ST NICHOLAS

RAILWAY CIRCLE

Emag No 63 January 2026

Platform End

Woodford Halse allocated B1 Class 4-6-0 Loco No **61028** stops at Moor Park Up Fast with a Marylebone bound train from Leicester. Since 1991, only Metropolitan line underground trains use these platforms except in an emergency. **Photo: John Cosford**

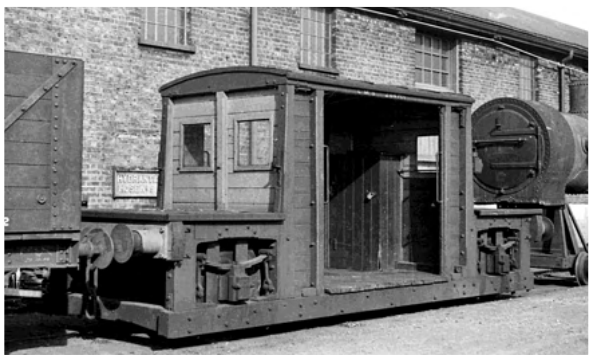
This loco spent its entire service on the Great Central lines going new to Neasden with spells at Leicester and finally Woodford Halse. Notice the Starting Signal is a "X" Signal which usually denoted it was the last automatic signal before a controlled area.

Originally called Sandy Lodge after nearby golf course, it was expected to attract golf enthusiasts when it opened in 1910. However, the area known as Moor Park was part of a 3000-acre private estate owned by Viscount Lord Leverhulme in the 1920s, which included Moor Park Golf Club, Moor Park Mansion, **Left,** (now the golf clubhouse, built in the 17th century for James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth) and Sandy Lodge Golf Club. The private gated community of Moor Park not only enjoys the unique advantage of having a Tube station within its grounds, but the 559 homes in the 3000 acres have their own shopping parade, not to mention the added peace of mind provided by watchful security guards.

Renowned railway photographer Henry Casserley photographed this strange looking vehicle at Bow Works on 24/7/46.

It was built at the works in 1899 and was similar to two built by the LNWR which were called 'cabs' and were used within the works area to move personnel, wages and parts around the premises.

Photo: Mike Morant collection



A year later, the Locomotive erecting shop at Bow Works looked busy. Unusually for such a small railway, the North London Railway had its own works at Bow. The works during its operation constructed locomotives, carriages, wagons, and signalling equipment. In 1882 a new erecting shop was constructed under the control of William Adams, employing 750 men at its height.

Between 1879 and 1901 thirty 0-6-0 tanks designed by J.C. Park were built, fourteen of them lasting into British Railways ownership known as the North London Tanks.

Photo: Science Museum Group Collection Online.

Cover photo

Class J72 No **69023** ***Joem*** on the KWVLR in 1969**.**

A total of 113 J72s were built in nine batches from 1898 until 1951. The gap in time (53 years) between the construction of the first and last J72, is probably a record for a British steam locomotive class.

Photo: Unknown

A seasonal Platform End photo on a freezing January day in 1987. The former D80, now class 45 No **45113** departs from Appleby with the 1M09, 07.40 Hull-Carlisle train. The loco was one of several Tinsley allocated locos to receive an unofficial painted name, in this case **Athene**.

In 1971, fifty locomotives in the class, including D80, were equipped with Electric Train Heating (ETH) to work with newer carriage stock. The steam boiler was removed, water tanks ballasted, and the locomotive was re-classified into the 45/1 subclass.

Photo: Stephen McGahon

Where Are We?

This station was built in 1847 to designs by John Livock and was jointly owned and managed by the LNWR and NSR, after the later had opened in 1849.

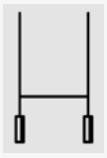
The lofty signalbox, demolished in 2005, overlooked the junction for lovers of the oatcake, that towns 'national dish' whilst the former station house remains alongside the tracks and is now a Grade II listed building.

West Coast Railways Class 37 No **37685** at Wick on Monday 5th January, on route proving duties along the Far North Line. This year, 2026, started with heavy snow in the North East of Scotland and temperatures well below freezing.

West Coast supplied the traction and crews to plough and check the routes. I was told Scotrail drivers are unit only these days.

Photo: Leon Gray

It's an up and under!



As Eddie Waring used to say.

Climbing **up** over the GWR main line, Wolverhampton Corporation trolleybus **No 440** passes the entrance to the Low Level station on a wet April day in 1959. The destination blind has already been set for the return journey from the town centre to the Albion pub (now the Lancaster) in Wednesfield.

The number 17 bus used this entrance every 40 mins, 30 mins on a Saturday, on the service to Bridgnorth originally operated by GWR buses.

Brownie 127 photos by Ray Deacon

Looking in the other direction a little later, we see **No 440** returning from the town centre and passing **under** the LMS line to Wolverhampton High Level station.

The Atkinsons Ales advert on the trolleybus refers to a Birmingham brewery that was acquired by Mitchells & Butlers Ltd in 1959 and closed in 1962.

Built in the Wolverhampton factory in 1948, the Sunbeam W4 trolleybus carries its original Park Royal body which would be replaced in 1961 by a new Roe body seating six more people as seen **Left**, on **No 446.**

Sadly this proved to be an costly exercise for the ratepayers as the whole system closed in March 1967. Judging by the red tower wagon behind, 446 is experiencing a spot of rooftop bother although as luck would have it right outside the Cleveland Road depot. Just look at those cars!

Photo: Brian Bennett

Wires did return to Wolverhampton along the Bilston Road and trams now pass **under** trains just as they did way back in 1902!. West Midlands Metro CAF Urbos tram **No 33** passes sister **No 29** as Cross Country Voyagers 221128 + 220025 pass going over the bridge behind on a Manchester Piccadilly to Bournemouth service. **Photo: Tim Jennings**

A Helping Hand

In the shadow of the chimney of scruffy Southern Region Class E1R 0-6-2T No **2695**, a young lad is held by an adult as his heavy Devon Belle all-pullman train is banked up the 1:37 through Queens Street tunnel into Exeter Central.

The Devon Belle started in 1947 so this undated photo may well be that year, especially as the loco still carries its Southern markings and number.

Photo: M. Whitehouse collection

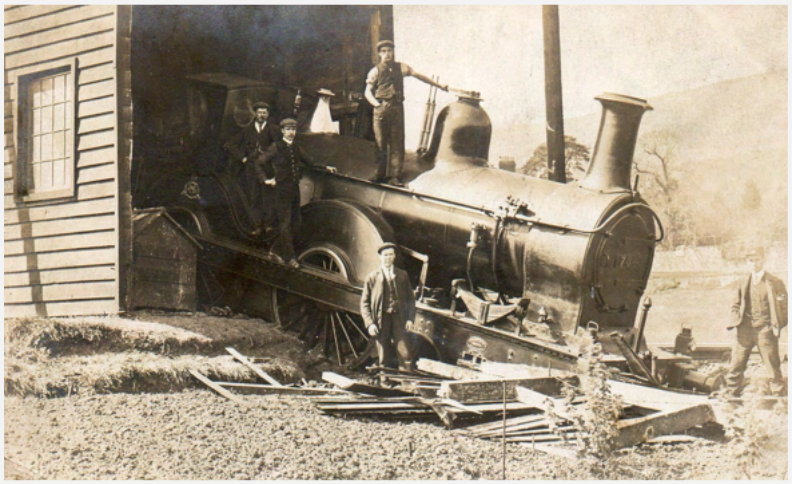
Built at Brighton between 1874–1883 as William Stroudley's Class E1 0-6-0 tanks, they were conceived as a larger, goods, version of his successful "Terrier" tanks. Ten of the E1 class had their frames extended and bunkers and water tanks enlarged at Brighton works from 1927. A pony truck of the same design as a N class locomotive was also added to create a radial trailing axle, making them Class E1R 0-6-2T. The rebuilt locomotives were dispatched to the Western section during 1928 and 1929 and proved to be a great success in Devon and Cornwall.

When you were told to put it at the back of the shed!

An embarrassing moment at the the Midland shed at Malvern Wells about 1909.

Midland Rly **No 73** was built in Glasgow by Neilson (1586 of 1871) as MR No 895. Renumbered 73 in 1907, it was scrapped in 1919.

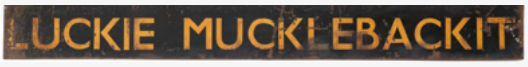
Photo: The Midland Railway Study Centre



Taking the biscuit for **Loco Name of the Day,** Class D11/2 **62671, *BALE-MACWHEEBLE***

A class of thirty-five 4-4-0 steam locomotives designed by John G. Robinson for passenger work on the Great Central Railway. The last twenty four being allocated to the Scottish Region and carrying painted names of characters in Sir Walter Scott's novels.

The 'flame-cut' nameplate of sister loco No 62678, Luckie Mucklebackit sold for £1,300 in 2024.



Never complain about the weight of the Hoover again!

Thought to be Manchester Victoria with Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway stock being cleaned during WW1.

