

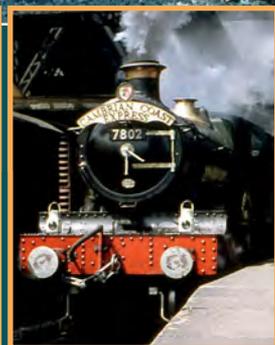
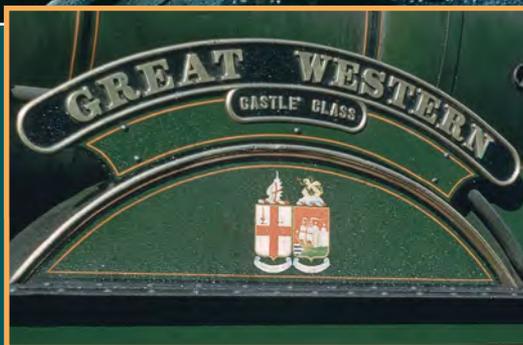
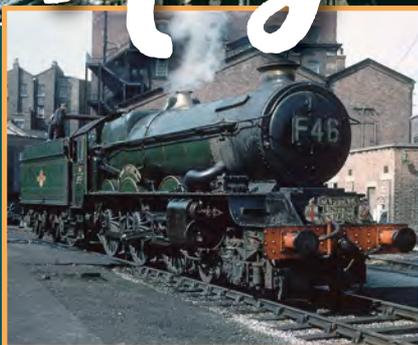
# BR STEAM

## WESTERN REGION 50 YEARS ON



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Cover: **No 7810 Draycott Manor on shed at Aberystwyth in the early 1960s.** Geoff Rixon

This page: **No 5014 Goodrich Castle is seen at Sonning Cutting with the up 'Cathedrals Express' in August 1958.** K.W.Wightman

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This atmospheric scene, captured on film at the wooden-plated Dovey Junction station on a frosty 27 December 1961, shows the Barmouth and Pwllheli-bound 'Cambrian Coast Express' about to depart. The titled train is hauled on this occasion by No 7802 *Bradley Manor*, a locomotive now preserved, and a long-term resident of Aberystwyth shed at this time, an engine finally withdrawn in August 1964. T.B. Owen

# Introduction

On 1 January 1948 the ‘Big Four’ railway companies – the Great Western, Southern, London & North Eastern Railway and London, Midland & Scottish Railway – were nationalised, and British Railways was created. Very little changed at first, but ahead were vast changes, many following the Beeching Report of 1963.

Over the following pages we take a look at what happened on the Western Region over the period 1948 to 1965, as 31 December 1965 – fifty years ago – saw the end of steam-hauled trains over the Western Region. To mark this event, 50 years on, we take a look at those early days of the Western Region under British Railways and follow the story in text and pictures through those 18 glorious years of steam over the Western Region from 1948.

The story from 1948 starts with the acquisition of Great Western stock and 250 former pre-Grouping company locomotives together with the creation of regional boundaries. Throughout this story we take a look at activity at major steam centres such as Paddington, Birmingham, Swindon, South Wales, over the Cambrian lines, and in the West Country.

There were changes of livery to both locomotives and rolling stock, titled trains being re-instated, and further boundary changes taking place, with some lines being acquired from one of the other regions and some lost, such as the Cambrian lines to the London Midland Region in 1963, and changes involving the Western Region on the Somerset & Dorset line. Here we tell the story of the politics involved regarding changes, and the fact that former Great Western-designed locomotives were still being constructed well into BR days at the same time that Riddles-designed BR Standard locomotives were being built at Swindon Works, many of these having only a short life-span due to the forthcoming dieselisation programme. We also look at the modification of the GWR ‘King’ class 4-6-0s in the mid-1950s and their demise in 1962.

Over the 18 year period from 1948 to 1965 many branch lines were closed, cutting off many rural locations, lines that were once the life-blood of the Great Western railway, but economics got in the way, and continuing to run passenger services, and even freight, over these lines was no longer viable. Passenger services over these lines were not just very convenient for the locals, but many, especially the railway photographers, felt that the ‘rural romance’ of the Great Western Railway, especially in the West Country, such as at locations like Fowey, Kingsbridge, Helston and Buckfastleigh, had disappeared.

All, however, is not lost, as due to the hard work of volunteers, some of those former Great Western lines that were closed have been saved and are now part of the preservation movement, where not only lines such as Totnes to Buckfastleigh, the Severn Valley Railway, Llangollen to Corwen and Paignton to Kingswear have been saved, but also many of the locomotives that were dragged out from the scrapyards, after years of restoration, now run on some of these lines. These lines have now become some of the finest tourist attractions that Britain has to offer. Over 130 former Great Western or GWR-design locomotives have been saved from the cutter’s torch, thanks mainly to Dai Woodham who let the steam locomotives that he purchased for scrap, which stood for many years on Barry Docks, be sold to preservation groups from all over Britain, and for those who visited his scrapyard would see what a mammoth task these enthusiasts had ahead of them.

The romance of steam-hauled trains will live on forever, and our grateful thanks go to those who had the presence of mind to go out there when steam ruled supreme and photograph it all in action, and eventually give railway enthusiasts so much pleasure in railway books and magazines for years to come. All railway enthusiasts that recall those halcyon days of steam have their own special memories of the Western Region, and we hope that this story of BR (Western Region) steam will help rekindle some of those memories.

**On 27 November 1965 No 7029 *Clun Castle* hauled the Western Region’s official ‘Farewell to Steam’ railtour from Paddington to Bristol (Temple Meads) and Gloucester (Eastgate). It is pictured here at Gloucester on that momentous occasion.**





## An inherited railway

*Although, at first, little changed from Great Western days with the formation of British Railways on 1 January 1948, Jeremy English details the changes that were about to take place in the future, and the reasons for the Unions and Labour Party wanting the railways to enter public ownership.*

Great Western Railway employees going to bed on 31 December 1947 would awaken the following morning as employees of the British nation. They would see no apparent changes to their working environment and little change in their surroundings, but at the top of the chain everything had changed, and its effects would be wide-ranging, to an extent that very many of them would no longer have railway jobs within a comparatively short time.

The public ownership of the great undertakings had been the fundamental ideal of the trades unions, some of the largest of which had members in most of the railway-related industries. The unions sponsored the Labour Party, and the great surge of its popularity at the end of the war under the leadership of Clement Attlee had resulted in a landslide victory in the 1945 General Election, one of the main manifesto promises being the nationalisation of all the great industries, which included the railways and the majority of road haulage companies.

The Government delivered its manifesto commitment by passing the Transport Act of 1947, and the railways' ownership had now changed forever. No longer would the railways' prime purpose be to make money for their owners, but to provide a service to the

**The first of two views depicting the last year of Great Western Railway control before nationalisation of the railways on 1 January 1948 show locally-based 4-4-0 'Bull Dog' No 3450 Peacock at Stourbridge Junction station on 5 September 1947 running round its local train. Withdrawn from service in December 1949, as many as 45 engines of this class of double-framed engines, built between 1899 and 1910, survived into BR days. P.J. Garland/Courtesy R.S. Carpenter**

citizens of the United Kingdom. They would be administered by a Railway Executive, which was a part of a newly-established British Transport Commission (BTC), the Executive being responsible for overall management and control of the railway system (the other Executives were the Docks & Inland Waterways, London Transport, and Road Transport). Day-to-day management was to be administered by six regional authorities based on the assets of the four former major railway companies which had been nationalised, together with some minor railways. The regions were the Western Region, the Southern Region, the London Midland Region, the Eastern Region, the North Eastern Region, and the Scottish Region. Importantly, the Executives were not given powers to raise finance.

The GWR, SR, LMS and LNER had been created in 1923 under the provisions of the Transport Act of 1921 and were known as the 'Big Four'. These were effectively four holding companies which had absorbed the many companies that had proliferated in pre-World War I days. They had existed for a quarter of a century and had started to consolidate the working practices of their respective constituent companies. All had diversified into road transport (both lorries and buses), air services, hotels, and shipping. They were integrated transport undertakings and not simply railways.

The 1948 Western and Southern regions were, initially at least, most akin to the railway companies upon which they were based, the only difference being the addition of a few small companies that had remained

independent at the time of the creation of the 'Big Four' companies in 1923. The lines of the other two of the 'Big Four' were to be split up in 1948 to create the London Midland, Eastern, Scottish, and North Eastern regions. These regions were railway-only undertakings, the other activities being taken under the umbrellas of other Executives within the British Transport Commission. The railway regions were initially tasked with retaining the shipping and hotels, although these were soon to be hived off into further Executives.

It could reasonably be expected that the Western Region would maintain the 110-year old traditions of the GWR which could claim continuity from its first trains that ran in 1838; it had received its enabling Act in 1835. It literally stood apart from its rivals by its use of Brunel's broad-gauge track, at seven foot nearly 50% wider than the standard gauge used by all other main-line companies. Commercial pressures had led to the adoption of the standard gauge by 1892, the first sign that Britain's railways were becoming one network.

The company had drawn together most of its rivals or potential rivals during the broad gauge era in the 19th century and had only added the Welsh coal-haulier companies at the Grouping in 1923. These had truly been 'absorbed', and had hardly changed the structure of the Great Western Railway at all. Its locomotive fleet had been standardised since the middle of the first decade of the 20th century under the guidance of Churchward, and continued until nationalisation by his successors, Collett and Hawksworth.



There was initially no real noticeable change to the working practices on the Western Region in the early days of nationalisation, and our second view of those last Great Western days in 1947 shows oil-burning Churchward Mogul No 6320 at Gloucester with a train from Hereford. This locomotive was equipped for oil-burning in March 1947, but reverted back to coal-burning in August 1949. This was the only GWR Churchward Mogul to be converted to an oil burner, and it was fitted with an experimental Laidlaw-Drew burner.

By contrast, the Southern Railway, its only competitor in the south and the West Country, had been created by the absorption of three very different companies in 1923, and the LMS and LNER had been created from some very diverse companies, and all had myriad types of locomotives and rolling stock. The GWR had a virtual monopoly of Wales and its eastern boundary was quite well marked, although it competed with the LMS system from London through Birmingham to Merseyside. Thus the Western Region (second only in size to the London Midland Region) was unique in 1948, and its employees felt that little had changed, and that what some would call the 'Great Western Region' would carry on regardless of nationalisation.

Overall, the gains of the Western Region by comparison with the Great Western Railway were as follows (these were described as minor railways and former joint railways):

- Shropshire Railways Company
- The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway
- The Easton & Church Hope Railway
- Weymouth & Portland Railway
- Great Western & Great Central Railways Joint (Ashendon Junction to Northolt Junction)
- The Severn & Wye and Severn Bridge Railways
- LMS & GW Railways Joint Committee (Brynmaur & Western Valleys; Clifton Extension; Halesowen; Rhymney Joint; Shrewsbury Joint lines; Vale of Towy; Wrexham & Miner)

- Shrewsbury & Hereford Railway
- Tenbury Railway
- West Cornwall Railway
- West London and West London Extension Railways (the former Southern Railway and LMS Joint line through Addison Road/Kensington Olympia)

Losses from the Great Western lines or Joint lines allocated to other regions or Executives, were:

- To the London Midland Region — Birkenhead Railway and Birkenhead Joint
- To London Transport — GWR part of the Western Extension of the Central line to Greenford, Ealing, and Shepherd's Bush line

During the first year of the nationalised railways, in October 1948 Great Western Collett-designed 'Hall' class 4-6-0 No 6916 Misterton Hall looks resplendent when awaiting departure from Gloucester station, but it carries the L&NWR style experimental livery. In fact, although completed in June 1941, this engine of the class was not given its name until April 1946.





Although the Western Region acquired certain lines on the nationalisation of the railways in 1948, it also lost a few to the London Midland Region. One of the gains was the former Southern Railway & LMS Joint line through Kensington (Olympia), a view of which is seen here sixteen years later on 18 July 1964 where a milk train from Old Oak Common passes through hauled by 2-6-2T No 6135.  
E. Wilmshurst

The British Railways regional boundaries map clearly showing the six boundaries as at 1950. As can be seen, the Western Region now had control of most of Wales and the entire West Country west of Exeter, but things would change in the years to come, such as the Cambrian lines passing into London Midland Region control in 1963.

