vary considerably, but they all share one strange obsession - the urge to put their head and shoulders inside a jet engine air intake, then stand there for as long as possible, oblivious to the anguished pleas of photographers. Quite why they should want to do this is beyond me - having spent many hours in intakes in a professional capacity, I can confirm that there isn't a great deal for the layman to see!

They are also closely related to another equally annoying species known as the "Exhaust Spotter" - the latter has similar habits but is found at the opposite end of a jet engine, and can easily be distinguished by its prominent markings i.e. a face covered in soot! And to think, railway enthusiasts have an image problem! Still, each to his (or her) own!

So, back to reality. I had planned to call in at the Fountain in Ely for a quick pint before heading straight home - ECML diversions were in force and as I was due to travel to Blackpool very early the following day, I didn't want to be too late back. There was surprisingly little traffic congestion between Mildenhall and Ely station and the bus from the base made short work of the journey. The Fountain did not open until 6pm so, having 45 minutes to kill, I decided to have a walk up to the Cathedral to see if it was still open to visitors. It wasn't, and by now rain had started to fall. I sought sanctuary in the Minster, opposite the main entrance to the cathedral. The Minster turned out to be a soulless open-plan pub which looked as though it had just undergone refurbishment. The ambience was not helped by the giant-screen TV at the back of the pub, around which several bottle-swilling youths were noisily clustered, watching highlights(?) of the England v Saudi Arabia football match. Beer choice was limited to Bass and Fuller's London Pride. I ordered a pint of Bass and then wished I hadn't as I was charged £2 for the privilege (no price list on display!). It must be said that the beer was very good, but at that price yours truly wasn't going to have another and I retired to a corner to slowly sip my pint and read a paper. At about five-to-six, I left the Minster and headed off back down towards the station.

The Fountain is en route, on the corner of Silver Street, and I was very pleased to see that the front door was now open and the lights were on. This pub, a new GBG entry, has also just been refurbished, but a damn-sight more sensitively than the Minster! A gleaming wooden bar now dominates and the walls are covered with old photographs of the Cathedral and its surrounding areas. The pink emulsion on the walls might not be to everyone's taste but I think the beer will be. Woodforde Wherry, Nethergate Golden Gate, Adnams' Bitter and London Pride were all on sale, and a blackboard behind the bar proclaimed the beers to come. Now, I have had rather a liking for Wherry since I first tried it at the Rose and Crown in the small Norfolk village of Snettisham, about ten years ago. I am glad to say that this pint did not disappoint either, although at £1.87, the price did a touch!

Regular readers again may recall that on my last visit to Ely, I developed a liking for another pub on Silver Street, the Prince Albert. This doesn't open until 6.30pm on a Saturday evening and I would have liked to pop in again - ooh, very tempting - but my self-imposed timetable ruled this out, so to console myself I had another half of Wherry in the Fountain, before a quick dash to the station for the 18.26 departure to Peterborough.

158783 deposited me on Peterborough's platform on time, with about twenty minutes to wait before the 19.26 departure northbound. I popped into the Station Managers office to say hello to Mr Skinner, who was on duty that evening. Robin kindly checked the progress of my train, which had been reported running about 10 minutes late through Hitchin. The train was still behind time, so declining his offer of a cup of coffee, I made my way over the road to the Great Northern Hotel for a quick pint. It is many years since I was last in there, and things have changed. The bar is now a very plush cocktail lounge. The current staff were friendly and efficient and didn't seem to mind that in a room full of people wearing dinner jackets and cocktail dresses (there was a function taking place in the restaurant), I was the only person wearing jeans and carrying a camera bag! Boddington's Bitter,

Marston's Pedigree and Greene King Abbot were on sale and surprisingly, in view of the plush hotel setting, the Boddys was excellent and very reasonably priced at £1.60.

The 19.26 must have made up a fair amount of time since leaving Hitchin as it was just arriving at the station as I crossed the bridge to the platform. 91019 was the loco as far as Newark, where 47788 was attached to drag the train via the Lincoln avoiding line and Gainsborough to Doncaster.