Photo: Helena Wojtczak

No 71000 approaching Carlisle Kingmoor sidings with Frank Sutton in the chair. His Scottish tale concludes on **Page 19.**

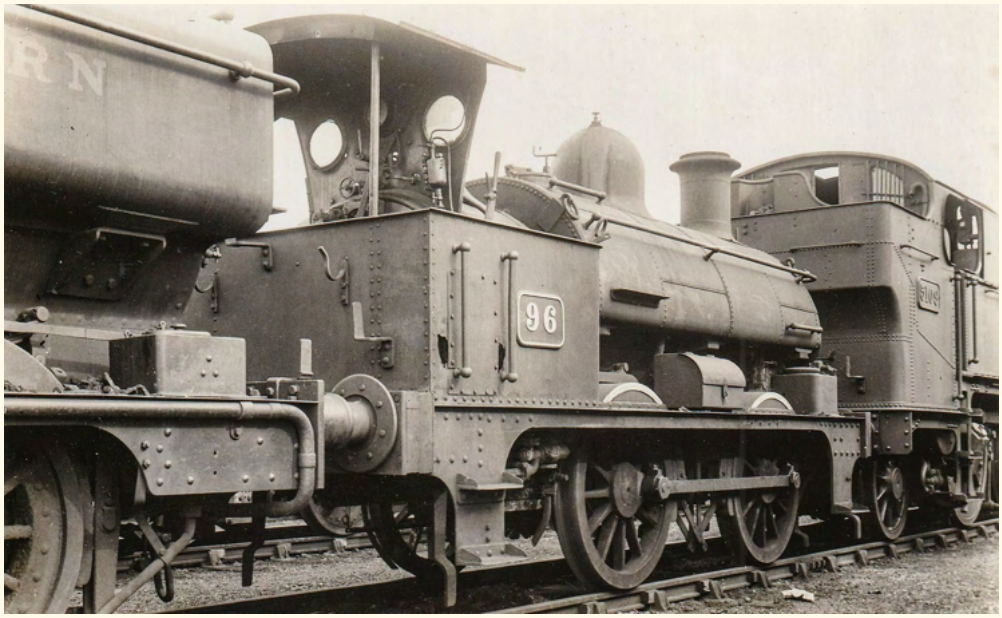
AC Railbus W79978

A bucolic scene as AC Railbus No W79978 leaves Culkerton station on the Tetbury branch in Gloucestershire in March 1964. The branch would close two weeks later. After passing through three different heritage railways it is now undergoing restoration at its current home on the Swindon & Cricklade Railway.

In 2004, locals might remember W79978 visited the Severn Valley Railway as part of the Railcar50 celebrations. Although intended for use on Kidderminster-Bewdley shuttles, the vehicle sadly did not see any passenger service during the visit due to major problems with the air braking system.

Photo: (c) TRANSPORT TOPICS

GWR No 96 at Stafford Road Works, Wolverhampton, on 8th September 1935.



This remarkable survivor worked for 79 years. The loco, then numbered 39 and named 'Cricket', was built by Sharp, Stewart & Co for the Birkenhead Railway in 1856. The stock of that railway was taken over by the GWR in 1860. New cylinders were fitted in 1871 and a rebuild took place at Wolverhampton in 1888 when the boiler pressure was increased from 120psi to 140 psi. The 1888 boiler lasted until the loco was scrapped in November 1935. GWR No 96 was one of five small 0-4-0STs, superficially rather similar in appearance, but which were not treated as a class. With one exception they were late 19th Century Wolverhampton reconstructions of older locomotives, and by the end of their long lives probably retained few original parts.

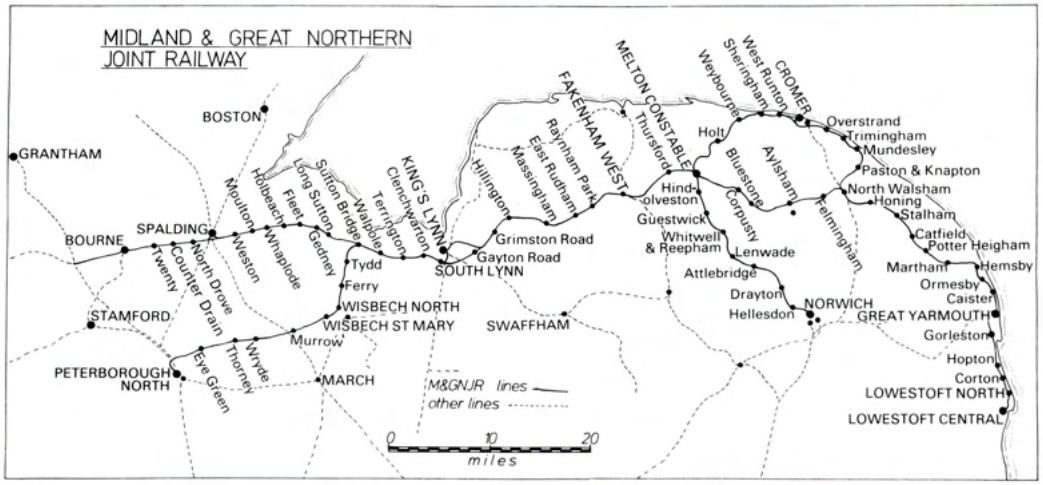
The first of the group was no 45, built in 1880, which was a new engine, albeit given the number of a Sharp Stewart built locomotive withdrawn a very few years earlier. It had the odd feature of a cab that was only accessible from the right hand side. The next to appear were 95 and 96,which were originally Sharp Stewart built for the Birkenhead Railway, and their cabs only had entrances on the left hand side. In their final form they had rather vestigial spectacle plates at each end of the cab and a rather minimal roof.

No 92 started life as two 0-4-2 saddle tanks, 91 & 92, built for the GWR by Beyer Peacock in 1857. In 1877/8, one good 0-4-0ST, 92 was made from the two. In 1893 it received a very major rebuild at Wolverhampton to gain basically the appearance shown here, **Right.** Amazingly, it then survived until 1942, albeit only as a stationary engine in its latter years. A similar loco, 342, was built by Beyer Peacock in 1856, and bought by the GWR in 1864. This had a similar life to 92, converted to 0-4-0ST in 1881 and rebuilt in 1897. A peculiarity of all these five was that the design had much greater weight on the trailing wheels than the driving wheels and this high load on the second axle meant they were prohibited on uncoloured routes.

They all had long lives, mainly in the obscure northern reaches of the GWR around Wrexham. At least two were cut down at one time or another for use on a route with a very low bridge. No. 342 was withdrawn in 1931 and No. 45 in 1938. No. 92 survived until 1942, with the boiler lasting a few more years in stationary use. One wonders whether the curious reluctance of Swindon to build 0-4-0Ts was the reason for the long lives of these antiques, or contrariwise, their long lives were why Swindon didn't build any replacements.

Thanks to Didcot Railway Centre and Jim Champ's notes.

Melton Constable is a town once renowned for its railway works and station, with a rich history dating back to the Domesday Book of 1086, where it was referred to as Maeltuna. The town we know today was established in the 19th century as a result of the railway's construction. Sadly the town lost all its railway with the closure of the entire mostly single line M&GN system in 1959.



An unusual 'Whistle' sign at Melton Constable shed. Ivatt 4 MT 2-6-0 No 43090 went new to South Lynn shed in 1950 moving to Kings Lynn and then March before leaving the area in 1960 with the demise of steam.

TURNTABLE TO UP SIDING
FOR CROMER -2 SHORT
SOUTH LYNN-3 SHORT
YARMOUTH-4 SHORT
NORWICH - 5 SHORT
UP SIDING TO TURNTABLE WHEN
CLEAR OF No 9 TRAP POINTS-1 LONG

Photo: © R Booth

LNER Class B17 4-6-0 No 61636 Harlaxton Manor on the turntable at Melton Constable. This was a 70' Turntable and on closure in 1959 it was moved to Kings Cross.

Photo: Unknown

Scruton Station, on the Wensleydale Railway, which operates heritage diesel train services between here and Leyburn, was once part of a cross-country route between Northallerton and Garsdale on the Settle & Carlisle line.

Scruton is one of the very rare **'Thankful Villages'** (only around 50 out of about 16,000 villages) from which all members of the armed forces returned home alive after the First World War. Most villages have a war memorial but they don't. At the end of the War their bells rang out in gratitude, not mourning. In Scruton the church clock was installed in 1921 as a mark of the village's gratitude and to commemorate peace in Europe.

Scruton Lane Station was originally opened by the York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway in 1848 and later became known as Scruton Station. In 1854 it became part of the North Eastern Railway (NER) and the London & North Eastern Railway in 1923. Used for goods, livestock and passengers, the station was closed to passengers in 1954, before the Beeching cuts, and soon fell into decay. **Photo: John Fitton**

W55032 sits at the nicely restored Scruton station with the 12.32 Scruton to Leeming Bar.

Photo: Flickr chris.mark.gee

This railway's goal this year was to return to Redmire station, closed since 2020, but a ¾ mile section of damaged track close to Wensley Station, in desperate need of repair' delayed matters. The earthworks which carried the railway along the foot of the cliffs below Leyburn Shawl have eroded and some material fallen into the adjacent fields.

Left, Class 14 diesel locomotive **(D9523**)

Photo: Wensleydale Railway

Ex LMS Stanier Black Five No. 45407 'The Lancashire Fusilier' has recently arrived on the line to haul this years money -spinning THE POLAR EXPRESS™

Colin Churcher-King for a day!

I was a cleaner at Reading in the summer of 1962. The diesels were already upon us and the Kings would all be withdrawn by the end of the year. Reading was about 40 miles west of London and the only Kings we saw were non-stop running through on the main line – until Wednesday 15th of August.

I signed on at 06:00 and made my way to the cleaners room where everyone was excited because 6000, King George V, was on shed. It had failed the previous night and was being made ready to run light engine to Swindon. We ran out and stood in awe at this machine which we regarded as the pinnacle of the steam locomotive. It had a good coat of paint but had been neglected and was in need of a good clean. At that moment, Eddie, the Chargehand Foreman came out and we asked if we could clean the King. He scowled: "Its not one of ours but Gladiator will be going out this morning and that needs a wipe down." No. 5076, Gladiator was one of our Castles and we always kept it in good condition. We argued with Eddie to no avail, although he did allow a couple of us to get out the Brasso and polish the King's bell. King George V had been fitted with a bell when it visited the United States shortly after it was constructed. The bell, located on the front buffer beam, had been retained as a reminder of that occasion although it was not operative.