**Initial boundary changes of 1949 and 1950**

Although the Western Region was to all appearances the Great Western in disguise, there was very much that had changed. New layers of management structures and new public owners meant that different attitudes would prevail. In its March/April 1948 issue, the *Railway Magazine* reported that the Railway Executive had established its headquarters at 222 Marylebone Road and had made 'a large number of appointments' to its staff. The Great Western's enigmatic General Manager, Sir James Milne, was the first choice to be Chairman of the Railway Executive, but perhaps realizing that the new bosses would want to change everything and oversee everything, and thus curtail his freedom of action, he declined. He and the GWR's Board had been the most active opponents of nationalisation, and it was probably against his principles to carry on, and he was not unique. Only one former GWR man in high places remained working for British Railways, David Blee, who took on responsibility for commercial direction, and thus became a member of the Railway Executive.

It should be borne in mind that there were many senior managers across the railway world on 1 January 1948 who had started their careers before the Grouping in 1923 and were thus imbued with traditions of many differing styles. People are only human, and there were those who still had scores to settle which



25 years of amalgamation had barely touched. Unfortunately, many had the view that the Great Western Railway was elitist. Those scores still needed to be settled, and the Western Region now became an easier target. Added to these were the new wave of civil servants who wanted to make everything neat and tidy, and politicians whose own masters were the Union bosses. The new British Railways was a cauldron of diverging views and objectives.

The first people to get their own way, as ever, were the civil servants of the British Transport Commission. Competition was now out, so they saw no reason for the new regions to have lines crossing each other's boundaries. Known as 'penetrating lines', they created chaos, and the initial ones to come into their orbit were former L&NWR and Midland Railway, and thus LMS, lines into South Wales.

Around the beginning of 1949 the former L&NWR line from Abergavenny Junction (whence it had been worked by virtue of running powers over the GWR's line from Hereford) to Merthyr Tydfil, the same company's Central Wales line from Craven Arms to Swansea, and the ex-Midland Railway's line from Swansea (St. Thomas) to Brynamman, together with others, were transferred to the Western Region. The Joint LMS (L&NWR) and GWR line from Hereford to Shrewsbury had already been allocated to Western Region control upon nationalisation, together with certain other Joint lines. The British Transport Commission was very vague about the actual date of these transfers, merely stating in an announcement on 30 November 1948 that 'these transfers are now being implemented by the Chief Regional Officers concerned'. It also said that 'proposals are actively in hand for many similar transfers'. The full list of lines affecting the Western Region, transferred under this scheme, is as follows:

*From the London Midland Region*  
Craven Arms to Swansea (Victoria) and branches Swansea (St. Thomas) to Brynamman Hereford (Moorfields) to Three Cocks Junction Rotherwas Junction to Red Hill Junction, Hereford  
Merthyr to Morlais  
'former joint stations including Talywain, Pontardulais etc' (this vagueness is that of the BTC, not us!)

*To the London Midland Region*  
Birkenhead (Morpeth Dock Goods)  
Liverpool (Challoner Street, James St. Office, Lightbody Street and Pier Head depots)

*To the Southern Region*  
Newbury to Winchester (Cheesehill) – this was the southern end of the Didcot, Newbury & Southampton line.

*Former joint stations and depots allocated to Western Region*  
Bristol (Temple Meads), Churchdown, Worcester (Shrub Hill) and Chelsea Basin

The Western Region now had complete control of South Wales and a number of former 'foreign' employees, but the L&NWR 'Super D' goods engines and LMS 'Jinty' 0-6-0Ts still worked the trains.

No doubt heartened by this and the BTC's assertions, the civil servants and their political masters spent the next year seeing what they could do to tidy up their maps. There was much discussion, the proposals inducing opposition both from within the Executive and from the regions. As usual, a compromise was reached – the transfers would separate operating and commercial interests. On 2 April 1950 more extensive transfers of the administration of lines were implemented, the objective of which was described as 'simplifying supervision, reducing administrative costs, and avoiding duplication.'

Needless to say it achieved precisely the opposite.

The Railway Executive, in a pamphlet entitled *A Step Forward* that was issued to all staff said, 'Under nationalisation of the railways it is possible, for the first time in their history, to arrange administration and supervision in such a way that, as far as practicable, each Region becomes self-contained, and the unnecessary expense of two or more administrations operating in the same territory is eliminated. Unfortunately it isn't possible to eliminate conflicts unless there is one single controlling body, and the spilt into regions had created six separate organizations which, despite everything, continued the competition and rivalry of the old companies. Each region had its own newsletters, and each region had been permitted to have its own liveries – at least for non-operating structures and ancillaries – and immediately started to paint them in its house colours which was a complete waste of resources and funding.'

The Western Region gained Marylebone to Northolt Junction and Neasden to Harrow from the Eastern Region. This might appear to be logical as the Western Region had gained those parts of the Joint lines on the route at nationalisation, but the Eastern Region still provided the locomotives and stock and worked the lines. This would be typical of most of the regional changes. The BTC appears to have been wedded to the idea of making administrative work coincide with physical locations, but apparently did not seem to recognize that the vast bulk of railway costs relate to trains rather than offices! As an aside, it seems no lessons were learnt from this, as the 'privatisation' of the railways in 1995 led to the most horrendous explosion of administrative costs and huge cost over-runs in public expenditure on the railways, which are still rampant today. Other gains were as follows:

**One of the important routes that were transferred from the London Midland Region to the Western Region in 1949 was the line from Craven Arms to Swansea (Victoria). However, former LMS motive power continued to work trains over this scenic route, and on 2 August 1963 we see the 1.40pm train for Swansea (Victoria) at Builth Road (High level) station hauled by former LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No 45190 sporting an 89A (Shrewsbury) shed-plate on its smokebox door. At Builth Wells, passengers could change for Brecon in the south and Llanidloes in the north by walking down to the Low Level station. E. Wilmshurst**





From April 1950 more line transfers took place, and one of these was the former LMS line from Birmingham to Bristol over the former Midland Railway main line which included the Lickey incline, a line which continued to have its trains hauled by former LMS motive power for many years to come. During that first year under Western Region control, in August 1950 a former Midland Railway Fowler super-heated '4F' 0-6-0, Saltley-based No 43891, with a down mineral train, approaches Blackwell, at the top of the 1 in 37 $\frac{1}{4}$  Lickey incline.

On 30 November 1948 the British Transport Commission announced that certain lines, stations, and depots would be transferred to and away from the Western Region, and these included some Joint stations and depots. One of these Joint stations transferred to the Western Region was Worcester (Shrub Hill), where on 28 October 1961 we see an excellent view of this station where 'Modified Hall' No 6989 *Wightwick Hall* passes through on one of the through lines as No 7004 *Eastnor Castle* stands at Platform 3 with the 11.10am service for Paddington. The 'Modified Hall' had just brought in the rear portion of the Paddington train from Kidderminster.





Another of the April 1950 transfers to the Western Region, this time from the Southern Region, was the part of the former Somerset & Dorset Joint line from Cole to Bath. This early 1960s view of Bath (Green Park) station shows an ex-LMS '2P' 4-4-0 No 40564 on the centre road waiting to shunt its train into the vacant platform to work an evening train to Templecombe on the S&D line. Awaiting departure in the platform is BR-built Ivatt '2MT' 2-6-2T No 41304 with a train for Bristol (Temple Meads). *Colour-Rail.com/SD451*



*From the London Midland Region*

Hadley Junction to Coalport  
Former LMS lines from Selly Oak to Bath and Bristol (the ex-Midland main line via the Lickey incline) and branches Broom to Byfield (exclusive)  
Warwick (Milverton) station  
Leamington Spa (Avenue) station  
Banbury (Merton Street) station  
Bicester to Oxford line

*From the Southern Region*

Cole to Bath (the old Somerset & Dorset Joint line, which had been taken in by the Southern Region at nationalisation)  
All former Southern Railway lines west of Exeter.

Losses were as follows.

*To the London Midland Region*

Crudginton to Nantwich.

*To the Southern Region*

Thornfalcon to Chard (Central)  
Thorney & Kingsbury halt to Yeovil  
Sparkford to Weymouth and branches to Bridport, Abbotsbury and Easton  
Newbury to Winchester (the Didcot, Newbury & Southampton line, southern section)  
Grafton & Burbage to Andover including Tidworth branch (southern part of Midland & South Western Joint line)  
Reading West (exclusive) to Basingstoke (exclusive)  
Westbury (exclusive) to Salisbury.

The result was a beautifully clean and tidy map, with no overlapping lines, of which the British Transport Commission was no doubt immensely proud. The epitome of all this fiddling was the Somerset & Dorset Joint line.

Once owned jointly by the Southern and LMS railways, from 2 April 1950 the northern part of the Somerset & Dorset line was administered by the Western Region, the southern part by the Southern Region who provided rolling stock, and locomotives were supplied by the London Midland Region (LMR) 'on loan' as the Southern had control of the motive power depots. The Southern would gradually replace the LMR locomotives with others from its own fleet.

After two years of nationalisation, a policy which had been paid for by the Government printing itself money by issuing 3% Transport Stock, there was little evidence of the promised massive investment funds which were supposedly going to become available to the nationalised industries. The Labour Government had now served its full term in office of five years so had to go to the country to obtain a new mandate. This it got on 23 February 1950, but it had a shock as its overall majority fell from 146 to 5, although the Labour Party actually increased its vote, but this went down from 47.7% to 46.1% of the votes cast. In the campaign, the Conservatives, who had opposed nationalisation in the 1940s, realizing that reversing the process would be financially impossible, effectively now endorsed most of those, notably that of the railways, which had taken place. Nevertheless they opposed further such moves, and intended to halt the somewhat gradual nationalisation of commercial road transport, this having only encompassed long-distance (over 25 miles) general carriers. This would leave the so-called 'C licence' carriers (those who only carried their own goods for less than 25 miles) in private hands.

This new Labour administration struggled on into 1951 when Attlee decided to try and

increase his majority by calling another General Election. The Labour share of the vote, both in numbers and percentage of votes cast, went up, the former being the highest it has ever captured and the latter now 48.8% but, such are the vagaries of the British electoral system that the Conservatives won more seats and achieved an overall majority of sixteen from 44.3% of the vote.

No attempt was to be made by the new Government to dismantle the nationalised railway structure, but it was not a friend to the railways either. The Conservatives naturally sided with private industry, and one of its most significant actions would be to de-nationalise the road haulage industries, which would dramatically abstract traffic from the railways. By nationalising the railway companies the Government had avoided paying them the war reparations that were due, and little money had been given to British Railways, subsequently, much of which had been used to set up the new structures and adjustments.

The Conservatives were not wedded to the use of indigenous coal supplies to fuel railway locomotives. This would open the way towards the replacement of local steam-hauled trains with cheaper-to-run diesel railcars, a policy that the GWR had pioneered before the war, but which had not been continued after the war since the Labour Government had wanted to preserve jobs in the coal industry. This had been partly responsible for the initial British Railways policy of building yet more steam locomotives rather than diesels, financial constraints being the main factor.

This was supposed to be an interim measure before electrifying as much of the system as possible to continue the use of coal-power generation. The Standard Locomotive Building Policy certainly was the logical progression from the Great Western's Churchward policy of the 1900s.

The first Conservative Transport Act, in 1953, made some major changes to the railway structure without recourse to de-nationalisation. The Railway Executive, just five years old, was abolished, and its powers derogated to the regions. The Chief Regional Officers became Chief Regional Managers and once again had authority in day-to-day matters. On the Western Region in the subsequent years this would lead to a return to a clone of the Great Western Railway with such matters as the introduction of 'The Bristolian' express as the country's fastest train, all manner of locomotives repainted in the traditional GWR lined green livery and chocolate and cream for principal express passenger stock, and the re-ignition of pride in all things Western.

British Railways now dealt solely with railways. The old integrated transport organisations created by the 'Big Four' were a thing of the past. The railways were also constrained by old service and charging restrictions which had been imposed by Government when they were monopolies, such as 'common carrier' requirements, which meant they had to accept any traffic offered at Government-fixed tariffs.

This all took place against the background of a disastrous plummeting of railway-

operating income. By 1955 the railways were sliding into overall financial losses despite an operating surplus, and the Government could no longer ignore their plight. Huge new funds were made available under the so-called 'Modernisation Plan' of 1955, actually published on 1 December 1954, which would see the introduction of new diesel locomotives, a curtailment of the steam locomotive building programme, investment in electrification (but, significantly, not on the Western Region), and streamlining of operational aspects such as resignalling and track renewals.

The railways had effectively become a football, tossed between conflicting political ideals and changing direction at the whim of political masters. The Conservatives and the Trades Unions were implacably opposed to one another, and this tinderbox exploded on the railways in the form of a series of strikes from 1953, culminating in a calamitous strike during the summer of 1955. To this has been attributed the precipitous acceleration of the flight of commerce to the roads that would lead to operating deficits in 1956, and a panic reconsideration of the 'Modernisation Plan' in 1957.