The following morning, I must admit I was glad that I'd not given in to temptation in Ely - there is nothing worse than being rudely awakened at some unholy hour by a low-flying small Bladen. Now if only Alex was old enough to make a cup of tea ..... !

Your intrepid membership secretary, Tony Caddick, has been known to quaff the odd noggin or two of good ale, so it was no surprise when he accosted me at a recent Pennine meeting and began singing the praises of the GBG-listed Stafford Arms situated, oddly enough, just outside Stafford station. I haven't been in, but TC says it is "thoroughly recommended."

Beers on sale during his visit were mostly from the Titanic Brewery viz. Best Bitter, Lifeboat, Premium, Stout, Captain Smith's and White Star, but there were also other guest beers which he forgot to note - hardly surprising really, given the range of house beers! He also supplied me with a list of locos sighted during his visit, and I think it's only fair to say the list does get a bit blurred towards the end! Only joking, Tony!

## Pennine Observers' Notes

### Eastern Region

We start on the Gainsborough - Barnetby line where the following locomotives were noted operating light-engine before the Saturday passenger service :-

Feb 14 - 56093+56120;  
Feb 21 - 56043+56051;  
Feb 28- 37710;  
Mar 7 - 37715;  
Mar 14 - 37350;  
Mar 28 - 56062;  
Apr 4 - 37705;  
Apr 18 - 47315;  
Apr 25 - 56115.

Midweek workings observed were :- Mar 2 - 60024 working light-engine; Mar 19 - 60079 on a p.w. train; Mar 20 - 60032 also on a p.w. train.

Oil trains passing through Lincoln have been headed by :-

Mar 6 - 56065, 60051;  
Mar 16 - 60012/077;  
Mar 19 - 60023/061;  
Mar 31 - 56065, 60023/027/096;  
Apr 23 - 60023/053/098;  
May 8 - 60074/075;  
May 21 - 56004, 60012/041.

A member visiting Immingham depot on March 7 noted :- 08445/466/665/824, 31306, 37101/131/212/245/344/382/886, 47277/315/475/574/981, 56034/065/111/121/133, 60051/061/094.

To Church Fenton now, where on the 14th of March, 47843 headed the 09.00 Poole- York, 56053 was on a steel train, 56115 was on a goods train and 60005 headed a coal train.

Stabled at Peterborough on the 20th of March were 31115/255, 37718, 56071/126. The following day, 47769 passed through at the head of a Kings Cross - Inverness charter and on the 27th, 31142/146/255, 37055/185/194/798, 56129 were on the stabling point.

Noted passing through Moorthorpe on the 4th of April were 47806 on the 09.00 Poole -York, and 56115 on a steel train. Later in the day, 6024 'King Edward 1' passed through Church Fenton on a Carlisle - York steam special, with 47732 at the rear.

87101 was a welcome visitor to Doncaster on the 8th of April. Later in the day at Swinton, 60085 was observed at the head of a tank train and 56036 was in charge of a ballast train.

On the 11th of April, North East - South West services to and from Poole were disrupted because of flooding between Reading and Birmingham. 47818 was noted on the 12.06 Newcastle - Plymouth and 47840 headed the 14.05 Newcastle - Bristol. The following day,

ECML services were diverted via Stockton, Hartlepool and Sunderland due to engineering works in the Durham area.

Locos employed on dragging duties were 47733/744/772/792.

On the 13th, Poole services were returning to normal - 47844 was noted at York on a Poole service, having worked into the station with a train from Birmingham.

The 16th saw 47839 at York, departing for Poole having worked in from Birmingham, and 47844 bound for Bristol having arrived on a service from Poole.

Another steam special was in operation on the 19th of April. 60532 'Blue Peter' was noted passing through Retford on the "Heart of Midlothian", from Edinburgh to Kings Cross - 47745 was attached to the rear of the train.

On the 25th of April, a group of Pennine punters made a rare outing into deepest Essex, where NSE-liveried "Bubble Car" 55029 was sampled on the Marks Tey -Sudbury branch. Locos noted on Liverpool Street-Norwich/Harwich duties were 86217/223/232/235/238.