As soon as Eddie had wandered off we got up on to the footplate. The controls were almost identical to the latter Castles. One attractive feature of all former Great Western locomotives was the varnished hardwood handles on the valves. This encouraged care from the footplate crews - certainly not the rough treatment frequently meted out to locomotives from other railways where a stiff steam valve might be "helped" with the coal pick. Of course, once in the cab I had to put on a shovelful of coal. The firebox was very narrow as it was set above the rear driving axle and between the wheels. To get coal to the front one had to throw the coal about twelve feet. My shovelful hit the front tube plate with a satisfying clunk. I said to the others, "See if you can throw the coal so hard that you can ring the bell." Everyone had a go and, although all but one hit the tube plate, none made the bell ring. The one who couldn't get the coal to the front was Titch. This short fellow, about 17 years old, intended to join the Grenadier Guards. "I want a bit of excitement in my life. I want to go around killing people." I lost track of Titch but he would have needed to have grown a lot to have made the minimum height requirements for the Grenadier Guards. There is a story that only one fireman was able to make the bell ring. He tied a thin wire to the bell, ran it back to the cab and tied it to a damper handle. When he made his swing he trod on the wire and rang the bell!

The fireman arrived while we were engaged in putting coal to the front of the firebox. He was ecstatic as he was actually going to work on a King and his driver had promised to let him drive. He was so elated that he wasn't even upset with us for putting way too much coal up front – the normal method of firing was to build a four or five foot deep fire at the back and motion of the engine would normally move the fire forward to the front. At that moment Eddie came by and we all scurried back to put the final touches on Gladiator. Gladiator had one thing in common with the Kings. It also had a rivetted tender. The later Castles had welded tenders which were much easier to clean. One had to clean around all of the rivets so working on the tender took much more time. That was my only encounter with a King. I saw the fireman a couple of days later. He was still in cloud nine. At least he could say that he had driven a King.

Photo: David Christie

BLACK COUNTRY STEEL TRIPPERS. Part Two: Trip T43

David J. Hayes continues his look at these local trips. (Images As Credited)

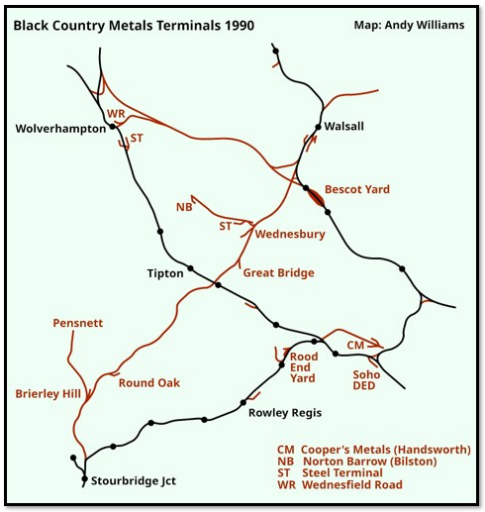
During the late 1980s, Trip T43 was still operating as a general purpose diagram based on Bescot dealing mainly with Speedlink traffic, which included serving the two steel terminals in Wolverhampton. The second one, Wednesfield Road Goods, by 1990 was acting as a satellite facility to the principal Wolverhampton Steel Terminal (ST). The Class 31 allocated to this duty also dealt with wagonload consignments to and/or from the British Oxygen Company (BOC) terminal at Monmore Green, as such movements of liquid nitrogen and oxygen from BOC Ditton to Wolverhampton were sometimes known to use the Speedlink network, despite such traffic usually being conveyed in block trainload formations for the most part (some BOC business to Monmore Green used intermodal tank-tainers, which were handled at Wolverhampton ST). The trip also dealt with deliveries of cement to Curzon Street and of wagons to and from attention at the wagon repair shops at Duddeston. The T43 tripping itinerary for January 1988 is given below.

Trip T43 (SSuX) January 1988

H'code	Service Details
6T43	06:00 SSuX Bescot to Wolverhampton ST
6T43	09:00 SSuX Wolverhampton ST to Bescot
7T43	10:50 SSuX Bescot to Wednesfield Road Goods
7T43	12:25 SSuX Wednesfield Road Good to Bescot
9T43	15:40 SSuX Bescot to Duddeston C&W
9T43	16:45 SSuX Duddeston C&W to Bescot
7T43	18:00 SSuX Bescot to Wolverhampton ST
7T43	20:10 SSuX Wolverhampton ST to Bescot

Thursday 15th September 1988: Class 31 No. **31 171** powers an afternoon T43 trip from Bescot to Wednesfield Road Goods along the former Grand Junction Railway axis, between Darlaston and Portobello junctions, near Willenhall, at 3:45pm, formed of a uniform raft of ten bogie bolsters laden with what appear to be bundles of square bars, the ends of which are coloured either red or yellow; does anyone know the reason for this differentiation? A sister Class 31 heads the opposite way with empty coaching stock. **David J. Hayes**.

The diagram was rendered surplus to requirements for a while, being designated "spare" for a year from early October 1989 until its reinstatement as a Metals sector duty in 1990. The second table shows its new itinerary as of October 1990 at a time when the trip was utilizing the resources off 6M06, the 19:12 SSuX Trainload Metals service from Boston Docks, Lincolnshire, to Bescot (arr. 00:08 MSuX), which handled imported strip coil for delivery to the Round Oak Rail Terminal. This "new" facility had officially opened in September 1986 and was previously the Bar Finishing Department of Round Oak Steelworks, which had closed in December 1982. Much of the former steelwork's site was demolished and subsequently re-developed as the Merry Hill Shopping Centre and Water Front complex.



6T43 (SuX) October 1990

Location	Arr.	Dep.	H'code	Traffic & Other Details
Bescot LHS	-	01:30 MSuX	0T43	Light Engine. Loco off 6M06, the 19:12 SSuX Boston to Bescot (arr. 00:08 MSuX)
Bescot Yard	01:45 MSuX	02:15 MSuX	6T43	Via Sutton Park. Steel empties ex-Wolverhampton Steel Terminal plus any other traffic
Washwood Heath	03:05 MSuX	03:45 MSuX	6T43	Via Sutton Park, Bescot and Soho Road. Steel traffic ex-Ravenscraig and Sheffield area
Wolverhampton Steel Terminal	05:45 MSuX	06:30 MSuX	6T43	Any available traffic
Bescot Yard	07:10 MSuX	07:15 SO	0Z00	Light Engine
Bescot LHS	07:30 SO	-	-	-
Bescot LHS	-	07:10 MO	0T43	Light Engine. Loco off 6M06, the 19:12 SSuX Boston to Bescot (arr. 00:08 MSuX)
Bescot Yard	07:20 MO	07:50 MO	6T43	Steel traffic off 6M06 ex-Boston
Round Oak	08:25 MO	08:51 MO	6T43	Any available traffic
Brierley Hill	09:04 MO	-	6T43	Freight Shunt & Trip as required to/from Brierley Hill, Great Bridge, Round Oak and Wednesbury
Brierley Hill	12:00 MO	(12:30 SSuX)	(6E73)	Loco works 6E73, the 12:30 SSuX Brierley Hill to Boston
Bescot Yard	-	07:50 MSSuX	6T43	Steel traffic off 6M06 ex-Boston
Round Oak	08:25 MSSuX	-	6T43	Freight Shunt & Trip as required to/from Brierley Hill, Great Bridge, Round Oak and Wednesbury
Brierley Hill	12:00 MSSuX	(12:30 SSuX)	(6E73)	Loco works 6E73, the 12:30 SSuX Brierley Hill to Boston

Abbreviation: LHS (Locomotive Holding Sidings).

Some two-hours or so after arriving with 6M06, the loco made an outward run from Bescot to Washwood Heath with empties ex-Wolverhampton together with any other traffic gathered at Bescot, returning to the Black Country with consignments of steel from Ravenscraig Steelworks and from the Sheffield area to Wolverhampton ST. After arriving back at Bescot, the trip made a delivery to Round Oak with traffic off 6M06 ex-Boston. This was then followed by a period of tripping on an "as required" basis to and/or from Brierley Hill, Great Bridge (then acting as a satellite site to Wednesbury ST), Round Oak and Wednesbury, arriving back at Brierley Hill around mid-day from where the loco departed the region atop 6E73, the 12:30 SSuX empties to Boston (balance of 6M06), which, for operating convenience, started from Brierley Hill rather than at Round Oak.

For a while, up until summer 1991, the traction for the aforementioned 6M06 trunk train from Boston to Bescot and associated T43 trips was booked for a pair of Class 20s (the diagram became a Metals sector Class 37 turn with effect Monday 8th July 1991, which was also the official date Speedlink was abolished). The tripping arrangements at that time were much simplified, entailing the delivery of traffic off 6M06 to Round Oak followed by an out-and-back 6T43 jaunt from Round Oak to Washwood Heath dealing with empties outward and returning with any available traffic to Round Oak, the Type 1 pairing then departing with 6E73, the 13:35 SSuX back to Boston for another consignments of imports.