All this was set against the backdrop of political unrest and the Suez crisis of 1956, which saw a temporary oil shortage and petrol rationing which forced some commerce back to the railways on a short-term basis. Some saw it as a real return to the railways, but once the crisis was over, the traffic, and more, returned to the roads. The railways seemed to be heading into oblivion.

Following the major changes in administration resulting from the Transport Act of 1953, the Western Region re-introduced 'The Bristolian' service — the country's fastest train, covering the journey in 1¼ hours. This titled train first came into being in 1935, and was generally hauled by a 'King' or 'Castle class 4-6-0 locomotive. The reinstated service with its spruced-up 'King' class locomotive, No 6028 King George VI, and coaching stock in the Great Western's chocolate and cream livery, makes a fine sight in this view of the train passing Twyford signal box with the down working on 27 September 1959. T.B. Owen/Colour-Rail 390183



# Pre-Grouping locomotives in Western Region days

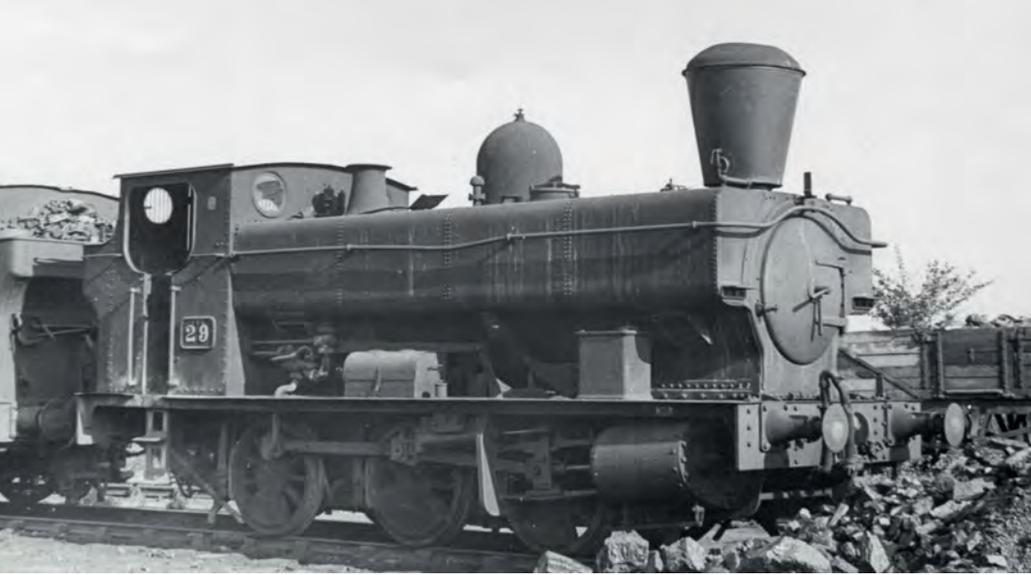


When the railways were nationalised on 1 January 1948 a total of 250 locomotives from railway companies that had originally be absorbed into the Great Western Railway in 1923 entered service with British Railways (Western Region), as detailed in the table which accompanies this photo-feature. The majority of these were from the Welsh valley companies, and others included those from the Cambrian Railways, the M&SWJR and Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors Railway. The former Liskeard & Looe Railway 2-4-0T, No 1308 Lady Margaret, was based at Oswestry from 1922 to 1927 and from 1931 to 1948 to work the trains over the Tanat Valley Railway, but it only survived in BR service until May 1948.



One of the three Welsh narrow-gauge railways whose locomotives entered BR service is the Welshpool & Llanfair Railway, its two 0-6-0Ts, Nos 822 *The Earl* and 823 *Countess*, surviving in BR service until November 1956, after which the Welshpool & Llanfair Preservation Society was formed. During that final year in BR ownership, on 4 April 1956 we see No 822 with the daily freight from Welshpool to Llanfair Caerenion crossing Raven Square, Welshpool. After the preservation of the line, the local council were against the line crossing Raven Square into the town of Welshpool, so the line now terminates at its eastern end at the square. G.F. Bannister

The former Whitland & Cardigan Railway 0-6-0ST, No 1331, originally numbered 1387, had been employed on the Cambrian system from August 1927, and was based at Oswestry for working the Tanat Valley branch to Llangynog after being fitted with increased bunker capacity. It was also cleared to work the Kerry and Porthywaen branches. Although originally withdrawn in 1902, it was retained as a department locomotive and worked at Reading signal depot from where it was transferred to the Cambrian and renumbered 1331 when returned to capital stock. In 1948, two years before its final withdrawal, No 1331 is pictured at Llyncllys Junction, the junction for the Tanat Valley line.



The two fascinating outside-cylinder 0-6-0PTs of the Cleobury & Mortimer Railway, Nos 28 and 29, entered BR service and remained at work until 1953 and 1954 respectively. The engines could often be seen on shed at Kidderminster and Worcester receiving attention, and No 29 is pictured at Kidderminster on 10 September 1949. These two locomotives were employed working trains of granite from Abdon Clee Quarries. Originally built as saddle tanks, they were rebuilt as pannier tanks in 1931 and 1924 respectively, and were later fitted with spark-arrester chimneys, as seen here. *Great Western Trust*



Locomotives from seven different classes of 0-6-2Ts of former Rhymney Railway origin entered BR service in 1948, working the many passenger and freight turns in conjunction with other Welsh valleys' railway companies. In this scene Rhymney 'RI' class 0-6-2T No 38 is seen on a typical duty, hauling an up coal train, and leaving Wenvoe tunnel near Caerphilly on 13 August 1954. The 'RI' class was a development of the 'R' class of 1907, and the engines were built by Beyer, Peacock and Hudswell Clarke, ten of these engines entering BR service. No 38 was withdrawn in October 1957, one of the final two in service. *Great Western Trust*

Sporting the BRITISH RAILWAYS legend on its tank sides, former Rhymney Railway 'A' class 0-6-2T No 56 is seen on shed at Cardiff (Cathays) in June 1949. Enthusiasts visiting Cathays shed at that time were often amazed at how clean they kept their locomotives; it was originally a Taff Vale Railway depot. Designed by Hurry Riches, by 1948 all those engines of the class entering BR service were fitted with either 'A1' boilers or GWR boilers.





Former Taff Vale Railway 'A' class 0-6-2T No 364, one of 65 engines of the class that survived into BR days, is seen here working an Officers' special train near Hirwaun on the Vale of Neath line in December 1954. The GWR rebuilt these engines with Standard No 10 boilers which resulted in excellent steaming capabilities, and No 364, pictured here, shows evidence of the conversion at Swindon Works by the squared-off top to the side tank as opposed to the rounded top of Caerphilly Works.

Engines from two classes of former Rhymney Railway 0-6-0Ts survived into BR days — the 'S' and 'S1' classes. Here we see 'S1' class 0-6-0T No 91, with the **BRITISH RAILWAYS** legend on the tank side and the short-lived 'W' below the cab-side numberplate, inside Cardiff East Dock shed in early BR days. These locomotives, when built, were the heaviest and most powerful 0-6-0Ts in the country. The locomotive pictured was withdrawn in June 1954.





Just six locomotives of the former Cardiff Railway survived into BR days, four 0-6-0PTs, one 0-6-2T, and one 0-4-0ST. Pictured shunting mineral wagons at Burrow's yard, between South Dock, Swansea, and the town centre, in February 1963 is 0-4-0ST No 1338, having only arrived at Swansea East Dock shed in 1960 to replace other 0-4-0STs. This now rusty old Kitson-built locomotive, completed in 1898, survived in use until September 1963. *Alan Jarvis*

Former Cardiff Railway 0-6-2T No 155, a locomotive that outlived other ex-Cardiff Railway 0-6-2Ts by almost twenty years, is seen performing shunting duties at Cardiff's Pengam sidings on 13 February 1953 in this interesting busy scene. This was the only Cardiff Railway 0-6-2T to be reboilered with a Standard No 3 boiler, at Caerphilly Works in 1928. *S. Rickard/J & J collection*





Twenty-two 0-6-2Ts of the former Brecon & Merthyr Railway of various types reached BR days in 1948, and in that first year of the nationalised railways we see No 1373 at Newport (Ebbw Junction) shed. This was one of the former B&M tank engines that were fitted with 5ft driving wheels, whereas many of the others had 4ft 6in wheels. Most B&M engines of this type were rebuilt with GWR superheated boilers between 1927 and 1936. In November 1948 this 0-6-2T was renumbered 432, and withdrawn in June 1953.

Still sporting the letters GWR on its tank sides, former Barry Railway 'B1' class 0-6-2T No 271 is pictured leaving Coity goods yard in Bridgend for the Vale of Glamorgan line back to Barry with a goods train on 6 March 1948. A larger version of the Barry Railway's 'B' class, with increased water and coal capacity, No 271 received a GWR boiler some time after 1924 and lasted in traffic until April 1951. It is likely that it was one of these locomotives that was used as a Works shunter at Swindon after withdrawal as it was not cut-up until October 1952. *Ian L. Wright*





Two locomotives of the former Llanelly & Mynydd Mawr Railway reached BR days in service, one 0-6-0ST and one 0-4-0ST. The 0-6-0ST, No 359, carried the name *Hilda* on its saddle tanks, as seen here, and was regularly to be found on Danygraig shed, Swansea, where it is pictured on 17 April 1949. Built by Hudswell Clarke in 1917, it lasted in traffic until February 1954, and was reboilered by the GWR and fitted with a warning bell on top of the tank. A former Rhondda & Swansea Bay Railway shed, Danygraig, was a fascinating place to visit with its collection of unique pre-Grouping company small tank engines allocated over the years.  
*Great Western Trust*

The Swansea Harbour Trust 1909-built Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST No 1144 is pictured here with its bell clanging as it wends its way through the streets of Swansea on 28 July 1958. The locomotive is crossing Victoria Road in front of the Royal Institution of South Wales, with the Exchange buildings behind the locomotive's chimney. The point work beneath the locomotive gives low-level access to South Dock and also to the former L&NWR Swansea (Victoria) station. Numbered 974 until 1948, this 0-4-0ST was withdrawn in January 1960 from Swansea East Dock shed.  
*M. Hale/Great Western Trust*



Eleven Cambrian Railways 0-6-0s entered BR service on 1 January 1948 of both Beyer, Peacock and Robert Stephenson builds, and here we see 1918-built Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0 No 849 working over the Mid-Wales line near Tylwch with a Moat Lane to Brecon passenger service in August 1952. This 0-6-0 was withdrawn in October 1954. In this scene No 849 looks in amazing condition for its age.  
*Rex Kennedy Collection*





The former Powlesland & Mason 0-4-0STs formed part of Swansea East Dock and Danygraig shed's allocation for many years, and some lasted in traffic into the 1960s, such as No 1151, pictured here, which was not withdrawn until August 1963. After its withdrawal it was sold to Hayes of Bridgend, and was used in their scrapyard until April 1965, but could still be seen there as late as 17 July 1966. The P&M locomotives operated trains over the former Swansea Harbour Trust lines. Initially numbered 779, its number was changed to 1151 in 1948. This 0-4-0ST is seen here in Burrows Yard, Swansea, west of the River Tawe, on 21 June 1963. In the background is the Coast Lines warehouse which would later become the Swansea Maritime & Industrial Museum. A. Linaker/Kidderminster Railway Museum