April 27th saw 47805 and 47840 at York, the former bound for Poole with the latter heading for Bristol, having worked in from Birmingham and Poole respectively.

Back to Moorthorpe where, on the 2nd of May, 47807 hauled the 09.00 Poole - York and 56123 had charge of a goods train. At Peterborough the same day, 56060 arrived with Mercia Tours "The Clubman Rose" charter train. (Our correspondent forgot to mention where this tour originated) 37274+37220 then worked the train on a circular tour via Newark, Lincoln, the Sleaford avoiding line and Spalding before returning to Peterborough. 56060 should have taken the train on its return journey, however, the failure of this loco meant that the pair of 37s continued on to Nuneaton where they were replaced by 47365. Locos noted at Peterborough stabling point were 31146/163/255/420, 37042/133, 56056/080, 58010/014/030. Additional locos noted on the 3rd were 37055/198/383, 56031/060/119. The 3rd was also another day when ECML diversions were in place. Locos noted on dragging duties, via Lincoln were 47722/746/766/769/786/792.

Scunthorpe steelworks played host to a tour train on the 9th of May, with BSC's 3138 'Hutnik' being employed to take the party through the complex. Other BSC locos noted in operation were 1438 giving brake-van rides, 79 'Big Keith' on steelworks steel train banked by 51, 71 and 75 on trains of torpedo wagons between the blast furnaces and steelworks, and 1, 73 and 74 on other steelworks trains. Diesel shunter 'Arnold Machin' still resides in the Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society's shed and "big" locos 56059 and 56097 were noted passing on coal trains. Later in the day, 47841 was noted operating Birmingham - York, York - Poole trains.

On the 10th of May, 47769 was noted in charge of the 12.10 Leeds - Kings Cross service.

Your editor was pleasantly surprised to observe 31166 blasting through Swinton station on the 14th of May, at the head of a rake of Tiphook vans. Closely following behind were 58031+56092 making light work (but a heavy racket) of a train of ballast hoppers.

The "York and Scarborough Liner" railtour traversed Eastern Region metals on the 23rd of May. 47207+279 commenced the tour at Finsbury Park, taking the train to Doncaster via Reading and Birmingham. 47361 then took over for the run to Scarborough and return to Doncaster, where 47279 was attached. The two 47s returned the train south, terminating at Ealing Broadway.

Noted in the sidings at March, also on the 23rd, were 37800, 58008/024.

May was definitely the month for engineering works!

The ECML was closed at Ranskill on the 23rd and 24th. Diesel/electric combinations noted on the 24th were:

47775+91020 10.00 KX - Edinburgh  
47749+91010 10.00 Edinburgh - KX  
47775+91014 15.00 KX - Edinburgh  
47788+91006 17.00 KX - Glasgow

The Doncaster "Thunderbird" 47624 was also pressed into service during the evening, and 47844 was also sighted on a Newcastle - Plymouth train. 37402+37429 worked a "Railtourer\*" charter from Hull to Edinburgh, via the S&C, on the 25th of the month.

The stock consisted mostly of Mk1 coaches, however, Mk2 air-conditioned were also included, hence the use of 37/4s. Return to Hull was via the ECML. incidentally, our Humberside, sorry, East Yorkshire correspondent reports that class 158 and class 142 units are appearing in 'Northern Spirit' livery - he is obviously not impressed as his letter described the colour scheme as "REVOLTING!!" Very succinct, John!

To Barnetby now, where on the 26th, 56018, 60010/014/051 were employed on oil trains, 56027, 60074 hauled coal trains, 60008/062 were on iron-ore trains, 56101 passed through on a steel train, 37679 powered a Cargowagon train and 31530 and 56087 worked through light-engine.

### Midland Region

Noted at Birmingham New Street on the 16th of March were 47847 on a Piccadilly - Paddington train, 47822 on a Liverpool -bound service, 47839 on a New Street - Paddington train and 47840 on a Liverpool - Plymouth service. The latter was some 32 minutes late leaving New Street following points problems at Edge Hill, however, after some spirited running, arrival at Plymouth was just 7 minutes down. Other locos noted were 47827/849, 86207/213/226/234, 87007.