As of summer 1991, Trip T43 had become a busier and more interesting diagram. The now rostered Class 37 off 6M06 ex-Boston made an 03:00 MSuX departure from Bescot to Birmingham Lawley Street (arr. 4:15am) with a call for traffic purposes at Washwood Heath (03:50-04:05). Outward traffic included empty bogie Sheerness Steel scrap carrying wagons for loading at Handsworth (see later), Kingsbury and Tyseley, those for Kingsbury and Tyseley being detached at Washwood Heath for onwards tripping from there. Non-Metals sector business consisted of loaded gas oil tanks ex-Fawley for Tyseley Depot (also detached at Washwood Heath) and possibly former Speedlink traffic (European goods) for Birmingham Distribution Centre (BDC), which was situated adjacent to Lawley Street Freightliner Terminal. One of the main traffics handled at BDC for some years was that of automotive glass loaded in IMA bogie vans from Italy for the automotive industry and various car dealerships.

The next part of T43s itinerary was to depart Washwood Heath at 05:10 SSuX with empty scrap carriers for loading at Coopers Metals at Handsworth (arr. 6:40am), which entailed travelling via Birmingham New Street and running-round at Langley Green (06:00-06:20). Traffic on this stage of the journey would have included bogie PXA Sheerness Steel types and also two-axle SSA (ex-POA) types, the latter being attached at Washwood Heath and at that time dedicated to scrap metal movements to the Aldwarke (Rotherham) and Stocksbridge (Sheffield) steel plants in South Yorkshire. From Handsworth, a Light Engine run back to Bescot ensued, from where trips were then made to Wednesbury and Round Oak before finally working 6E73 to Boston.

Monday 27th July 1992: Seen from the remaining platform of Wednesbury Town station (closed July 1964), Class 37 No. **37 713** arrives, at 5:10pm, with a lightweight 6T43 trip from Bescot, its meagre wagon consist being formed of just two empty BDA types and one SPA. The loco departed Wednesbury with 6E29 to Scunthorpe, which was actually booked to start from Bescot (dep. 17:34 SSuX). **David J. Hayes.**

Further Tripping Variations

Yet another incarnation of Trip T43, as of October 1991, entailed the Metals sector Class 37 dealing with former Speedlink traffic from Bescot to and from Pensnett. This was yet another short-lived arrangement, by which time Metals sector traffic previously gathered at Washwood Heath was now being focussed on Bescot, thus filling the void left by Speedlink. Traffic handled at Pensnett in the wake of Speedlink's demise is thought to have mainly been that of imported chipboard from Switzerland, and possibly that of mineral water and wine from France. Although Speedlink itself had been abolished in July 1991, RfD managed to keep a skeletal wagonload network "alive" for European wagonload traffic based on the Dover train-ferry operation in anticipation that such business would boom once the Channel Tunnel opened in summer 1994. This wasn't to be, unfortunately, although it did peak at over 3-million tonnes in 1998 at a time when rail freight was witnessing a much welcome resurgence under the aegis of English, Welsh & Scottish Railways (EWS).

The T43 Class 37, again as per October 1991, also dealt with the Boston imports from Bescot to Round Oak as well as with traffic to and from Brierley Hill and Wolverhampton, and the delivery of empty scrap carriers to Wednesbury for loading at Bilston by Norton Barrow (see below). Other traffic detached at Wednesbury may have included domestic steel and imports from Europe entering the UK through Dover (former RfD Speedlink business). This could also include steel together with sawn timber from Luxembourg. Some of the steel/RfD traffic detached at Wednesbury may have later been tripped to Great Bridge using Wednesbury's Class 08 pilot duty (T22), which also delivered scrap empties to Bilston and collected the scrap loads later in the day.

Interestingly, by this time (October 1991), the Class 37 off 6M06, the 19:08 SSuX Boston to Bescot (arr. 00:02 MSuX), having fulfilled its T43 tripping commitments in the Black Country, was booked to depart the region with 6E29, the 17:34 SSuX Bescot to Scunthorpe. Likewise, the loco allocated to Metals Trip T44 (looked at next month), which was powered by the Class 37 off 6M59, the 01:40 SSuX Scunthorpe to Bescot (arr. 5:37am), departed early afternoon atop 6E73, the 13:25 SSuX Brierley Hill to Boston. This working practice enabled a "loco rotation" arrangement with 6M06/6T43/6E29 and 6M59/6T44/6E73, to be implemented, which continued into 1993.

Wednesday 6th September 1989: Nicely backlit by the early evening sun, large logo Class 31 No. **31 147** approaches Coseley, at 6:11pm, with 6T43, the 18:00 SSuX trip from Wolverhampton ST to Bescot (arr. circa 6:40pm). The diagram was soon to be rendered "spare" from 2nd October 1989, but would be reinstated 12-months later, with effect 1st October 1990, as a Class 37 assigned Metals sector duty. **David J. Hayes.**

Wednesday 19th December 1990: Four Italian-registered IMA bogie vans arrive at Bescot, at 12:42, behind Class 20 Nos. **20 108 + 20 215**, which are allocated to Trip 6T43. It is assumed that their booked working, 6E73, the 12:30 SSuX Brierley Hill to Boston, conveying empties from Round Oak, had been "caped" (cancelled), so the Type 1 pairing performed the additional tripping turn, as seen here, which has most likely originated from Wednesfield Road Goods. **David J. Hayes.**

T43 Finale

Trip T43s final incarnation as a Metals sector duty was in 1993, the diagram being shown as "spare" from May of that year onwards. As of January 1993, its allocated Class 37, off 6M06 from Boston, tripped the Boston imports from Bescot to Round Oak (arr. 6:05am and again at 8:15am) together with steel traffic from South Wales reaching Bescot (arr. circa 6am) on a 6M11 Metals sector service from Margam. It also dealt with traffic to Wolverhampton ST (arr. 11:50am and again at 2:50pm), which is thought to have included traffic off 6M11 and possibly off 6M12, the 06:50 SSuX Cardiff Tidal to Bescot (arr. 12:29); this made a call at Brierley Hill (11:08-11:48). Some traffic off 6M12 was also tripped from Bescot to Round Oak using T43 resources for a while as of September 1992.

Thursday 5th December 1991: For a short period, as mentioned in the article, the Metals sector Class 37 allocated to Trip T43 was diagrammed to deal with European traffic to Pensnett (normally handled by RfD resources). Class 37 No. **37 714** is seen at Pensnett and is about to be attached to some Continental vans, which will be worked to Bescot (arr. 12:10 pm) via a call at Brierley Hill from where it would depart at 11:30 SSuX. ***Paul Dorney***

The above mentioned 6M12 trunk service had previously departed Cardiff Tidal around midday and was once one of two Metals sector services from Cardiff Tidal running to the Black Country each weekday dedicated to the delivery of Allied Steel & Wire products (lengths of reinforcing rod and rod/wire-in-coil) to Brierley Hill and Wednesbury where it terminated. However, Wednesbury ST together with the satellite facilities at Great Bridge (overflow to Wednesbury) and Wednesfield Road Goods (overflow to Wolverhampton ST) had each closed back in November 1992. The Boston Docks to Round Oak traffic ended in January 1993 and the line from Bescot/Walsall (Pleck Junction) to Stourbridge Junction via Dudley, itself, closed soon after as a through route in March 1993 when the section northwards from Round Oak was "mothballed" (now to be re-opened southwards from Wednesbury as an extension of the Midland Metro). The Boston to Round Oak service later resumed in October 1997, under the aegis of EWS, and was routed via Worcester (run-round) for a while, but today is dealt with at Wolverhampton ST.

Wednesday 12th June 1991: The Class 20 pairing of **20 163 + 20 078** pass the site of Wednesbury Town station (closed July 1964), at 9:22am, with 6T43, the 08:45 SSuX Round Oak to Washwood Heath (arr. 9:50am), which is formed mainly of empty BDA type wagons. The Type 1 veterans returned "Light" and later departed the Black Country region with the 6E73 afternoon empties (ex-Round Oak) to Boston Docks. The tower blocks visible in the middle distance are those of Bolton Court, which were opened in September 1965 and demolished in July 2011. **David J. Hayes.**

Thursday 1st August 1991: Also seen passing the site of Wednesbury Town is Class 37 No. **37 048**, at 10:17am, with the 6T43 Bescot to Round Oak tripping turn. The "split-box" Type 3 is adorned in Metals sector branding and has a string of bogie BOA wagons in tow laden with a hefty consignment of steel coils that have been imported through Boston Docks, Lincolnshire. The traffic ended in January 1993, but resumed several years later in October 1997. **David J. Hayes**

Sign of the times?

The Kent & East Sussex Railway (K&ESR) announced in late November a planned management transition as part of a strategic budget review to address predicted flat income against rising costs in 2026. The Board has agreed a restructure that removes the General Manager post and reallocates day-to-day operational responsibilities across existing directors and managers. “Like many visitor attractions, heritage railways face headwinds from inflation in energy, insurance, materials and compliance costs. The K&ESR Board has chosen to simplify overheads while maintaining visitor experience and the railway’s long-standing safety standards. This is a pragmatic step to live within our means while keeping our focus on safety, service, and the visitor experience.

Outgoing General Manager Robin Coombes, that’s him on the left shaking hands with the Chairman, said I’ve mentioned before that this place which I call paradise is built on string, sticking plasters, and sheer willpower — and it’s true. But it’s also built on pride, passion, and a deep love for what this railway stands for. That’s what’s kept me here, and what will keep it going long after I’ve stepped away. My part in the story ends after Santa, but K&ESR continues — and I have no doubt you’ll take it further than ever. Heritage railways were started by volunteers — people with grit and imagination — and that spirit still runs through every part of this place. So thank you everyone at K&ESR for the kindness, the hard work, the humour, and the belief. You’ve made this job one of the hardest I’ve ever done, but also one of the best. I leave proud, grateful, and optimistic.