Table One

Pre-Grouping company locomotives entering BR (Western Region) service

| <i>Origin</i>                             | <i>Type</i>       | <i>Locomotive Nos</i>   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Ystalyfera Tin Works                      | 0-4-0ST           | 1   |
| Corris Railway                            | 0-4-2ST           | 3, 4  |
| Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway     | 0-6-0T            | 5, 6  |
| Vale of Rheidol Railway                   | 2-6-2T            | 7, 8, 9   |
| Welshpool & Llanfair Railway              | 0-6-0T            | 822, 823  |
| Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors Railway | 0-6-0PT           | 28, 29  |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'R' class 0-6-2T  | 30, 31, 32, 34, 46  |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'M' class 0-6-2T  | 33, 47, 51  |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'R1' class 0-6-2T | 35-44   |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'A' class 0-6-2T  | 52-75   |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'P1' class 0-6-2T | 76, 77  |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'AP' class 0-6-2T | 78-81   |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'P' class 0-6-2T  | 82 and 83   |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'S1' class 0-6-0T | 90-92, 605  |
| Rhymney Railway                           | 'S' class 0-6-0T  | 93-96, 610, 611   |
| Cardiff Railway                           | 0-6-2T            | 155   |
| Cardiff Railway                           | 0-6-0PT           | 681-684   |
| Cardiff Railway                           | 0-4-0ST           | 1338  |
| Port Talbot Railway                       | 0-6-2T            | 184   |
| Port Talbot Railway                       | 0-8-2T            | 1358  |
| Taff Vale Railway                         | 'H' class 0-6-0T  | 193-195, 792-794  |
| Taff Vale Railway                         | 'O4' class 0-6-2T | 200-220, 236, 278-302, 310, 314, 317, 320, 321, 324, 333, 409, 414, 420 |
| Taff Vale Railway                         | 'A' class 0-6-2T  | 303-309, 312, 316, 322, 335-357, 360-399, 402, 404, 406, 408, 438-440   |
| Taff Vale Railway                         | 'O3' class 0-6-2T | 410, 411  |
| Brecon & Merthyr Railway                  | 0-6-2T            | 11, 332, 421-428, 431-436, 504, (various types)                         |
| Alexandra Docks Railway                   | 0-6-2ST           | 190   |
| Alexandra Docks Railway                   | 0-6-0T            | 666, 667  |
| Alexandra Docks Railway                   | 0-6-0ST           | 680   |
| Alexandra Docks Railway                   | 2-6-2Ts           | 1205, 1206  |
| Barry Railway                             | 'B' class 0-6-2T  | 198, 212, 213, 231  |
| Barry Railway                             | 'E' class 0-6-0T  | 783,784   |
| Barry Railway                             | 'B1' class 0-6-2T | 238-277   |
| Llanelly & Mynydd Mawr Railway            | 0-6-0ST           | 359   |
| Llanelly & Mynydd Mawr Railway            | 0-6-0T            | 803   |
| Swansea Harbour Trust                     | 0-4-0ST           | 701, 929, 943, 968, 974, 1098, 1140-1147                                |
| Swansea Harbour Trust                     | 0-6-0ST           | 1085  |
| Powlesand & Mason                         | 0-4-0ST           | 696, 779, 935, 1150-1153  |
| Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway    | 0-6-0T            | 2162-2168, 2197, and 2198   |
| Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway    | 0-6-0ST           | 2176, 2192-2196   |
| Liskeard & Looe Railway                   | 2-4-0T            | 1308  |
| Whitland & Cardigan Railway               | 0-6-0ST           | 1331  |
| Midland & South Western Junction Railway  | 2-4-0             | 1334-1336   |
| Cambrian Railways                         | 0-6-0             | 844, 849, 855, 864, 873, 887, 892-896                                   |
| Cambrian Railways                         | 2-4-0T            | 1196, 1197  |



On 20 April 1951 Taunton-allocated Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway 0-6-0ST No 2194 *Kidwelly* is pictured at Bridgwater hauling a coal train. This was one of two locomotives of this type built for the BP&GVR by the Avonside Engine Company in 1903. Their weight was 31 ton 7cwt, and they had 3ft 6in driving wheels and outside cylinders. No 2194 was moved from Weymouth to Taunton in the 1940s principally to carry out shunting duties at Dunball Wharf at Bridgwater for the Shell/BP depot, and was withdrawn from Taunton shed in February 1953. *Great Western Trust*

Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway 0-6-0T No 2168 is pictured here over the inspection pit at Burry Port sporting its Llanelly shed plate (87F). This was one of nine BP&GVR engines of this Hudswell Clarke type that survived into BR days in 1948, as seen in the table (Page 19). They were low in height to cope with the low bridges on the line, No 2168, one of the five of this type rebuilt with GWR fittings, remaining in service until May 1956.





# Early BR days at Birmingham (Snow Hill)

*Rex Kennedy recalls days in his youth on the platforms at Birmingham (Snow Hill) station in the early days of the nationalised railways from 1948 to 1950 when he travelled by train to this interesting station from his home in Worcester.*

The light and airy Birmingham (Snow Hill) station was the place to visit for young railway enthusiasts living in the Midlands from the days of the Great Western Railway into the BR era. Whilst still at grammar school, I would often catch a train on a Saturday from Worcester (Foregate Street) station to this busy main-line station with notebook and pencil for a day's spotting, something that I had done since 1946 and well into the early BR days up until 1950, when I left school, and for a few years after that. The summer months at Snow Hill station were the best, with extra trains arriving and leaving with holiday-makers for places such as Bournemouth, Aberystwyth, and resorts in the West Country, resulting in packed platforms and a great variety of motive power to be seen.

I would catch either a Cardiff or Hereford to Birmingham train, and my mother always told me that she would only allow me to go providing I did not leave the station at Birmingham. On the odd occasion I would go to Birmingham (New Street) station from Worcester (Shrub Hill), but New Street was always dark and dingy, but it did provide me with the sight of LMS 'Jubilees' that we rarely saw in Worcester. However I chose the Great Western 'Kings' and 'Castles' over these LMS express locomotives and the greater variety at

The appropriately-named GWR Hawksworth 'County' class 4-6-0 No 1029 *County of Worcester* is pictured here on 5 June 1950 arriving at Snow Hill station with an up stopping train, as seen from the west end of the station. At this time, Wolverhampton (Stafford Road) shed had an allocation of five of these locomotives built between 1945 and 1947, Nos 1016, 1017, 1024, 1025, and 1029. These fast mixed-traffic locomotives were directly descended from the 4-6-0 'Saints', and were a larger version of the 'Modified Halls'. The comparatively-new 'Counties' were always a welcome sight for us young train-spotters. Kidderminster Railway Museum I17855

Snow Hill. Both of these train journeys to Birmingham followed the same route as far as Droitwich, the Great Western route taking the left fork here via Kidderminster and Stourbridge Junction, while the LMS route forked right to Bromsgrove, followed by a climb up the Lickey incline to Birmingham (New Street).

The main attraction at Birmingham (Snow Hill) for me in those early days of British Railways, and in the years leading up to the nationalisation of the railways was the chance to see the Great Western 'Kings', a class of locomotive that was not allowed into Worcester, four of which were allocated to Wolverhampton (Stafford Road) shed until December 1948, when three more joined the ranks at Stafford Road shed. On all my visits in those days I would see all four of these 'Kings' arriving on trains to and from Paddington, Chester, and Birkenhead, some painted in the blue livery applied to these locomotives at that time for a short while, but at this time the 'Kings' did not work north of Wolverhampton.

Most spotters at that time would gather at the north end of the station at the far end of Platform 6, facing the large elevated North signal box, this viewpoint providing an excellent view of trains entering the station from Wolverhampton, Worcester, and the north. At the other end of the station was Snow Hill tunnel, from which trains emerged into the daylight from the Paddington direction having passed Moor Street station prior to entering the tunnel.

The two centre lines at Snow Hill would provide the opportunity to witness freight trains passing through, and in those early days of the nationalised railways we could still witness Great Western 'R.O.D' class 2-8-0s, 'Aberdare' class 2-6-0s, 'Manors', 'Granges', '7200' class 2-8-2Ts, and 0-6-2Ts on these trains — an amazing variety! Other classes of locomotive seen at that time whose time in action was fast diminishing were the 'Saints', 'Stars', and 'Bulldogs', and a class of tank engine always seen on my visits was the '3100' class 2-6-2T, and GWR railcars would come and go on the services to and from Dudley. The 'Castle' class 4-6-0 No 4000 *North Star*, being allocated to Wolverhampton (Stafford Road) shed, was also regularly seen. A further attraction, of course, was the sight of trains running to and from the Cambrian coast, arriving and departing, and titled trains such as the 'The Inter City', a titled train introduced in 1950, and 'The Cornishman'.

To access the platforms at Birmingham (Snow Hill) station was down a long flight of stairs from the concourse that housed the booking office. This stairway from the concourse went down to the up platforms, Nos 7 and 8 and bays, and another served down Platforms 5 and 6 and their bays. Also at street level was the impressive-looking Great Western Hotel. Two bay platforms faced the Wolverhampton direction and I will remember sometimes catching my return trains to Worcester from bay platform No 4, situated the other side of Platform 6 where we spotters congregated.



Stourbridge Junction-based '5100' class 2-6-2T No 5180 lets off steam when at Snow Hill station's Platform 6 while waiting for its return trip to Stourbridge on 24 September 1950. To the left can be seen the screen at the end of the train shed. This tank engine has not only received its BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering on its tanks sides by now, but also its new smokebox numberplate and shed plate. Prior to the introduction of shed plates on former GWR locomotives, Stourbridge Junction would be coded STB, the letters stencilled on the front of the running plate. Note that the style of the BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering differs from that in the view of No 5197, illustrated on Page 26. H.C. Casserley

Below: On 8 April 1950 Wolverhampton (Stafford Road)-based 'King' class 4-6-0 No 6005 King George II, in blue livery and lined-out in white and black, awaits departure from Platform 7 at Snow Hill station with a Birkenhead (Woodside) to Paddington express. On leaving the station the train will pass through the 596yd Snow Hill tunnel, seen in the background and pass Moor Street station on its way to London. This 'King' class locomotive was one of the four allocated to Stafford Road shed, Nos 6005, 6006, 6008, and 6011, that I would see every time I visited Snow Hill station in the late 1940s, both before the railways were nationalised and after 1948. Stafford Road shed acquired three more 'Kings' in December 1948, Nos 6002, 6004, and 6020. V.R. Webster/Kidderminster Railway Museum 017179

DOWN TRAINS—WEEK DAYS—cont.