On the 26th of the month, at New Street, 47712 worked the 10.58 train to Plymouth, 47853 headed the 10.55 service to Liverpool, and 47849 arrived on a Plymouth - Liverpool train.

The 11.03 New Street to Plymouth train on the 28th, with 47848 in charge, was diverted via Oxford, Didcot and Swindon, because of engineering works in the Gloucester area. 47814 was also noted working the 10.42 Plymouth - Manchester train.

April was obviously a quiet month, as our next report for the region is for May! On the 2nd, 31166, 37037/225/695 were stabled at Nuneaton. On the 8th, 37408, 47194, 60002/079, 87006/025, 90003 were noted at Nuneaton, 08628/951, 31113/308, 37074, 47186/701, 86247, 87021, 90004/008 were sighted at Rugby and 58010/033, 60030/055/090 were stabled at Leicester.

As mentioned in 'Rail Ale', your membership secretary was ensconced in the Stafford Arms for "an hour and a bit" (how long the "bit" was isn't stated!) on the 16th of May. Sightings were as follows:-

56134 Northbound Freightliner

47831 15.10 Manchester Piccadilly - B'ham NS

86251 11.44 Plymouth - Liverpool

87030 15.20 Preston - Euston

47296 Southbound Freightliner

87035 15.45 Liverpool - Euston

86240 16.16 B'ham Int - Piccadilly

37415 13.40 Holyhead - B'ham NS

87003 14.55 Euston - Liverpool

47844 12.30 Glasgow - Poole

87004 13.40 Glasgow - Euston

86213 14.18 Paddington - Glasgow

87029 15.25 Euston - Glasgow

87028 15.55 Euston - Liverpool

86242 17.10 Piccadilly - Paddington

47831 17.18 B'ham NS - Piccadilly

Stabled at Peak Forest on the 25th of May were 08915/925, 37688/689, 59204, 60001/026/084/089/096, whilst a visit to Toton on the 27th produced 58040, 60031 on coal trains, 37678 on a ballast train, 08528/706 yard pilots, 31405/466, 37055/258/416, 47294/462/492/744, 56074, 58026/029/030/050, 60007/030/056 in the depot, 08594/723/773/829, 20119/154/177, 31116/135/180/184/199/205/217/219/250/268/276/290/294/531/547, 37048/092/111/137/188/213/241/278/330/343, 45015, 47341, 56023 stored.

DRS-liveried 37610 was noted at Stafford (no prizes for guessing who by!) on the late-running 10.40 Edinburgh - Brighton and was seen a few hours later heading back north assisting 47712 on the 15.28 Bristol - Glasgow. The first summer-Saturday was obviously placing a strain on the Virgin trains loco fleet as 47016 was also seen putting in a spirited departure on the 12.30 Glasgow - Poole.

### Western Region

A correspondent out and about in the West Country and South Wales in mid-March, noted the following:-

16 March

Exeter - 08792, 37146/197/229, Plymouth - 37610+37611 on a freight working, 47745/759 on mail trains, 47840 on a Plymouth -Sheffield service, 47847 on the 12.17 Piccadilly - Plymouth

17March

Bristol TM - 47745/763 on mail trains, 37417 on the 08.39 Weymouth - Bristol and 11.30 Bristol - Cardiff. The 09.15 Paddington - Bristol HST was terminated at Chippenham due to a mechanical problem. This led to cancellation of the 11.15 Bristol - Paddington. Newport - 09015, 37219/229/248/275/411/521/672/901, 47310, 56117.

Cardiff - 37010+37057/696, 47152/181/279/292/371/745/761, 56057/066/086, 59004/101, 60055. Additionally, 37429 was noted operating the 17.04 Cardiff - Rhymney in place of the rostered class 33, which is believed to have failed, much to our correspondent's annoyance! Canton - 08900, 37178/684/897/902/905, 47016/209/279/523/785, 56070, 60019/034/038.