Robin later posted on his Facebook site, look a little closer into the background of this picture and you’ll see something far more important: a steam locomotive working hard up the bank to Tenterden, hauling a short goods train on the driving test of one of our young volunteers, Angus. Early 20s. Calm under pressure. Focused. Determined. And yesterday, he passed.

That single moment — a young driver taking charge of a steam engine — is what the true resilience and sustainability of heritage railways looks like. Not just locomotives lovingly maintained, or stations kept alive by community spirit, but the next generation stepping forward to learn skills, shoulder responsibility, and carry 150 years of tradition into the future. Angus could be driving steam for the next 50 years, and that, quietly in the background of a handshake photo, is the real story worth celebrating

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Chipperfield Circus elephants being loaded onto a British Railways van at St Botolph station, Colchester in September 1961. Railway workers were used to transporting animals, although normally they dealt mainly with livestock being taken to markets! By the 1960s the numbers of animals being transported by rail was in decline due to competition from the roads. **Photo: National Railway Museum**

The Southern Railway had built some bogie scenery vans in three lots, the last built in 1949. Three of the vans were later fitted with an additional layer of planking to reinforce the floor, along with steel securing rings, and were used for the carriage of circus elephants in Billy Smart's Circus train, which took Billy Smart's elephants and horses on tour around Britain during the 1950s and 60s.

Right, No **4601** nicely restored on the Bluebell Railway and used as a children’s play carriage.

Photo: Derek Hayward

Codsall Corner

An unknown Class 40 heads west c1968. Both up and down loops are still in but the goods yard has been lifted, a sign of further rationalisation to come.

No doubt the three lads under the canopy would have preferred steam, as in the picture below with what looks like a 9F working hard.

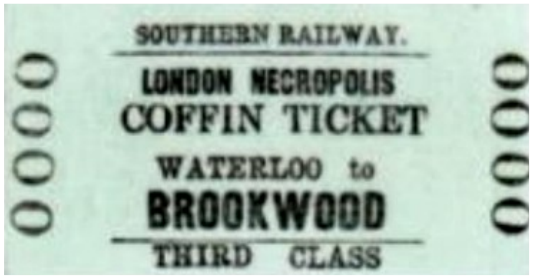
Photos: Unknown, eBay sale items.

An unknown BR Std Class 4 4-6-0 photographed from the end of the up platform. The very neatly chalked train reporting number indicated to signalmen that this was an express passenger train **(1**) with a destination on the midland region **(M).**

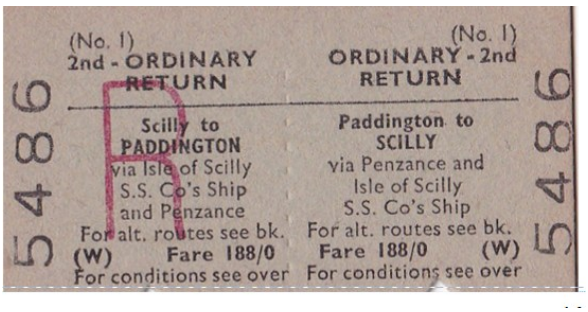
By 1976, the replacement of the huge number of manual signal boxes with centralised power-signalling coupled with computer-based train control and more modern telecommunications systems meant that it was no longer necessary to display headcodes throughout the railway network.

Phil Drake kindly shares some more of his ticket collection

The Waterloo ticket isn't from the main terminal station, but from the well-known Necropolis Station a few hundred yards away on Westminster Bridge Road, from where trains ran to Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey, opened in 1852 in response to public health concerns about overcrowded inner city cemeteries. A daily train ran until the station was destroyed by bombing in 1941. (Comment about stiff fares being charged will be avoided, **or indeed single fares only-Ed!)**

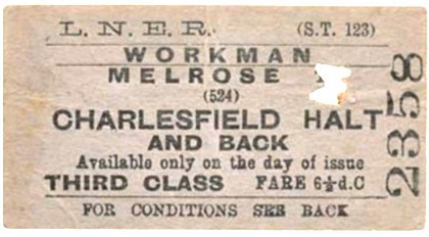


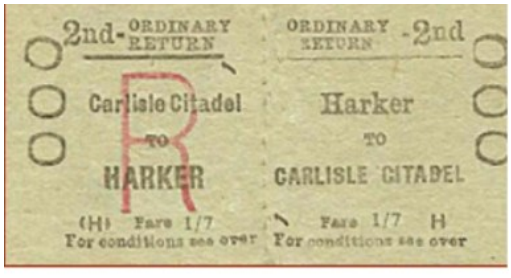
The last few tickets spread the net a little more widely. Castlemilk wasn't a station- it was a Glasgow housing estate (or 'scheme' in Scots parlance) which was the destination of an experimental service to link the estate into the newish Blue Train network in 1962-63; competing as it did with a frequent through Glasgow Corporation bus service, (G.C.T.) it was predictably short-lived. Scilly is an island group, not a specific place (and certainly not a station) but it was identified as St Mary's in GWR and BR timetables. Through bookings like this are no longer available.

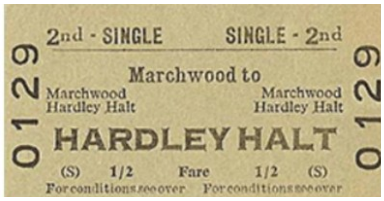


The Swiss ticket is valid to Iselle Transito. Getting out there would be difficult as it is halfway through the 12.5-mile Simplon Tunnel and is the agreed frontier point between Switzerland and Italy. This ticket is, intriguingly, headed 'BR London'; it is valid from the French frontier at Vallorbe Frontiere (which is a station), possibly in connection with a rail staff free travel facility. Tickets to and from these points are still quite common, as Swiss pass holders only need to pay for the share of their journey outside their own country.

Charlesfield Halt, Harker and Hardley Halt are more examples of stations built, or retained after closure to the public, to serve what in an earlier age were called 'workmen'. Charlesfield Halt, on the Waverley Route near St Boswells, opened in 1942 to serve an ordnance factory which employed 1300 people making incendiary bombs. The site was used as a Naval Armaments Depot post-war; the halt closed in 1959. Harker was on the same line, but further south near Carlisle; it closed as a public stop in 1929, but reopened in 1936 (unadvertised) to serve Carlisle Airfield, which soon passed into military use as RAF KIngstown and then 14MU (+Maintenance Unit), a stores and maintenance depot. It lasted until the line closed at the start of 1969. The ticket and information both came from the excellent Disused Stations website. Hardley Halt was alphabetically, if not geographically close; it had a very short life from 1954 or 1958 (sources differ) to 1965 to serve Fawley Refinery near Southampton; it closed with the branch passenger service.







Frank Sutton describes six days on the North Briton rail tour in 2008

Day five, Tuesday 15th April. Double headed 45407 & 60009 as 1Z23 Inverness - Glasgow loaded, 12 coaches 200 miles. The original plan was to detach 45407 at Perth which we would then run engine and support coach to Thornton Junction whilst Bob Morrison, Keith Murfin and Gareth were to work through to Glasgow with 60009. As that crew were booked to move 45407 from Thornton Junction the next day and we were due out of Glasgow next morning with 71000. we swopped footplates at Perth, putting us in our proper positions without the expense of taxis.

So the day began with no early start and plenty of time for breakfast, first one for three days; I don't think my body can take this sort of luxury. In Inverness Yard we joined the support crews on another beautiful morning. These support crews do a fantastic job and we always admired their dedication in getting everything prepared on the loco. I personally feel rather guilty because we just climb on board, work the train and get all the glory and praise from the passengers. Anyway down to business, our loco 45407 was leading 60009 as i said manned by Bob, Keith and Gareth and I thought here we go again pulling Crewe men around the countryside, only joking my pens getting tired. Back to the story, we had a tender full of small coal so it was the same technique as yesterday although the hard work starts right after the station departure so I made the fire up very gradually in the yard. One worry was the rear damper would not open fully or stay open although it was ok yesterday, so in time honored fashion it was wedged open with a spanner. I visually checked underneath and noted that it was only half open so hopefully no problem.

So with an Inverness Pilot Driver we departed and were straight into a 21 mile climb and she was steaming perfectly. Looking back at Keith on 60009, the big grin on his face assured us that they were in good nick too. At Culloden we were looped for a freight train to pass us on the down line. Leaving here Steve shouted "look at this" and looking forward I was amazed by the site of Culloden Viaduct rearing up from a short level approach into a 1 in 60 climb looking like a ski jump!

Culloden viaduct

45407 and 60009 *Union of South Africa* are working well off the viaduct with the North Briton heading south from Inverness

Photo: Copyright David Price

Steam pressure dropped back to 205 psi after this stop bit I was expecting this with the damper problem but we soon got it back to 225 psi and went over the top at Slochd Summit with the boiler in good order; anybody observing us would think we went over this bit of railway everyday. We were looped again at Aviemore to cross another train. leaving here we heard a loud bang from under the footplate Brian immediately stopped the train and the loco and track were examined with no fault found; somebody said it was John Cameron's wallet falling on the track but John, the owner of 60009, said it would have made a louder bang! All this took time and as such we lost our booked path and had to wait for two more trains to pass before we departed for Kingussie our water stop. At our water stop one of the support crew removed the wire mesh from behind the rear damper thus making it work fully. The mesh guards are a requirement of the modern railway although they are nothing but a hindrance.

Leaving Kingussie I exchanged the shovel for the regulator for the south bound climb of Druimuachdar, I'm getting to know this railway. On the climb Brian and Steve were fighting each other for the shovel much to my amusement but I think the Inverness pilot man must have thought he was in the company of a bunch of mad Englishmen and would no doubt be glad when we were back behind Hadrian's Wall. Over the top now for the 50 miles and nearly all downhill to Perth; what a railway this, is I would love to work over it on a regular basis.