| Train      | From               | Arrive | Platform No. | Depart | Platform No. | To   | Remarks  |
|------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|--|--|
|            |                    | a.m.   |              | a.m.   |              | All stations to Kidderminster  | Formed by 9.23 a.m. ex Lapworth, due 9.33 a.m. SX, 9.25 a.m. ex Leamington, due 10.17 a.m. SO.       |
| 9.10 a.m.  | Paddington         | 11 50  | 5            | 11 56  | 5            | Wolverhampton, Wellington, Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Rushon, Wrexham, Chester, Hooton, Rock Ferry and Birkenhead (Barmouth via Rusbou). (Advertised departure 11.55 a.m.)   |  |
|            |                    |        |              | 11 58  | 3            | All stations to Wolverhampton  | Formed by 9.10 a.m. ex Solihull, due 9.25 a.m. SX, 9.55 a.m. ex Stourbridge Jct., due 10.35 a.m. SO. |
| 11.45 a.m. | Tyseley C.S.       | 12 12  | 1            | 12 15  | 3            | Hockley, Smethwick Junction, Rowley, Old Hill, Cradley, Lye and Stourbridge Junction, Handsworth, West Bromwich, Swan Village, Great Bridge and Dudley.  | Formed by 7.45 a.m. ex Stourbridge Junction, due 8.32 a.m.   |
|            |                    |        |              | 12 25  | 3            | All stations to Stourbridge Junction   | Formed by 10.10 a.m. ex Leamington, due 11.5 a.m.  |
| 12.9 p.m.  | Hall Green         | 12 25  | 1            | 12 30  | 4            | (Advertised arrival 12.26 p.m.) Handsworth, West Bromwich, Swan Village, Great Bridge and Dudley.  | Forms 12.37 p.m. to Wellington. Formed by 11.15 a.m. ex Dudley, due 11.40 a.m.                       |
|            |                    |        |              | 12 34  | 1            |  | Forms 12.55 p.m. to Wolverhampton.   |
| 10.10 a.m. | Paddington         | 12 30  | 1            | 12 34  | 1            | Cannock Road, Saturdays, May 28th to June 25th and September 17th and 24th.  |  |
| 10.10 a.m. | Paddington         | 12 29  | 1            | 12 34  | 5            | Wolverhampton, Welbourn, Neatons, Machynlleth, Dovey Junction, Borth and Aberystwyth. Conveys through portion for Penhelg Hall, Aberdovey, Teugn, Llanygwal, Fairbourne, Barmouth Jct. and Barmouth. (Runs July 2nd to September 10th, inclusive.) |  |
|            |                    |        |              | 12 37  | 1            | Handsouth, West Bromwich, Swan Village, Woloburn, Bilston, Priestfield and Wolverhampton and all stations to Wellington.   | Formed by 12.9 p.m. ex Hall Green, due 12.25 p.m.  |
|            |                    |        |              | 12 40  | 3            | Rowley, Old Hill, Cradley, Stourbridge Jct., Hagley, Church Hill, Kidderminster and Ewoodley.  | Formed by 8.38 a.m. ex Knowle, due 9.7 a.m.  |
|            |                    |        |              | 12 45  | 6            | Handsouth, West Bromwich, Swan Village, Great Bridge and Dudley. To No. 3 Bay SO.  | Formed by 11.15 a.m. ex Dudley, due 11.40 a.m.   |
| 11.45 a.m. | Leamington         | 12 46  | 5            |        |              |  | Forms 1.57 p.m. to Leamington SX, 1.5 p.m. to Wolverhampton SO.                                      |
| 12.40 p.m. | Tyseley C.S.       | 12 50  | MR           | 12 55  | 5            | To No. 4 Bay All Stations to Wolverhampton except Hockley  | Forms 2.55 p.m. to Wolverhampton. Formed by 10.10 a.m. ex Paddington, due 12.30 p.m.                 |
| 12.45 p.m. | Tyseley C.S.       | 12 55  | 1            |        |              |  | Forms 1.3 p.m. to Stourbridge Jct.   |
| 12.45 p.m. | Tyseley C.S.       | 12 56  | MR           | 1 0    | 4            | To No. 4 Bay Smethwick Jct. (SX), Stourbridge Jct., Kidderminster, Droitwich, Worcester, Malvern Link, Great Malvern, Colwall, Ledbury, Hereford, Pontrilas, Abergavenny, Pontypool Road, Newport and Cardiff.                                     | Forms 2.50 p.m. to Wolverhampton Formed by 8.35 a.m. ex Cardiff, due 11.25 a.m.                      |
|            |                    |        |              | 1 3    | 1            | All stations to Stourbridge Jct.   | Formed by 12.45 p.m. ex Tyseley CS due 12.55 p.m.  |
|            |                    |        |              | 1 5    | 3            | Handsouth, West Bromwich, Swan Village, Wednesbury, Bilston and Wolverhampton. All stations to Kidderminster   | Formed by 11.45 a.m. ex Leamington, due 1.45 p.m.  |
| 12.50 p.m. | Solihull           | 1 10   | 5            | 1 25   | 6            | Wolverhampton only.  | Formed by 1.45 p.m. ex Leamington, due 1.45 p.m.   |
| 9.45 a.m.  | Paddington         | 1 15   | 1            | 1 25   | 1            | (Advertised arrival 1.26 p.m.)   |  |
| 10.15 a.m. | Paddington         | 1 25   | 5            |        |              |  |  |
| 12.30 p.m. | Leamington         |        |              |        |              |  |  |
| 11.3 a.m.  | Paddington         | 1 28   | 5            | 1 33   | 5            | Wolverhampton only.  |  |
| 11.10 a.m. | Paddington         | 1 37   | 5            | 1 43   | 5            | Wolverhampton, Wellington, Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Rusbou, Wrexham, Chester, Hooton, Rock Ferry and Birkenhead (Aberystwyth via Shrewsbury, also Barmouth via Rusbou). (Advertised departure 1.42 p.m.)   |  |
|            |                    |        |              | 1 50   | 1            | All stations to Wolverhampton  |  |
| 9.10 a.m.  | Portsmouth Hbr.    | 1 48   | 5            | 1 54   | 5            | Handsouth, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Bilston and Wolverhampton. (Runs Saturdays, June 25th to September 10th, inclusive.)   |  |
| 1.35 p.m.  | Solihull           | 1 55   | 1            |        |              | To No. 3 Bay   |  |
| 1.36 p.m.  | Lapworth           | 2 10   | 1            | 2 20   | 3            | All stations to Hartlebury   |  |
| 9.20 a.m.  | Bournemouth (West) | 2 23   | 5            | 2 28   | 5            | Wolverhampton, Wellington, Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Rusbou, Wrexham, Chester, Hooton, Rock Ferry and Birkenhead. (Advertised departure 2.26 p.m.)  |  |
| 9.32 a.m.  | Bournemouth        | 2 23   | 5            | 2 28   | 5            | Queen's Head (Saturdays, commencing June)  |  |
| 1.37 p.m.  | Leamington         | 2 35   | 1            |        |              | To No. 4 Bay   |  |
|            |                    |        |              | 2 35   | 4            | Handsouth, West Bromwich, Swan V Great Bridge and Dudley.  |  |
| 2.30 p.m.  | Tyseley C.S.       |        |              | 2 40   | MR           | Halesowen  |  |



The cover and a sample page from Birmingham (Snow Hill) Station, Table of Arrival and Departure of Trains, May 23rd to September 25th inclusive, 1949 published by British Railways Western Region for internal use. This gives a snapshot of the activity at the station during this period. Kidderminster Railway Museum

BRITISH RAILWAYS  
WESTERN REGION

BIRMINGHAM (Snow Hill) STATION.

TABLE OF  
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE  
OF TRAINS

MAY 23rd to SEPTEMBER 25th inclusive, 1949.

EXPLANATION OF NOTES.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| CR—Call if required.            | RR—Run if required.                          |
| D—Standard Diesel Rail Car.     | SO—Saturdays only.                           |
| FO—Fridays only.                | SX—Saturdays excepted.                       |
| FR—Fridays excepted.            | TSSO—Thursdays and Saturdays only.           |
| FSS—Fridays and Saturdays only. | WSSO—Wednesdays and Saturdays only.          |
| M—Rail Motor.                   | WTSO—Wednesdays and Saturdays excepted only. |
| MO—Mondays only.                |  |
| MR—Middle road.                 |  |
| MX—Mudgery excepted.            |  |

Items printed in *italics* indicate trains which only run occasionally.

BIRMINGHAM  
A V E. BROWN,  
Divisional Superintendant



By standing at the end of Platform 6 at Birmingham's Snow Hill station spotters had an excellent view of trains approaching from the north and Stourbridge as they passed the timber-built elevated North signal box, seen in this view as Banbury-allocated ex-GWR 'Grange' class 4-6-0 No 6879 *Overton Grange* approaches with a southbound freight train. Beyond the brakevan on the right we see the large water tank.  
Kidderminster Railway Museum I23036





I was always interested in small classes of locomotives, and was always delighted to see most engines of the '3100' class of 2-6-2Ts that would work into and out of Birmingham (Snow Hill), as during the period 1948 to 1950 Nos 3102 and 3104 were allocated to Wolverhampton (Oxley) and No 3101 to Tyseley. They would be regularly seen working stopping trains between Birmingham and Wolverhampton (Low level), and Stourbridge Junction. By 1950 No 3102 had moved across Wolverhampton to Stafford Road shed, as did No 3104 in later years. These tank engines were built from '3150' class 2-6-2Ts with higher boiler pressure and smaller wheels for banking duties. No 3104 is pictured in the early 1950s at Snow Hill's Platform 2 inside the train shed, awaiting departure, possibly for Stourbridge Junction. H.C. Casserley

A Wolverhampton (Low Level) to Oxford train, headed by Banbury-based 'Grange', No 6839 Hewell Grange, arrives at Snow Hill station, circa 1950, and is seen under the glazed roof of the train shed. The 'Grange' class 4-6-0s were regularly seen by me on both passenger and freight trains at Snow Hill, and I would often arrive there for a day's spotting hauled by a Worcester or Wolverhampton-allocated member of the class. Kidderminster Railway Museum I04897



Shunting and movement of stock duties at Birmingham (Snow Hill) in 1948 was carried out by one of the many 0-6-0-PTs allocated to Tyseley shed, and on 18 September 1948 we see '5700' class 0-6-0-PT No 3625 still bearing the spaced-out letters G W R on its tank side, with the locomotive's driver standing beside his cab. Platforms and canopies are seen in this view, together with part of the signal gantry where below can be seen a former GWR 'Siphon' milk van. In the background, between the locomotive and its van, is an ex-GWR 'Toplight' coach. S.V. Blencowe Collection



The Great Western AEC diesel railcars were a common sight at Snow Hill station as they regularly worked the frequent stopping services between there and Dudley. Eleven of these railcars were ordered by the GWR in 1935 to four different specifications, No W14W, pictured here at Snow Hill in 1950, having seventy seats, it being one of Stourbridge's three allocated there, although one of these, No 33, was one of the later builds, with angular bodies. Kidderminster Railway Museum 163281

Birmingham (Snow Hill) station, closed on 6 March 1972, and was demolished during 1976/77 being deemed unsafe. However, the station was revived in the mid-1980s and a new Snow Hill station was opened in 1987. Over the years there had been three stations at Snow Hill. The original station of 1852 was rebuilt in 1871 and had a massive single-arched roof. This was itself rebuilt over a period of six years, between 1906 and 1912, which is the structure that existed when the

A total of 12 engines of the outside-framed 'Aberdare' class of 2-6-0s remained in service when the nationalisation of the railways took place on 1 January 1948, and for the enthusiast it was a delight to witness one of these locomotives in action. Photographed from the popular Platform 6 at Snow Hill station, and showing the partially-canopied platform and running-in board, Hereford-based No 2651 of this class approaches through the centre lines with a goods train for its home town via Stourbridge Junction and Worcester. The last engine of the class was withdrawn in October 1949, one of only four engines of the class to survive into 1949, including No 2651. Kidderminster Railway Museum 068665





Seen at the down platform at Birmingham (Snow Hill) on 3 July 1948 with a passenger working, probably from Leamington Spa as the locomotive featured often worked local passenger trains between Leamington and Birmingham, is Leamington shed's Great Western 'Saint' class 4-6-0 No 2902 *Lady of the Lake*. The train is at the platform regularly frequented by train spotters and carries unidentifiable carriage roof boards, which would display the train's destination. At this time, Leamington shed would have two engines of this class on its books, the other being No 2933 *Bibury Court*. The locomotive pictured would have just over a year left in service.  
H.C. Casserley

Right: Just four months after nationalisation, GWR 2-6-2T No 5197 is seen passing through Snow Hill with a goods train on 23 April 1948 having already received its new BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering on its tank side, but it carries no smokebox numberplate, its number still appearing on the front buffer-beam. This was one of Stourbridge Junction's 25 engines of this class allocated there at that time.  
S.V. Blencowe Collection



station was closed in 1972. There was very little bomb damage at Snow Hill during the war — bombs certainly destroyed Curzon Street goods. The reason the station was rebuilt in the early 1900s was because it outgrew itself with the amount of traffic, and it needed more space and platforms.

When it came to the closure of Snow Hill station in 1972, it was simply because the railway management decided that they would concentrate all their investment in making New Street the sole station in Birmingham, and concentrate all their operations in one place. This might have been alright for a short while, but it soon became apparent that New Street station was not capable of handling all the traffic it needed to, and with projected growth in traffic starting to take place, the pressures on re-opening Snow Hill were great. However, the station had already been demolished so a new

station had to be built. The same story happened with Birmingham's Moor Street station, which was built largely to relieve pressure on Snow Hill in 1909, and after it had been shut for some years, was re-opened to perform exactly the same function.

This look at those early British Railways' days from 1948 and the Western Region

steam scene at this important and most interesting station in one of England's major cities is intended to provide a just a brief insight into the attraction for so many railway enthusiasts like myself at a time when very little had changed from those good old GWR days into the early days of the new British Railways era.

Train-spotters on Birmingham's Snow Hill station would always welcome the sight of a rare locomotive from some far-off shed turning up, and in this scene from 1948, the first year of the nationalised railways, approaching the west end of Snow Hill, is Pontypool Road-allocated Great Western 'Hall' No 4912 *Berrington Hall* in smart condition. The locomotive is seen fitted with the small Churchward 3,500 gallon capacity tender, these tenders being fitted to the first forty engines of the class. S.V. Blencowe Collection



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## Great Western locomotives that never were

Many locomotives constructed after Nationalisation on 1 January 1948 for the Western Region were still built to the Great Western Railway's design, as **Philip Atkins** explains.

A total of 452 new steam locomotives of GWR design, for the most part ordered by the Great Western Railway prior to its demise, were put into service between 1948 and 1956. Characteristically, 89 of these were 4-6-0s and no fewer than 321 were 0-6-0 pannier tanks, all but ten of which had 'old fashioned' inside cylinders. In its final years the late GWR could be said to have run a large proportion of its services with these two types which mechanically speaking could directly be traced back to the early 1900s and the 1870s respectively.