18 March

Exeter - 37146/197/293/689, 47575, 47812 on a Derby - Plymouth service and the 11.40 Plymouth - Derby, 47851 on the 10.44 Plymouth - Manchester, 60083. Bristol - 47786 on 'Orient Express' stock. Newport - 37211/275/888/894/901, 56066/078, 60019 37429 was again operating the 17.04 Cardiff - Rhymney in place of the booked class 33. Our correspondent is now hopping mad!



19 March

47814 on a Derby - Plymouth service and return 11.40 Plymouth - Liverpool, 47848 on a Liverpool - Plymouth service, 47476/765 in the sidings at Bridgewater, 37467 on the 16.33 Bristol - Weymouth, 37709/717/885 at Westbury, 47815 on a Penzance - Waterloo train.

Our correspondent had a further trip to the West Country and South Wales towards the end of March and noted:-

26 March

Bridgewater – 37715. Newport - 37178/229/258/668/871/894/901.

Cardiff - 56046/066, 59101 and, happily, class 33 D6593 (33208) on the 16.32 Cardiff - Rhymney! Other sightings were 37429 on the 14.30 Cardiff - Bristol and 16.33 Bristol- Weymouth, and 47832 on a Penzance - Paddington train.

28 March

37402 on the 14.33 Bristol - Weymouth service.

The "Cornish Gnome" railtour took green-liveried 37403 from Cardiff to deepest Cornwall on the 3rd of May, with EWS-liveried 37669 'top-and-tailing' on the Falmouth and Looe branches. Unfortunately, '403 was not in the best of health on the return journey and was assisted from Plymouth by 47781.

A member visiting Didcot on the 19th of May noted 47194 on a car train, 37350 hauling a train of London Underground stock, 08804, 09101 in the yard, 37146, 47004/095 stabled in the station and 37703 stabled at the shed. Our correspondent must like the West Country and South Wales, (I suppose it beats watching Yorkshire play cricket!), for he was there again at the end of May and noted:-

20 May

Newport - 37242/668/695/701, 60064 Gloucester -37715 on a freight working Swindon - 37116/689/711, 47313, 56134. Didcot - 08804, 09101, 37146/263/417, 47475/524, 56086.

Oxford - 47212/225 on freight trains, 47822 on a Glasgow - Poole service

Sightings at Gloucester were 21/5: 66034/038; 22/5: 37710, 60009/034/051; 23/5: 37503, 56009, 60037//048.

### Southern Region

Eridge played host to 37057 on the 8th of March. The loco was operating on a ballast working. 500019 was also noted on the Spa Valley railway, awaiting a move to a location in Norfolk.

Locos noted at Eastleigh on April 10th were 47831 on an express, 47330 light-engine, 08649 in the works and 37698, 47219, 73110/139 in the depot. On the 14th, the depot played host to 33046, 37888, 47018/219/231/281/303/330/377, 58001, 60069.

### Preserved Railways

On the 7th of March, the 'Bluebell Railway' had Southern Railways loco C1 in operation, whilst later in the day, E6003 was operating between Isfield and Little Horstead on the 'Lavender Line'.

Locos in operation on the Keighley and Worth Valley on the 13th Of April were D5209, 80002 and 75019 (75014). Noted at the Llangollen Railway on the 19th of April were D2162, D8142, 25313, 26004, 47449 and DMU 50428+50454+54490+51907.

Peak Rail held a "Friends of Thomas" weekend on the 2-4 May. 45337 and 68012 'The Duke' were noted on the 4th, topping-and-tailing a 7-coach train between Matlock and Rowsley.

Many thanks to Tony Caddick, John Dewing and Paul Slater for their continuing contributions.

## The Back Pages

### Robin's Letter

Dear Member,

For a number of years now, I have been aware, and indeed have been constantly reminded by my peers, that in the twenty-four years of the Pennine Railway Society's existence, I have never really contributed to Trans Pennine in a big way. Okay, so in years gone by I have written the occasional "Notes from the Committee" and compiled the fixtures and meetings lists - granted - but that's not really creative. Creative, Robin Skinner?!! Mmm, well, let's see what happens! In recent years, Dave has put the magazine together himself, preparing his own articles and editing those of the small band of regular contributors. Well, this is where it all changes - Dave is still in charge of putting it all together, but it's a team effort from now on.