At Perth as planned we changed from a cool Stanier footplate to a Gresley hot oven but we are used to it. Steve took over the regulator from here to Glasgow with Brian and I sharing the firing, no more fighting for the shovel. Somewhere after Stirling the regulator gland started leaking showering Steve with steam and water; well if it is going to discomfort anybody it may as well be an Inspector! I went through the tender to inform Fraser who promptly came through to try and remedy it but to no avail. It had blown the packing completely out so Steve had to suffer it with little or no sympathy from Brian and I. Approaching Glasgow Brian pointed out the site of the former Polmadie shed. The old repair shop was still there which I remember sneaking round on a 'shed bash' in 1964. At Glasgow Central a diesel came onto the rear to drag us to Mossend from where we left in a taxi to our final hotel stay in Motherwell. This is quite a nice place but we had no time to enjoy it for we were only just in time for the last orders in the restaurant so it was quick wash, a meal, a pint and to bed with the alarm set for 04.30.

Day 6, Wednesday 16th April. 71000 'Duke of Gloucester' Glasgow - Newcastle via Carlisle as 1Z28, 175 miles.

Out of bed at 04.30 and dragged myself down to the hotel foyer, no breakfast of course but they made up packed lunches, and grunted a good morning to Brian. He was trying to ring Steve as the taxi had arrived. When he eventually got Steve to answer he said he had set his alarm for 05.00 (all that steam and water must have got to him) and told us to go and he would call another taxi.

So back on the footplate, it felt as though we had not been to bed, eventually Steve arrived saying "don't speak to me until 10.00, I hate early starts" I said I had got the solution and showed him my supply of Paracetamol. He readily took one and I had two, looking at Steve I think I would be doing most of the firing. Looking at the coal I might need more pills for we had the same small stuff about as big as marbles which 60009 would have thrived on it but 71000 has a deep firebox, not so easy and an extra coach on the hook, 13 in all. We were dragged back from Mossend to Glasgow Central by a diesel loco again while I was making up the fire slowly as I had done over the last few days.

After photographs were taken we departed a little late of the 06.20 booked start time. Brian on the regulator reminded me that we would be climbing for many miles so no let up for me then. As predicted she started losing steam pressure but at least I held her at between 200 and 210 psi for mile after mile not daring to knock the exhaust injector off and keeping 3 parts of a glass of water comfortably. I started to get the better of her well before the Abingdon water stop where I ate my packed lunch, first one in six days, luxury. Leaving Abingdon the steam pressure was back to where it should be, 250 psi and it stayed there, my pills must have kicked in and what seemed no time at all Brian shouted "that's it Beattock Summit" piece of cake this job. Rattling through Beattock Station Brian vacated the driving seat and stuffed me in it for a fast run to Carlisle Kingmoor.

Concentrating on the road ahead I can't remember who did most of the firing but I know there was no fighting between Steve and Brian, "haha", the hard work was over, running at 75 mph with the gear notched up to 6 or 7% which you can do with Caprotti Valves. I hadn't a clue where I was but Steve and Brian were keeping an eye on the road and at one point Brian shouted at me to make a lot of noise with the whistle, I shouted why? He replied that we were crossing the border; "hurrah" we definitely are a bunch of mad Englishmen. After the Kingmoor water stop with Brian back in the driving seat, we rolled into Carlisle station and picked up Willie Linden again for another training session. I left the firing mainly to him just giving a hand occasionally, taking the chance to enjoy the scenery again. At Newcastle Tyne Yard Brian was relieved by Chris Bayliss, Willie was going through to York so he relieved me and Steve was relieved by Jim Smith. After saying our goodbye's we all travelled our different ways home. I greeted my wife with a slightly Scottish accent, she wasn't amused, they never are, are they?

Heading for Newcastle, No 71000 on the curve after leaving the deep cutting at Cowran.

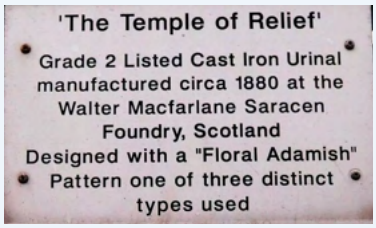
Photo: Copyright David Price

Proof House Junction

Type AL1 ac electric No. **81004** approaches Proof House Junction, Birmingham with the 10.10 SO Euston - Aberystwyth on 31st July 1982.

Photo: David Rostance

Geoff Dowling commented this is an interesting angle which shows in the first arch after the 2 adverts one of Birmingham's wonderful cast iron toilets.



Below, A typical Birmingham 'Temple of Relief' slotted into a railway arch as many of them were around the city centre.

How it got its name

Right, the Birmingham Proof House was established by Act of Parliament in 1813 to ensure small arm user safety, as far as it is practicable, by the compulsory and statutory proof of small arms. It stands in the lee of the railway embankment, unnoticed by many of the travellers above.

Over 200 years later the Birmingham Proof House remains at the forefront of international standards for the testing of firearms and ammunition, recently achieving ISO 17025 accreditation for the British Proof Laboratory located onsite.

Essex Road railway station - a creepy tale

The station was opened on 14 February 1904 by the Great Northern & City Railway on its underground route between the Great Northern Railway station at Finsbury Park and the Metropolitan Railway station at Moorgate in the City of London.

The plan was for electrified trains of the **G**reat **N**orthern **R**ailway to run from Finsbury Park, now the East Coast Main Line, to the City of London at Moorgate. However, the GNR eventually opposed the scheme and cancelled its electrification plans, and when the line opened in 1904 its northern terminus was in tunnels underneath Finsbury Park GNR station. It was originally electrified using an unusual fourth-rail system with a conductor rail outside each running rail.

By comparison with other underground stations built at the beginning of the 20th century, the station's surface building is nondescript and unremarkable, unlike its near neighbour in Essex Road, the former Carlton Cinema with its Egyptian façade, the creation of Architect George Coles. The Egyptian theme was probably due to the discovery in 1922 of the tomb of Tutankhamun. The Carlton became the ABC in 1962, but closed as a cinema ten years later in August 1972, when it was then converted into a Mecca Bingo Club, before it was purchased by Resurrection Manifestations, who use the old building as a place of worship**.**

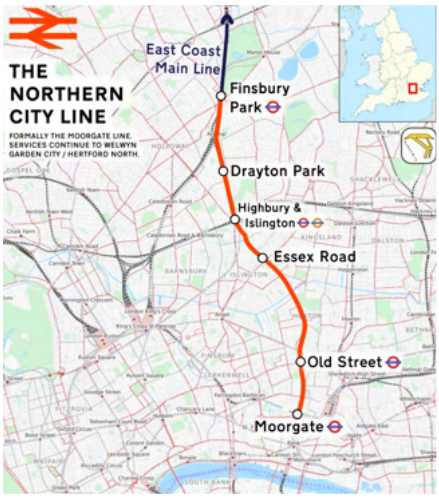
Because the GN&CR was intended to carry main line trains its tunnels were constructed with a larger diameter than the other deep tube railways being built at that time. From 1913 the Metropolitan Railway took control of the GN&CR and ran it under its own name until it became part of the London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) in 1933. In preparation for the LPTB's Northern Heights plan, some of which was never completed after the disruption of WW11, the line was transferred to the control of the Morden-Edgware Line, now the Northern line. The station was, from the early 1960s, closed on Sundays and in the 1970s it was also closed on Saturdays.

The Northern City Line closed completely on 4 October 1975 and ceased to be part of the London Underground. The line was transferred to British Rail (BR) and the unused connection between Drayton Park and Finsbury Park from the cancelled Northern Heights plan finally received the tracks to connect the line to the surface platforms at Finsbury Park. On 8 August 1976, the City Line reopened as part of the BR network with main line size trains running to Old Street. On 8 November 1976, seventy-two years after the GN&CR first opened, the line was opened fully for main line trains from Moorgate to Finsbury Park and beyond as had been originally intended. It is the only underground station on this line not operated by London Underground or Transport for London and the only deep-level station served by national rail.

Unlike many other central London underground stations, Essex Road was never modernised with escalators and access to the platforms is by lift or a 156 step spiral staircase which gives rise to its rather creepy reputation, especially at quiet times when you could be the only passenger. Strangely, when you reach the bottom you then have to climb steps **up** to the platform level. Until recently the station retained the 1980s Grey, Blue and Red Network SouthEast identity everywhere.


Photo: Dave Dixon

Right, the 1923 stock seen here was the last remaining pre-1938 stock operating on LT until 3 November 1966. An off- peak 2 car set is seen here arriving ecs to take up a southbound service - six cars operated in the peaks. The ancient looking signal box on the left was actually built by LT in 1938 replacing an earlier 1904 Great Northern example. **Photo: Unknown**



Right, 717016, Photo: Ian Mansfield

Today, all services at Essex Road are operated by Great Northern using Class 717 EMUs. The typical off-peak service in trains per hour is 4 trains per hour (tph) to Moorgate, 2 tph to Stevenage via Hertford North, and 2 tph to Welwyn Garden City whilst during the peak hours, the station is served by an additional half-hourly service between Moorgate and Hertford North and the service between Moorgate and Welwyn Garden City is increased to 4 tph. Despite its central location and a Tube-like stopping pattern, the line is only really used for longer-scale commutes: very few people use it as a part of the Tube. These usage stats look like those for a station in London's outer zone seven, not one in Islington. One reason for this might be a lack of awareness that the line exists at all. The absence from the Tube map means very few people in London will have heard of it, let alone ever used it.