With regard to the new 4-6-0s, these were of the 'Manor', 'Modified Hall', and 4-cylinder 'Castle' classes, but interestingly did not include any further 'Counties' additional to the thirty built by the GWR itself. When compared to pre-war builds, the new 'Modified Halls' and 'Castles' were provided with increased superheat, although this was

The first Churchward taper-boiler 2-cylinder 'Saint' class 4-6-0, No 98, built in March 1903, is seen at Bath (Green Park) when new, and still nameless pre-1906. As GWR No 2998 it would last until 1933. The pioneer Churchward 2-8-0, No 97, designed and also built in 1903 almost in parallel with No 98, later renumbered as 2800, would not be withdrawn until 1958, almost ten years beyond its official 45-year lifespan. The Western Region unsuccessfully even sought to build more new 2-8-0s fundamentally to this design as late as 1953 in order simply to replace the earliest now life-expired engines of this class. Rail Archive Stephenson

No 17920 *Coney Hall*, the first of the final 1950 batch of Hawksworth 'Modified Halls' built, is pictured on Swindon shed on 10 February 1957 in ex-Works condition, almost certainly on first repainting from BR lined black to GWR green circa 1956/57. The close affinity with No 98 (illustrated below), designed and built at Swindon almost fifty years before, is readily apparent from this similar viewpoint. J.F. Davies/Rail Archive Stephenson

not extended to the new lightweight 'Manors'. Following experimentation in the early 1950s the maximum steaming capacity of both the 'Modified Halls' and 'Manors' was significantly increased via improved (single) draughting arrangements, while somewhat later some 'Castles' were enhanced with double exhaust.

The last 'Modified Hall' to be built, No 7929 *Wyke Hall*, turned out from Swindon Works in November 1950, could directly trace its ancestry back to the first true GWR 'Saint' class 4-6-0, No 98 *Ernest Cunard*, which had been completed in March 1903. It retained the same distinctive inboard steam chests in association with internal Stephenson valve gear, which emulated American 1900 practice, from which Swindon scarcely moved on in almost fifty years.

The last 'Castle', No 7037 *Swindon*, completed three months before No 7929, could likewise trace its origins back to the

then 4-4-2 *North Star* of 1906, which was later rebuilt as a 4-6-0 in 1909, and later, still as a 'Castle' (in 1929), would enjoy a total life of fifty years. In a similar vein, twenty '5101' class 2-6-2Ts (Large Prairies) built during 1948/49 were direct descendants of the prototype Churchward 2-6-2T No 99 of 1903, which was officially rebuilt in 1938 and renumbered 8100, as such being withdrawn from service after almost sixty years.

Remarkably, during 1949 and 1950, Swindon Works was also building no fewer than three classes of inside-cylinder 0-6-0 pannier tank engine ('1600', '5400', and '5700' classes), which each traced their origins back to numerous Armstrong and Dean 0-6-0 saddle tanks built by the GWR in the latter years of the 19th century. The smallest, the '1600' class 0-6-0PT, introduced in 1949, was simply built as a then much needed replacement for the last remaining Dean engines, which had necessarily earlier been





rebuilt with pannier side tanks when fitted with Belpaire boilers. In 1957, two of these 0-6-0PTs, Nos 1646 and 1649, were transferred from Wrexham to the far north of Scotland to work the Dornoch branch, shortly before its

closure. However, striking a distinctly more modern note, also in 1949, Swindon built ten massive outside-cylinder 0-6-0PTs with taper boilers, external Walschaerts valve gear, and piston valves — the '1500' class.

Although scrapping of the 'Stars' began as early as 1933, several were rebuilt as 'Castles', including the pioneer No 4000 North Star in 1929 (originally turned out in 1906 as a 4-4-2 locomotive). As such, this locomotive remarkably lasted until 1957 after an almost unprecedented total working life for a British express passenger locomotive of 51 years, which contrasted sharply with the twelve years of No 7037 Swindon. Wolverhampton (Stafford Road)-allocated No 4000 is pictured here moving out of the centre road at Shrewsbury station prior to leaving with an up slow working on 4 June 1953. In the adjacent platform No 4977 Watcombe Hall takes on water, having arrived with a passenger train.  
R.O. Tuck/Rail Archive Stephenson



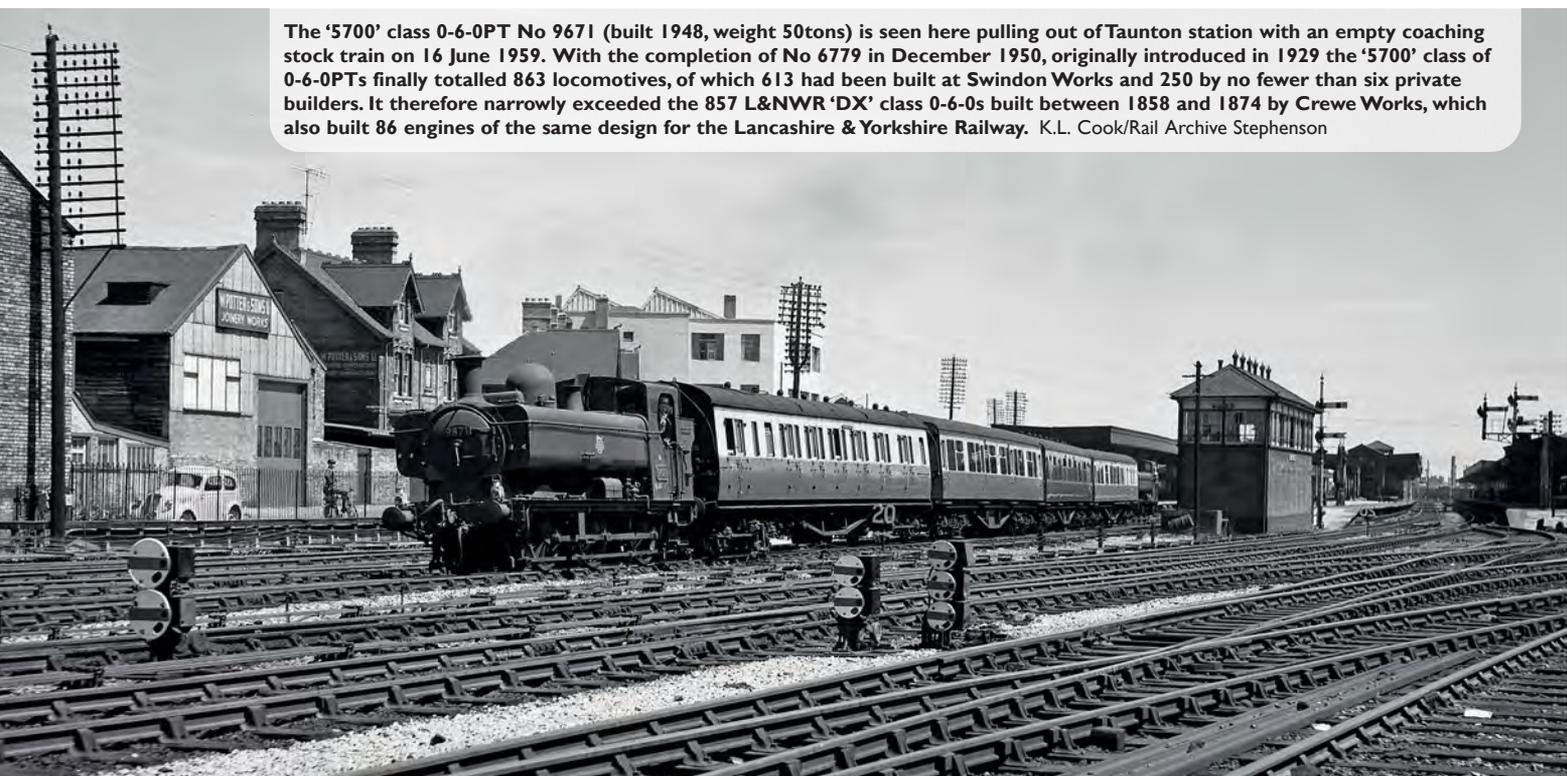
Commencing in 1956, a large number of former GWR locomotives which from 1948 had been painted either plain black or lined black were repainted in the former GWR livery of mid-chrome green, lined out in black and orange, which several years earlier had been adopted as the standard for express passenger locomotives by British Railways as a whole. By the early 1960s this was often simplified to plain green, as seen here on Leamington Spa-based ex-Works (from Caerphilly) 2-6-2T No 4171 (built 1949) at Cardiff (Canton) shed on 7 February 1960, also in association with the later 1956 BR emblem. Rail Archive Stephenson

The pioneer GWR 2-6-2T, No 99, brand-new in 1903. Officially, and latterly running as No 8100, this engine was not retired until October 1962, although it is doubtful that very much of the original locomotive still remained. It could be described as having been the first modern British passenger tank engine.  
Great Western Trust





Large Prairie tank No 4164 (built 1948), one of twenty 2-6-2Ts built at Swindon during the period 1948/49, is seen from a similar viewpoint to that of No 99 in the earlier illustration, which it clearly resembled 45 years on, notwithstanding major alterations to the side tanks and coal bunker. The engine was recorded at Port Talbot in May 1953, still attired in its initial plain black livery with the 1949 BR 'lion and wheel' emblem.



The '5700' class 0-6-0PT No 9671 (built 1948, weight 50tons) is seen here pulling out of Taunton station with an empty coaching stock train on 16 June 1959. With the completion of No 6779 in December 1950, originally introduced in 1929 the '5700' class of 0-6-0PTs finally totalled 863 locomotives, of which 613 had been built at Swindon Works and 250 by no fewer than six private builders. It therefore narrowly exceeded the 857 L&NWR 'DX' class 0-6-0s built between 1858 and 1874 by Crewe Works, which also built 86 engines of the same design for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway. K.L. Cook/Rail Archive Stephenson

In addition to all this, at its eleventh hour, 1947, the GWR had placed orders with contractors for a further 200 inside-cylinder 0-6-0PTs, but having taper boilers similar to ten which had just been built at Swindon — the '9400' class. These were ostensibly ordered to replace a similar number of surviving South Wales 0-6-2Ts and a few 0-6-0Ts. Although initially divided between six builders, two of which duly sub-contracted their order to two of the others, and Swindon supplying most of the boilers, a surfeit of other orders and national steel shortages resulted in delivery being protracted. Although deliveries actually peaked at 53 as early as 1950, the last nine did not arrive until 1956! Traffic patterns changed dramatically

One of the noticeably smaller '5400' class 0-6-0PTs of 1932 design, Oxford-allocated No 7445 (built 1950, weight 45.6 tons), is pictured here on arrival at Fairford with a branch train from Oxford on 7 June 1961 — regular motive power for the Fairford branch trains. M.J. Fox/Rail Archive Stephenson

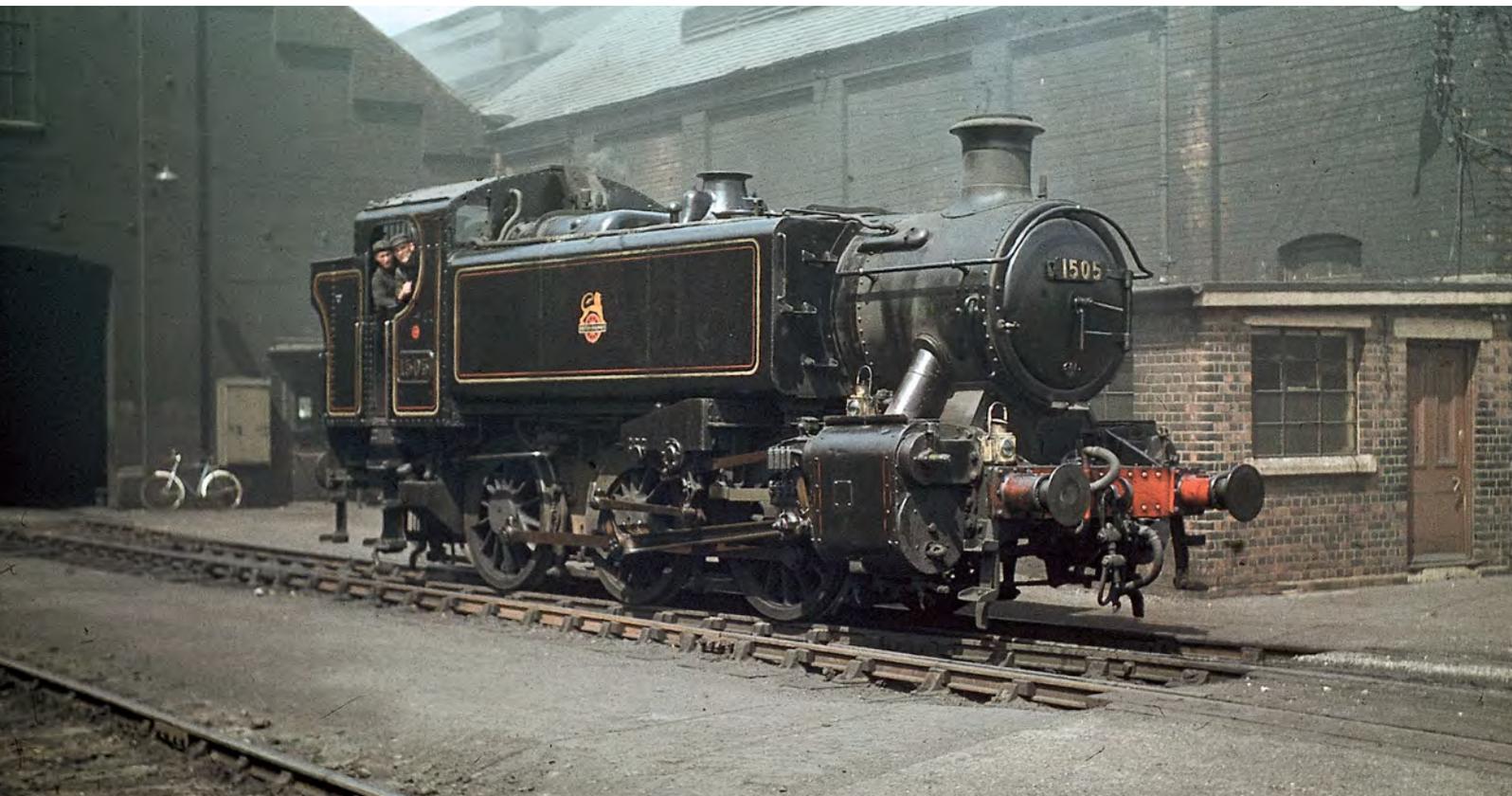




The even lighter '1600' class 0-6-0PT (weight 41.6 tons) was introduced in 1949. No 1646 (built 1951), seen here at Dornoch on 31 May 1957 with the 1.00pm service to The Mound, had recently been sent with No 1649 to the far north of Scotland to work this branch line to replace two recently-withdrawn former Highland Railway 0-4-4Ts. However the branch closed in 1960 and the two engines languished at Perth, rarely used prior to their withdrawal in 1963. Neil Sprinks