In 'The Back Pages', I will try to give you as much variety as possible, whilst complementing the rest of the magazine. Meetings lists are still my domain as you know, so they will be in The Back Pages. Any trips that may be advertised by the society will be in, along with any other events you, the member, would like me to publicise.

I'll also be reviewing other railway publications - sometimes a monthly magazine, sometimes a book - and occasionally railway videos. There will also be a short article on a particular subject - in this edition, I cover that fascinating building St Pancras Chambers, once one of London's most expensive hotels. There will also be a paragraph covering a Pennine trip from the past - who went, where we went and what happened!

I hope you will enjoy the new section. Please keep sending contributions to Dave - they all help the magazine to get bigger and better!

Robin Skinner

### Robin's Rambles

#### St Pancras Chambers

For many years now, I've got off trains at Kings Cross or St Pancras and walked under the subway to the south side of Euston Road, and headed up the westbound stairs towards the bus stop, to wait for a number 10 or 73 bus (originally 14 or 73) to go to the West End. Routemasters are by far the best way to see London (sorry, Gerry!). As you will be aware, you wait and wait, then four come at once. While I am waiting for the four to come at once, I always look up in complete awe at the Gothic frontage of St Pancras Chambers - it is by far the most beautiful frontage to any railway station in Britain, never mind in London, and I have always wondered what the inside of the building is like.

A few months ago, I saw an advert in Modern Railways inviting people to apply for tickets for a guided tour of the former Midland Grand Hotel, on Tuesday the 11th of May. "That's for me". I thought, and off I went.

At 1.30pm, I was standing in the original entrance with twenty-three other people, looking at a small London and Continental Railway exhibition telling us that when the new direct line is built, St Pancras will be the London terminus for Eurostar, allowing access to the railway system to the north, particularly the East and West Coast Main Lines. LCR hope to make the hotel once again into the most prestigious in London.

The Midland Grand Hotel closed its doors as a hotel on the 19th of April 1935. The London, Midland and Scottish Railway said it was too expensive to run, and refurbishment was not a viable option. Thus the building was renamed St Pancras Chambers and became the headquarters of the LMS's hotels and catering department. Nationalisation in 1948 saw it become the headquarters of BR's

hotel and catering operations, remaining in this role until 1985, when the buildings fire certificate was withdrawn - it has been empty ever since.

In recent years, British Rail and Railway Heritage have spent £10 million restoring the outer fabric of the building - cleaning the stone and brickwork, repairing the roof and guttering and securing chimney pots. When you look up in awe from the south side of Euston Road, it looks even better.

Inside, however, is a different matter entirely. Most rooms are exactly as they were in 1935 - original decorations remain, but in a very poor state. Rooms used as offices had obviously had some work done to them, in particular, larger rooms had been divided into two by stud-wall partitions, but in general, it was like walking back in time.

Imagine the Titanic had been in dry-dock since launching, preserved in all its glory as a time-capsule. Now imagine you are one of the first people to re-enter that capsule to see how time has faded that glory - that's how I can best describe how I felt. Some work has been done by conservationists to establish how many coats of paint were on the walls - 11 in total - and as a result, some of the original design of wall covering, in all its splendour, is revealed for all to see.

The Grand Staircase must be one of the finest staircases in the country. The original Axminster carpet design has survived and is preserved.

At the back of the hotel are rooms which look out into Barlow's great train shed, now occupied by green-liveried Midland Mainline HST's, though in the past, Peaks, Jubilees, the odd Royal Scot and many Black 5s would have dominated the scene, preceded, no doubt, by Midland Compounds. I put my camera to work, though the windows were somewhat grubby!

Only the ground floor and main reception rooms on the first floor had central heating. All other rooms had fire places - the amount of coal burned daily in winter must have run into tons.