Since late 2023, the trains on the Northern City Line started carrying passengers using the European Train Control System (ETCS), first installed on the Cambrian lines in 2011. This allows Network Rail to remove lineside signalling and put all that information on a display screen inside the train cabs instead. Not only does that reduce the cost of a signalling system as there's less hardware, but there's also a reduction in maintenance costs, as there are no longer any signals to maintain. The previous system caused around 9 hours of delays annually due to being antiquated and harder to maintain, so it was in need to updating. The first section to go live, after a lot of testing, was the tunnels between Moorgate and Finsbury Park stations, but the upgrade is already being rolled out along the East Coast Mainline up to north of Peterborough, and may eventually replace all signalling in the UK.

Drivers using digital ETCS aren't told to stop and go by fixed signals at the side of the track. Instead, they drive according to a target speed set by the system in their cab that is kept continually updated about the location of other trains by a multitude of beacons positioned along the track. The system effectively allows drivers to 'see' much further ahead than line-of-sight signals would ever allow, meaning trains can run more efficiently. The technology also allows gentler braking, meaning journeys are smoother and use less energy.

Poet's Corner

Sir John Betjeman CBE was an English poet, writer, and broadcaster and Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death.

Left, sign for Dilton Halt station where Mrs Roberts sold train tickets from her house for a commission.

Sir John wrote this poem about the little halt

West Country 4-6-2 **34100** ***'Appledore'*** passes the halt at the head of 'The Devonshire Rambler' railtour in June 1966. The platforms are staggered each side of the road underbridge.

Was it worth keeping the Halt open,
We thought as we looked at the sky
Red through the spread of the cedar-tree,
With the evening train gone by?

Yes, we said, for in summer the anglers use it,
Two and sometimes three
Will bring their catches of rods and poles and perches
To Westbury, home for tea.

There isn't a porter. The platform is made of sleepers.
The guard of the last train puts out the light
And high over lorries and cattle the Halt unwinking
Waits through the Wiltshire night.

O housewife safe in the comprehensive churning
Of the Warminster launderette!
O husband down at the depot with car in car-park!
The Halt is waiting yet.

Renamed plain Dilton Marsh in 1969, despite BR's best efforts to close the little halt, the 1-coach length wooden platforms were replaced in 1994 and the shelters in 2018.

And when all the horrible roads are finally done for,
And there's no more petrol left in the world to burn,
Here to the Halt from Salisbury and from Bristol
Steam trains will return….. *They didn't but at least the request stop is still open today.*

Model Modellers

Terry Davis explains his Hest Bank layout. A saga of a dream realised.

It is many years since this layout was begun and the reason for its existence started back in the late 1970s when I joined Wolverhampton Model Railway Club. This club was then approaching the height of its reputation for producing large quality layouts based largely on Eastern Region BR practice, and some of you may have seen layouts such as Fordley Park, Leighford, Stoke Summit and Charwelton on the exhibition circuit.

My involvement with these layouts gave me the impetus to start building a layout of my own, based this time on London Midland Region practice. The plan was that it should be made exhibitable so that the kudos gained by previous club layouts should be carried on but in a slightly different vein. Accordingly I set about planning to build a layout which was almost the same size as its predecessors, but which might require fewer operators, as exhibition managers are always keen to trim their costs!

Despite being weaned on the GWR, my first love was fired by frequent visits to New Street station in Birmingham. It was grubby, dishevelled and noisy, but it was always busy and I loved it. The only regret was that we never saw the biggest LM locos; they came later on when electrification was on the cards. I did, however, manage to see Stanier Pacifics later on spotting trips elsewhere and that did it. The gift of a Hornby-Dublo Duchess of Montrose set for Christmas 1955 might also have had something to do with it!

Whatever layout I built had to be based on a location where these superb locos ran. This rather limited the choice to the West Coast main line, so the search was on. I was keen to base the model on a real place rather than creating a fictitious place. I started to look at a number of locations; Colwich, Great Bridgeford and Weedon were among the candidates, but the clincher came when I went to the Manchester show one December and I was introduced to a book, which I bought, called “West Coast Steam” written by Anthony Darnborough. It was then that I saw a chapter about a place I hadn’t heard of called Hest Bank, a small station between Lancaster and Carnforth.

This place leapt out of the page at me because it met all my criteria:-

1 It was small enough to be modelled to scale within a reasonable size.

2 It was WCML. Of course!

3 There was a junction to add operating interest.

4 There was a small yard which enabled a little shunting.

5 It was on a stretch of track where trains ran through at speed.

Stanier LMS "Princess Coronation" class 8P 4-6-2 **46257 "City of Salford**" powers through Hest Bank station with an up WCML express - c.1955**.** **Photo: John Turner 53A Models**

That did it! I set about planning to fit the track plan onto a set of baseboards which I could manage and it was possible with a little bending of the main line. The track plan of the real place did, however, undergo a change in December 1958 and the layout was simplified. I had to choose whether I wanted the layout to be set pre or post the changes and I opted for the pre Dec ’58 changes because the track layout was more interesting and the locos and stock would be more varied.

Making the layout was proceeding at a pace since I had a useful supply of timber and the facilities of the Wolverhampton club behind me. The plan was to have all the boards of the same length so they could fit into a rack in a van for transport. The bare boards were finished quite quickly and it was then that a good friend, a great carpenter, quietly suggested that the boards could be "beefed up" a bit and I shall be for ever grateful to Norman Turner for his work on making these boards as robust as they are. Gratitude also to friend Dave Morris for his enthusiastic assistance with track laying. Work continued apace in the early 2000s in the club rooms, laying track and getting the scenic basics in place when suddenly a change in domestic circumstances took place. We moved house from Wolverhampton to west Wales, just south of Aberystwyth. While this gave me a shed in which to house the erected layout, it also meant that the logistics of taking the layout away on exhibition had become almost impossible.

Early days at Hest with track laid and operating but scenic work just begun with a long way to go. 4F on short freight passing on the down main under the A5105 bridge, heading towards Hest Bank station and on to Carnforth.

I became reconciled, almost gladly, to the fact that Hest Bank was never going on the exhibition circuit and this gave a new sense of freedom. I had almost done the "show business" to a point where we, my wife particularly, was happy to know that there wasn't another show in the offing in a few weeks' time. New projects loomed, a long term building renovation especially, but that's another story. So it was that Hest Bank became a semi-permanent fixture in its shed. After 15 years or so, I have never had to move it and it has always been my "go-to" whenever I needed some relaxation time.

An early shot of the staggered storage yards at the back of the layout. The up yard is in the foreground and has 16 roads with 2 kick-back sidings. The down main yard is the background and also has 16 roads. Trains leaving the down yard traverse the extreme right hand road en route to the scenic section at the front. Similarly trains leaving the up yard pass on the extreme left of the down yard before emerging onto the scenic section.

Mention should be made of the basic configuration of the layout. It is a roundy-roundy with up and down main lines each starting in their own storage yards and passing through the scenic section at the front before returning to the storage yard. There is a junction where the single line from Morecambe heads northwards and joins the main lines just south of the station. This gives additional operational interest as down trains from Morecambe trail in to join the down main line while up trains leave the main to cross over to head south toward Morecambe. The branch runs parallel to the main lines to pass beneath the A5105 road bridge after which in the real world it diverges west towards Bare Lane and Morecambe.

Within the storage yard itself, there is a dedicated road for each train. The 16 roads each way house a representative selection of all the trains which would have passed through Hest Bank in the 1950s. There is an example of every major express, the Caledonian, Royal Scot, Midday Scot and all of the unnamed intercity workings, such as Birmingham-Glasgow/Edinburgh, Liverpool and Manchester-Glasgow/Edinburgh as well as shorter distance ones such as Preston-Barrow and all the other combinations which would have passed through. There also some seasonal ones such as the Morecambe-Windermere summertime excursions. Freight workings are not forgotten; there are several heavy mixed freights (Crewe-Carlisle mostly) and other workings, such as oil from Heysham refinery, steel workings to and fro Workington, and local trip freights allowing the facility to shunt the little yard behind the station. Parcels workings also feature, usually Black 5 hauled and also some "oddball" ones such as Corkickle-St. Helens soda ash. The operation of the layout is flexible at the moment.

This means you can run what you want when you want. There is, however, work underway to create a sequence timetable based on the working timetable for 1957.

A slightly later shot southwards after some scenic work had been done. A Jubilee in charge of a Manchester-Glasgow working has just negotiated the junction and is about to "level-cross" the lane that goes down to the seashore.

A view northwards taken some years ago with an up freight moving off the main line crossing the down main to head along the single line branch towards Morecambe. The signal gantry was unique in design, beautifully modelled by Mick Moore. Much scenic work was still to be done.

It should be said that there are many more realistic, better modelled layouts than Hest Bank; I have seen such beautifully modelled scenic settings which are truly inspirational and enjoyed models of locos and stock far superior to mine. I am glad that such skilled modellers are around in large numbers. It gives us hope for the future of the hobby.

However everyone who chooses this hobby must work by their own criteria. For me, the wish was to create a setting in which the train was the star and the scenery was incidental. A friend who knows the area well opines that I have captured the flavour of this part of Lancashire, but I freely admit that I have had to use proprietary resin buildings or plastic kits to represent the buildings. To have scratch built accurate models of the many structures would have taken far too long.

The best part of modelling for me has long been the construction of locos and coaching stock. A good proportion of those on Hest Bank have been from this source and a much smaller proportion of the freight stock. However there have been so many excellent proprietary models available over the years that I would have been foolish not to utilise them, so all the trains which run through Hest Bank are a mixture of proprietary, kit-built or "kit-bashed" items.