In the late 1940s no fewer than five distinct classes of 0-6-0 tank engine were built at Swindon Works, two of which were of new design, and of which four had inside cylinders. No 1504, designed and ordered by the GWR, one of the ten posthumous '1500' class outside-cylinder 0-6-0PTs (weight 58.2tons), was built by British Railways at Swindon Works in 1949. It is seen at Old Oak Common shed on 20 August 1956 attired in early BR lined black livery as some of these engines were employed at Paddington station moving passenger stock. Compared with the dimensionally-similar inside-cylinder '9400' class engines these were heavier but had a shorter coupled wheelbase of only 12ft 10in, compared with 15ft 6in, and could therefore negotiate  $3\frac{1}{2}$ chain as against  $4\frac{1}{2}$ chain track curvature. R.C. Riley

during this period, and some engines had already been in store before even the last units were delivered. Withdrawals began only three years later in 1959. For a masterly and rational analysis of this fraught affair the reader is referred to *The Pannier Papers No. 1*, by Richard Derry, published by The Irwell Press (2008). The '9400' class resembled tank versions of the Collett '2251' class, of which the last two, Nos 3218 and 3219, technically were completed at Swindon at the very dawn of the British Railways era in January 1948.



The 0-6-0PT No 3405, one of the nine '9400' inside-cylinder tank engines (weight 55.35tons) ordered by the GWR in 1947 but completed in Sheffield by the Yorkshire Engine Co during 1956, is pictured outside Swindon Works shortly after delivery, before its coupling rods were fitted. Rail Archive Stephenson



At the other end of the pannier tank scale, twenty additional '1600' class engines were very surprisingly authorised as late as 1953 when the Western Region also made a reasoned case to be allowed to build new '2884' class 2-8-0s, which it reckoned would be cheaper to operate than the then-imminent BR Standard '9F' 2-10-0, the first few units of which were already earmarked for service in South Wales. This couldn't be allowed to happen and two forms of a possible BR Standard '8F' 2-8-0 were outlined in late 1953, which would have either amounted to a BR Standard equivalent of the Stanier '8F', or a truncated '9F' with wide firebox. Neither were progressed further on



BR-built 'Manor' class 4-6-0 No 7829 Ramsbury Manor departs from Neyland with the 8.00am train to Paddington on 25 May 1963. Authorised by the Great Western Railway in early 1947, and completed at Swindon in December 1950, this was the last 4-6-0 and the last tender locomotive of GWR design to be built. Interestingly, it perpetuated the 7ft + 7ft 9in coupled wheelbase initiated on the pioneer Dean/Churchward 4-6-0 No 100 in 1902, (which was originally built with a unique design of parallel boiler), and this was incorporated in all subsequent GWR 2-cylinder and 4-cylinder 4-6-0s, with the exception of the 'Kings', and also on the Churchward 2-6-0s and large 2-6-2Ts. This simple factor has also greatly facilitated the still on-going creation of a replica Churchward 'Saint', a Collett 'Grange', and a Hawthornthwaite 'County', derived to a greater or lesser degree from Collett 'Halls' Nos 4942 Maindy Hall and 5952 Cogan Hall, and 'Modified Hall' No 7927 Willington Hall, respectively. E. Wilmshurst

Table One  
Monthly summary of  
GWR-design locomotives built at Swindon Works in 1950

| Month (1950) | 'Manor' 4-6-0 | 'Hall' 4-6-0 | 'Castle' 4-6-0 | '1600' 0-6-0 | '5400' 0-6-0 | '5700' 0-6-0 |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| January      |               | 7907-10      |                |              | 7440-41      |              |
| February     |               | 7911         |                |              | 7442-44      |              |
| March        |               | 7912-15      |                |              | 7445-47      |              |
| April        |               | 7916-18      |                |              | 7448/49      |              |
| May          |               | 7919         | 7028-29        |              |              |              |
| June         |               |              | 7030-32        | 1620-24      |              |              |
| July         |               |              | 7033           |              |              |              |
| August       |               |              | 7034-37        | 1625-28      |              |              |
| September    |               | 7920-24      |                | 1629         |              |              |
| October      |               | 7925-28      |                |              |              | 6770/71      |
| November     | 7820-21       | 7929         |                |              |              | 6772-76      |
| December     | 7822-29       |              |                |              |              | 6777-79      |



Here we see the final 'Castle' class 4-6-0 locomotive to be built, No 7037 Swindon, being cleaned on Swindon shed, circa 1952. It was also the last British 4-cylinder locomotive and, Garratts excepted, was probably the world's last new 4-cylinder simple locomotive. Rail Archive Stephenson

the drawing board, but five units of one or the other were provisionally initially put on the 1956 Building Programme, only to be replaced by a like number of 2-10-0s.

The antipathy of the Western Region to the BR Standard locomotives in general under the leadership of Keith Grand is well known, and it is possible that the Western Region was also agitating to build more 'Manors' at this time. It instigated a rather odd comparative building cost analysis concerning the 1950 batch of 'Manors' and a recent Derby-built batch of significantly heavier Standard '5MT' 4-6-0s, strangely rather than the similarly sized BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0 which Swindon itself had very recently built, and which in any case was also already operationally established on the Western Region!

In a few short years it all really didn't matter. Compared to many of their GWR-built forebears, the posthumous GWR locomotives described here were doomed to very short working lives. For instance, the final 'Castle', No 7037 Swindon, was withdrawn from service in March 1963, two months before the second 'Castle' built, No 4074 Caldicot Castle, which had first entered traffic in December 1923. Interestingly, this engine, together with No 4073 Caerphilly Castle, had originally been scheduled for withdrawal back in 1955.

Swindon Works would have been a very interesting place to have been in 1950, during which time it was building three classes of 4-6-0 and three classes of 0-6-0PT, which totalled 73 engines and concluded with no fewer than eight new 'Manors' emerging during December. A monthly breakdown is given in Table One.

**Table Two**  
GWR-type locomotives built at Swindon Works, 1948 to 1955

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1948</b>  | <b>1950 (continued)</b>   |
| '2251' class 0-6-0s Nos 3218-19, 'Modified Hall' 4-6-0s Nos 6981-95, 'Castle' class 4-6-0s Nos 7008-17, '5400' class 0-6-0PTs Nos. 7430-39, '5700' 0-6-0PTs Nos 6760-65 and 9662-72, '5101' 2-6-2Ts Nos 4160-69.                         | '1600' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 1620-29, '5400' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 7440-49, '5700' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 6770-79 |
| <b>1949</b>  | <b>1951</b>   |
| 'Modified Hall' 4-6-0s Nos 6996-99 and 7900-06, 'Castle' class 4-6-0s Nos 7018-27, '1600' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 1600-19, '5700' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 6766-69 and 9673-82, '1500' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 1500-09, '5101' class 2-6-2Ts Nos 4170-79 | '1600' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 1630-49   |
| <b>1950</b>  | <b>1952</b>   |
| 'Manor' class 4-6-0 Nos 7820-29, 'Modified Hall' 4-6-0s Nos 7911-29, 'Castle' class 4-6-0s Nos 7028-37   | None  |
|  | <b>1953</b>   |
|  | None  |
|  | <b>1954</b>   |
|  | '1600' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 1650-54   |
|  | <b>1955</b>   |
|  | '1600' class 0-6-0PTs Nos 1655-69   |

**Table Three**  
GWR '9400' class 0-6-0PTs built by contractors, 1949 to 1956

| Nos     | Ordered from   | Delivered |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 9410-69 | Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns Ltd (Newcastle),   | 1950-52   |
| 9470-89 | Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns Ltd (Darlington)   | 1952-53   |
| 9490-99 | Hunslet Engine Co. (Leeds), but sub-contracted to Yorkshire Engine Co. (Sheffield)                   | 1954-55   |
| 8400-49 | W.G. Bagnall Ltd (Stafford)  | 1949-54   |
| 8450-79 | Yorkshire Engine Co  | 1949-52   |
| 8480-99 | Hudswell, Clarke & Co. (Leeds), but sub-contracted to Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns Ltd (Darlington) | 1950-52   |
| 3400-09 | Hunslet Engine Co, but subcontracted to Yorkshire Engine Co  | 1955-56   |

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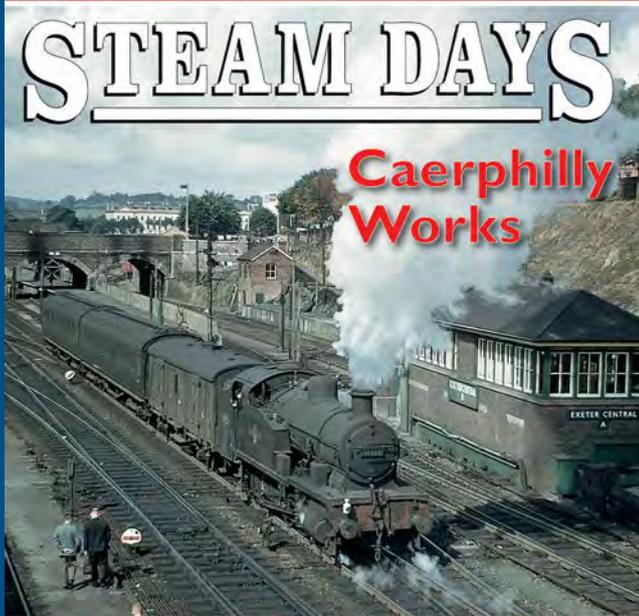
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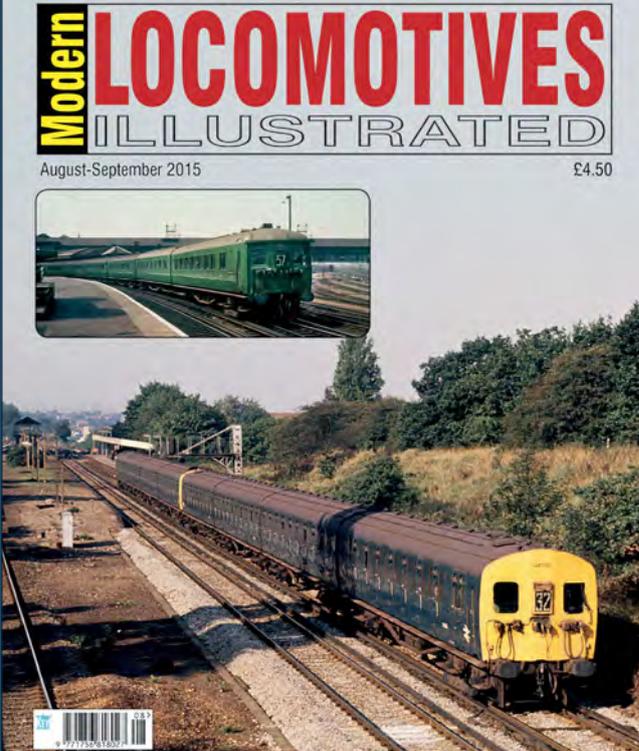
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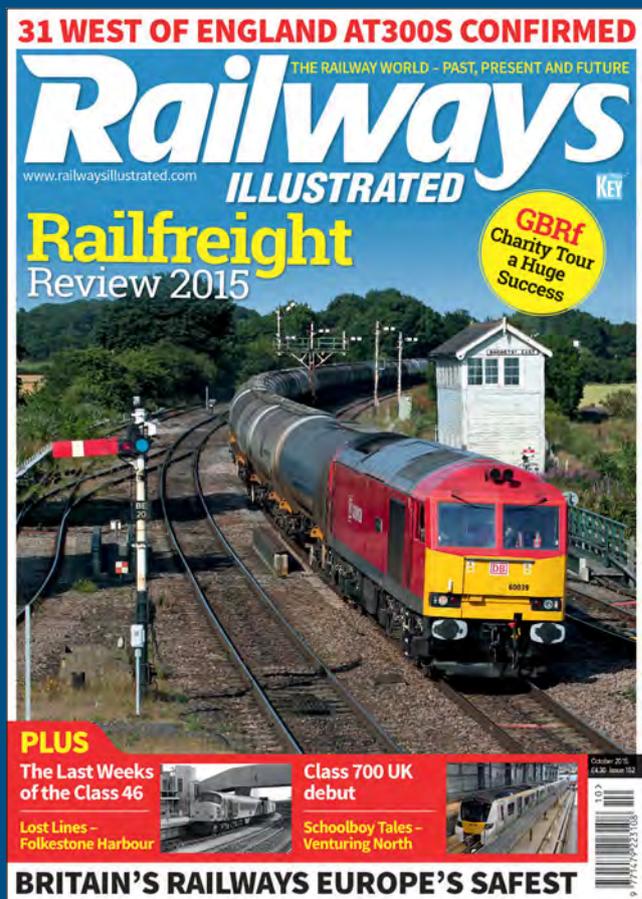
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# Western Standards