The tour took nearly two hours and was an excellent insight into the past and, who knows, maybe the future. Thomas Betjeman did an excellent job when he saved the building from the same fate as Euston, back in the 1960's. St Pancras Chambers is now a grade 1 listed building.

#### Some facts about St Pancras Chambers

- \*\* 1863 - The Midland Railway secures an Act of Parliament to build St Pancras station and hotel.
- \*\* 1865 - The architects' competition to design the hotel is won by Sir George Gilbert Scott.
- \*\* 1868 - The first passenger train departs St Pancras for Manchester on October 1st.
- \*\* 1876 - The hotel opens at a total cost of £437,335. (fabric £304,335: fittings £49,000:furnishings £84,000). .
- \*\* 1879 - A room, with half board, costs 14/- (70p).
- \*\* 1911 - Bed and breakfast costs 12/- (60p), with dinner costing 5/- (25p).
- \*\* 1930 - Room only costs 8/6 (42.1/2p), room with bath costs 15/- (75p), breakfast is 4/- (20p), lunch is 5/- (25p) and dinner costs 7/6 (37.1/2p)
- \*\* 1935 - The hotel closes on April 19th, to become offices.
- \*\* 1985 - Offices close following withdrawal of the building's fire certificate.

\*\* 1990's - Work commences on restoration of the building. £10 million is spent on the outside, with £120,000 being spent on the inside, mainly work connected with saving the fabric of the building, installation of lighting and humidifiers and restoration of murals on staircases.

## Robin's Review Review

### Steam World

Steam World caters for the steam buff who yearns for the glorious post-war heyday of steam, up to its end with British Railways in 1968. Preserved steam, however, is not covered. The magazine is embedded in an atmosphere of dirt, soot and clinker, relishing photographs, some in colour, some in black-and-white of steam operations in Britain in the 40s, 50s and early 60s.

Contributors are people who went on trips in that era, to places that are very different today. For example, in the current issue (June 1998), one article is by enthusiasts visiting Retford in 1965. Locomotives recorded are B1s, K1s, O2s, the odd A4, A1s, J6s, J11s etc.

There is an excellent picture of A4 60014 'Silver Link' hauling maroon Mk1 stock into platform 1.

Other articles cover a visit to sheds in the Staveley area in 1964, seaside traffic to Scarborough in the 1950s, and the Station Master at Elland in West Yorkshire, in the early 1960s - pure nostalgia, where do they dig it up from?

I've been subscribing to Steam World for a number of years now and really look forward to it. It's the only way I can travel back in time to a railway that was. The atmospheric black-and-white photography is excellent, especially the Aero Films centre spread of a railway location.

And the verdict? In my book it is the best publication available recording steam in the twenty years after the Second World War.

*Steam World is published monthly by EMAP Apex Publications of Peterborough and is priced at £2.55, with an annual subscription costing £30.60 for 12 issues*

### Robin's Meetings

All meetings are held at the Corporation Brewery Taps, Cleveland Street, Doncaster, commencing at 20.00.

Wednesday, June 17 <sup>th</sup>	Ian Shenton	"Yorkshire slides from a Yorkshireman"
Wednesday, July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Tony Caddick	"Slide show down Mexico way"
Wednesday, July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Tyas	"Plant your eyes on these slides"
Wednesday, August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Robin Skinner	"Don't plant your eyes on these slides!"
Wednesday, August 19 <sup>th</sup>	John Andrews	"Chris Nicholson 's friend"
Wednesday, Sept 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Derek Porter	"Westems, Warships and Hymeks"
Wednesday, Sept 16 <sup>th</sup>	Stewart Donohoe	"Railfreight"
Wednesday, October 7 <sup>th</sup>	The Annual Pennine Slide Contest	Cash prizes and trophies!
Wednesday, October 21 <sup>st</sup>	John Wragg	Title to be announced

If would like to give a slide show, or know someone who would, please contact Robin Skinner or pop along to a meeting.

The next edition of Trans Pennine will, hopefully, be produced in September. Please have contributions to me by 30 August. Thank you!