A typical Anglo-Scottish express heads north about to pass through the station. The loco is a much-modified Hornby-Dublo body shell with a scratch-built chassis making light work of the 10 coach rake consisting of some kit-built and some modified proprietary coaches. An everyday scene in 1957 now long gone!

It is a matter of regret for me that such characterful scenes that 1950s British Railways represented disappeared so quickly. I am only grateful that I was able to see these sights first hand at the time. I wasn't old enough to really appreciate the detail of the sights in front of me, so I have had to rely on those who took pictures at the time to augment my memories and to yield much useful modelling information.

When I read articles many years ago in magazines such as the Railway Modeller, I was always intrigued to read layout owners' stock lists of the locos and rolling stock owned. I confess that such a list about Hest Bank would not only be very long but also tedious, so I'll spare the reader that. Suffice it to say I have accumulated a large number of locomotives which represent just about all the types which would have been seen in this area, and they all take their turns to operate the 34ish trains which inhabit the storage area. All of these trains are made up from stock which is appropriate to the time and place and broadly consist of:-14 coach Midday Scot and 13 coach Royal Scot (BR Mk 1) down through several long distance rakes of 12, 11 and 10 (mostly ex LMS vehicles) to the 8 coach Caledonian. Some short haul local and 4 parcels vehicle rakes, several heavy freights, a 40 wagon coal empties, a steel empties, a perishables van train, a milk train, an oil tank train and several shorter freights.

Electrically the layout is quite simple (a bit too simple!) with three Modelex handheld controllers, one in charge of the up circuit, one for the down and one for the Morecambe branch. The Morecambe branch can also be switched to either the up or down controllers. This means that a seamless movement off the up main or onto the down main can take place, giving the illusion of traffic coming onto or off the Morecambe branch. One of the regular "set-pieces" is to have an oil train or other freight train leave the down yard, switch to the Morecambe branch and then get held at the gantry signal. Meanwhile a parcels or passenger train then leaves the down yard and makes its way on the down main, overtaking the freight and returning its own road in the down yard. This then leaves the road free for the freight to join the down main line and carry on its way north to Carnforth (maybe onto the Furness line) or Carlisle or even cross the WCML in Carnforth to head back east and south into Leeds. In reality it simply returns to its own road in the storage yard.

Another older shot with much work done but a lot more yet to be done. A down express passes through en route to Carlisle and is just about to pass through the "hole in the sky" heading back into the down storage yard. The bracket signal controlling the junction is under way being built of brass section, while the signal cabin is a resin cast one, subsequently replaced by a more accurate one. Full prototype signalling has now been installed, but is yet to be full operative.

There are many other operating quirks, too numerous to mention, which are used to reflect prototype operations and to vary the viewer's experience from an endless round of trains just passing through. However everyone has their own preferences and it is to be hoped that this taste of Hest Bank will meet with the reader's approval.

I'm sure it will Terry, thanks for sharing. Do you have a layout to share-we would love to hear from you. Ed

Where are we answer: **Colwich.** The station was managed jointly by The London and North Western Railway and The North Staffordshire Railway, closing in 1959. The signalbox closed in 2005.

The junction here was the scene of a serious accident in September 1986 when a Euston bound train travelling under clear signals hauled by 86429 *The Times* struck a London to Manchester via Stoke train hauled by 86211 *City of Milton Keynes* on the junction. The subsequent Ministry of Transport accident report concluded the immediate cause of this collision was that Driver Shaw, who was at the controls of the Manchester train, passed Signal CH23 at Danger and, despite making an emergency application of brakes shortly before reaching the signal, failed to bring the train to a halt until the locomotive was on the switch diamonds of the junction with the Up Main- Up Fast line, 259 yards beyond the signal.

There is no doubt that the reason for Driver Shaw passing Signal CH23 at Danger was his ignorance of the meaning of the Flashing Yellow aspects and the associated signals approaching Colwich Junction. He was clearly under the impression that a Flashing Double Yellow at Signal CH105 followed by a Flashing Single Yellow at Signal CH103 indicated that the route was set for him to go through the junction, even though the signal taking him through the crossover from the Down Fast to the Down Slow line, Signal CH28, displayed a single steady Yellow aspect with a Position 4 Route Indicator.

Shaw admitted that, while he had signed for the two Weekly Notices issued in August 1986 which included details of the signalling alterations on the Down Fast - Down Slow line approaching Colwich, including the use of Flashing Yellow Aspects, he had not in fact studied these sections of the notices, even though this was the first time he had driven over this route since the signalling had been changed.

Interestingly the author of the report, Major P.M. Oliver, added "the failure of Driver Shaw to examine either of the notices giving details of the alteration of the signalling approaching Colwich on the Down Fast line is inexcusable but I consider that it also indicates the importance of motive power inspectors travelling in the cab to check the correct handling of locomotives by drivers and that their knowledge of the 'road' generally and signalling in particular is correct. The reduction in the number of motive power inspectors, as part of the general 'slimming' down of the railway staff, is, in my opinion, a retrograde step which can only lead to less efficient supervision on vital safety matters".

Both driver Shaw and a trainee Southern Region driver who had no right to be in the cab, jumped from the loco moments before impact but sadly Eric Goode, the driver of the London train travelling at nearly 100 mph, died at the scene. Despite nine of the trains carriages being derailed none of the passengers died. Both locos were deemed beyond repair.

Following the accident, local resident and a former permanent way supervisor, Alf Taylor, created a monument to Eric Goode at the site of the accident which Alf looked after until his own death in 1997. The location is where the cab of 86211 came to rest.

Photo: Paul Baxter

The garden is now maintained by members of the very friendly Haywoods Permanent Way, a locally based railway society for people who are interested in all aspects of railways.

Right, No steam in shot but plenty on the shed no doubt as the smartly dressed spotters from Beckenham & Penge Grammar School for Boys get to enjoy a spin on the Bricklayers Arms turntable sometime in February 1959.

Photo: Nigel Lemon

Some of these learned scholars would have grown up to be railway enthusiasts no doubt and perhaps visited the site below.

Eastern Region K1 2-6-0 **No 62012** under the ornate arches of Alnwick station in April 1964 with an afternoon train to Alnmouth. The loco was shedded at Alnmouth 52D at the time but would head north to York later that year.

The station is now occupied by the very wonderful Barter Books and was described thus in County Living magazine...

'Just as books can transport you to another place, so, to, can the best bookshops - and none more so than this one. Housed in Alnwick's grand Victorian station, Barter Books is one of Britain's biggest secondhand book stores, stocking over 350,000 tomes.'

Photo: Ian Krouse

Below, young spotters give Gresley V3 2-6-2T No **67689** a clean while she waits to depart from Washington in September, 1956! 67689 was a Gateshead loco until 1962 when it was transferred to Haymarket shed in Scotland.

How the mighty have fallen, for two years earlier, 67689 was one of the locos used to haul the Royal train from Newcastle to Sunderland and back on the occasion of the visit of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to the N.E. Coast. V1 tank 67653 and V3 tank 67689, both beautifully polished for the occasion, ran bunker first from Newcastle and were prompt to time, arriving at Sunderland at 4.08 p.m. After a 10 minute halt, the train proceeded to Ryhope Grange where the engines ran round the coaches ready for the return journey. Due to delays on the Royal tour of Tyneside, the return journey was commenced about half an hour late.

Ian Krause and friends were not adverse to a spot of engine cleaning towards the end of steam!
Photo: Ian S. Carr

East Anglian Aveling

Sirapite, seen below at the now closed Leiston station, is a very rare shunting engine. It is part traction engine and part locomotive and was built in 1906 by Aveling and Porter for Gypsum Mines Ltd at Mountfield in Sussex. Its name comes from a product similar to plaster of paris which was produced by the company; 'Sirapite' was decided to be more suitable than 'Parisite'!

Sirapite was bought by Richard Garrett & Sons, a manufacturer of agricultural machinery, steam engines and trolleybuses, and brought to Leiston in 1929. It was used to replace the horses which had been used to haul the trucks which conveyed goods and materials on tracks between the workers' houses to and from the town site (where today's Long Shop Museum is located) to the top works and Leiston railway station, Right.

Sirapite was the visible link between the company and the townspeople, trundling backwards and forwards across the main road, supervised, **below** by a man with a red flag**.**

The Garrett Company logo

Photos: Unknown

Right, *Sirapite*, having crossed Main Street, climbs the incline into the town works.

Photo: Richard Casserley

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Email letters

Andy Harris was in touch earlier to say further to my article about the Burton Railway Society, we had a successful 40th Anniversary day out at the Statfold Barn Railway This is the Carrabasset Parlor Car that we hired which was built at Boston Lodge in 2005 for the late, great, Adrian Shooter.

Photo: Burton Chairman Dave Hook.

Seen through the crowd was 0-4-2T Isaac, a 1953 Bagnall, from the Rustenburg Platinum Mines in South Africa, about to work our first train of the day. **Photo: Andy Harris**

Your chance to comment on previous items, add a photo or story, correct our mistakes and generally add to our knowledge …. We would love to hear from you!

EMAIL:

lenadpam@hotmail.com

The extraordinary sight last month of a German preserved steam loco, taking three modern Vectron locomotives from the Dessau factory to Blankenburg (Harz) for testing. Can anyone tells us more about its base at the Meiningen Steam Locomotive Works? Andrew Watts we probably mean you! **Photo: Dirks Bahnbilder**

A wintery scene at Buxton on 27th November 1985 including a class 104 diesel multiple unit and a pair of class 37 diesel-electrics, 37169 and 37080. Photo: David Rostance