**Andrew Wilson** provides a survey of the British Railways Standard designs built at Swindon Works, and those allocated to the Western Region.

The vexed question of whether or not the 999 British Railways Standard locomotives built between January 1951 and March 1960 were worth the effort and expense has run its course, and has long been consigned to the dustbin of history. The fact is that they were constructed and put to work, some duplicated regional classes, some were redundant before they entered traffic, and a few were better than anything that had gone before. Of the major pre-nationalisation Works premises, only Crewe, Derby, Doncaster, Darlington, Horwich, Brighton, and Swindon were given orders for the BR Standards, and of these, Swindon was in some ways the most surprising.

Nationalisation saw the establishment of a Mechanical Engineers Committee, and at its first meeting on 8 January 1948 a Locomotive Standards Committee was set up and began to consider future motive power demands. Initially the regions were allowed to continue the construction of existing designs up to 1950. It was also decided to adopt the Ivatt '4MT' 2-6-0 and Fairburn 2-6-4T designs as well as the Ivatt '2MT' 2-6-0s as putative Standards, with batches to be built at Horwich, Darlington, Doncaster, Brighton, and Swindon, while Crewe also turned out thirty Ivatt '2MT' 2-6-2Ts for the Southern Region. Swindon duly completed 25 '2MT' Moguls, Nos 46503-27, between November 1952 and March 1953, but only after it had completed its first order for twenty Standard '4MT' 4-6-0s, Nos 75000-19.

By June 1948 design work on what would become the British Railways Standard classes had begun in earnest, and once the twelve classes had been decided upon, annual building programmes were drawn up (see *Table One*). In reality, these proved to be very optimistic as supplies of steel, copper, and bronze were in short supply in post-war



The first BR Standard locomotive to be completed at Swindon Works, in May 1951, '4MT' 4-6-0 No 75000, is pictured at Swindon on 29 May of that year. The '4MT' 4-6-0s had more than their fair share of teething troubles before settling down to become one of the success stories of the Standard locomotives. No 75000 itself suffered a seized tender wheel-set on a test run and had to be returned to the Works for remedial action. The locomotive was retained at Swindon for testing purposes before being sent to Shrewsbury in September 1951. Withdrawal came in December 1965 from Worcester shed. Colour-Rail.com/10995

austerity Britain at a time when exports were seen as the way forward. Importing the shortfall was not a consideration as World War II had left the country, in effect, bankrupt.

Although Swindon was to build four separate BR Standard classes of locomotives, Crewe Works flanged the plates for the '4MT' 4-6-0s and '9F' 2-10-0s, but not the '3MT' 2-6-0s, which were designed at Swindon, and whose boilers were very closely based on the Standard No 2 that was used on the '5600' class 0-6-2Ts. Furthermore, as far as steel

castings were concerned, only Crewe Works possessed a steel foundry, and so in addition to the cylinders, wheels, axles, and motion were also cast there.

In all, 198 Standard locomotives of four classes were built at Swindon with the '4MT' 4-6-0s being initially allocated to the Western, Southern, and London Midland regions. The '3MT' 2-6-0s were first sent to the Scottish and North Eastern regions while the '3MT' 2-6-2Ts went to the Western, Southern, and North Eastern regions. The '9F' 2-10-0s were divided between the Eastern, Western, and North Eastern regions.

The Western Region, however, was allocated 123 new Standard locomotives from five classes – thirteen 'Britannia' Pacifics, twenty '4MT' 4-6-0s, ten '2MT' 2-6-0s, 24 '3MT' 2-6-2Ts, and 56 '9F' 2-10-0s. Of these, the 'Britannia' Pacifics duplicated the Western Region's indigenous 'Castle' class 4-6-0s, while the region tried to block the delivery of '9F' 2-10-0s in favour of more Churchward/Collett '2800/2884' class 2-8-0s. The '4MT' 4-6-0s were seen as comparable to the Collett 'Manor' class 4-6-0s, while the '3MT' 2-6-2Ts

**Table One**  
Annual building programme for Swindon Works, 1951-1958

|              | 1951     | 1952     | 1953     | 1954      | 1956      | 1957      | 1958       |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| '4MT' 4-6-0  | 75000-19 | 75020-49 | 75050-79 | 75080-89* |           |           |            |
| '3MT' 2-6-0  |          |          | 77000-19 |           |           |           |            |
| '3MT' 2-6-2T | 82000-19 | 82010-34 | 82035-44 | 82045-62* |           |           |            |
| '9F' 2-10-0  |          |          |          |           | 92178-202 | 92203-220 | 92221-250† |

\* Subsequently cancelled. † Order transferred to Crewe Works  
'9Fs' Nos 92087-92 originally part of the 1954 order to Crewe Works but moved to Swindon and built during 1956/57.

The construction of BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0 No 75060 is well underway in Swindon Works on 7 April 1957, alongside the chassis of another member of the class, probably No 75061. The cab, running plate, chimney, and front bogie are the major items remaining to be attached, along with the plethora of smaller items. Once run-in, No 75060 will be sent to Leicester (Midland) shed in May, and withdrawal will come from Croes Newydd in April 1967 after a working life of barely a decade. R.O. Tuck/Rail Archive Stephenson



On Wednesday, 4 May 1955, BR Standard '3MT' 2-6-2T No 82040 is nearing completion in Swindon Works alongside two Hawksworth '1600' class pannier tanks, Nos 1668 and 1669. No 82040 was one of the '3MT' 2-6-2Ts built with a coal capacity of 3½ tons, and would be sent to Barry shed once run-in. When withdrawn in July 1965 it was allocated to Gloucester (Horton Road) shed, having spent between September 1960 and October 1962 moving between the Bristol and Bath sheds. R.J. Leonard/Kidderminster Railway Museum



Transferred from Oswestry to Machynlleth in May 1955, BR '2MT' Mogul No 78005, now carrying the green livery, is seen on a typical duty for the class on the Cambrian Division, a local all stations passenger working along the coast, and is seen on the outskirts of Pwllheli on 7 June 1960. No 78005 remained in traffic until the end of steam on the Western Region and was withdrawn from Gloucester (Horton Road) shed in December 1965. Colour-Rail.com/19895



BR Standard '3MT' 2-6-2T No 82034 waits in the excursion platform at Barmouth with a local working to Dolgellau in the summer of 1964. Released to traffic in January 1954 it has carried lined-green livery since September 1958. Allocated to Machynlleth between April 1961 and April 1964 it was to be found on local passenger work as well as on goods trains, and at busy times could also be seen on pilot duties over Talerddig bank. Arguably from one of the most attractive of the Standard classes, No 82024 was withdrawn in December 1966 from Patricroft shed. Colour-Rail.com

were to take the place of life-expired pre-Grouping tank engines and the older Churchward 2-6-2Ts. The '2MT' 2-6-0s were seen as replacements for the 'Earl' class 4-4-0s and remaining Cambrian Railways 0-6-0s along with the Ivatt '2MT' Moguls built at Swindon during 1952/53.

By the time that steam on the Western Region was in its death throws at the end of December 1965 only 67 BR Standard locomotives were still allocated to Western Region sheds. Six classes were represented — nineteen '5MT' 4-6-0s, six '4MT' 4-6-0s, five '2MT' 2-6-0s, one '4MT' 2-6-4T, nine '3MT' 2-6-2Ts, and 27 '9F' 2-10-0s. Of these, two '2MT' 2-6-0s, Nos 78004 and 78008, had spent their entire working lives on the Western Region's sheds along with three '3MT' 2-6-2Ts, Nos 82004, 82008, and 82041

and twenty '9F' 2-10-0s, the oldest of which was No 92003, and the youngest No 92220 *Evening Star*.

The thirteen 'Britannia' Pacifics allocated to the region were divided between four sheds — Old Oak Common (4), Cardiff Canton (5), Plymouth Laira (3) and Newton Abbot (1), where they met the innate conservatism of the Top Link where most drivers were in their fifties and sixties. Left-hand drive, draughty

cabs, two cylinders, large grates, and a hard ride did little to endear the Pacifics to their crews. Old Oak Common put 'Britannia' Pacifics Nos 70017/18/20/23 to work on its Top Link turns to the south-west, Bristol, and Cardiff, including 'The Bristolian' and 'The Merchant Venturer'. At Newton Abbot, No 70019 was diagrammed on the Bristol services, which included 'The Devonian' as far as Bristol (Temple Meads). Laira's Nos 70021, 70022 and 70024 were entrusted with 'The Cornishman' and the 'Cornish Riviera Express'.

The biggest change in the deployment of the 'Britannia' Pacifics on the Western Region came at the end of 1956 when it was decided to allocate all fifteen Pacifics to Cardiff (Canton) depot, the one shed that took to

Table Two  
BR Standards built at Swindon Works, 1951-1960

|             | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 4MT' 4-6-0  | 16   | 4    | 25   | 5    | 13   | 5    | 12   |      |      |
| 3MT' 2-6-0  |      |      |      | 20   |      |      |      |      |      |
| 3MT' 2-6-2T |      | 20   |      | 12   | 13   |      |      |      |      |
| 9F' 2-10-0  |      |      |      |      | 6    | 10   | 19   | 15   | 3    |

The Western Region operated 'Britannia' Pacifics for some ten years, and here we find No 70018 *Flying Dutchman* of Cardiff (Canton) shed running past Old Oak Common shed in charge of the 3.45pm Paddington to Fishguard Harbour service on 29 August 1959. Originally allocated to Old Oak Common at the end of June 1951, No 70018 *Flying Dutchman* moved to Cardiff (Canton) at the end of December 1956. It remained a Western Region locomotive until September 1961 when transferred to Carlisle (Canal) shed. Withdrawal came from Carlisle (Kingmoor) in December 1966. Colour-Rail.com





**Only one BR 'Clan' Pacific, No 72006 *Clan Mackenzie*, is known to have worked a passenger train in and out of Paddington, and this occurred on Sunday, 8 December 1963 when it worked a Home Counties Railway Society rail tour to Swindon, and is seen near Hayes & Harlington on the outward journey on what was a foggy winter's day. Other BR 'Clan' Pacifics worked into Bristol and as far west as Margam and Chester. Rail Archive Stephenson**

them, where they worked 'The Red Dragon' and 'The Capitals United Express' among other Top Link workings. At the end of the Summer 1959 Timetable the 'Britannias' lost more workings to six 'King' class 4-6-0s, Nos 6003/04/18/19/23/28, displaced from the Plymouth to Paddington trains by increasing numbers of 'Warship' diesel-hydraulic locomotives, and 1960 would be the last full year of 'Britannia' operations from Cardiff (Canton), and in September 1961 all of the shed's 'Britannia' Pacifics were transferred to the London Midland Region.

The lone Standard '8P' 3-cylinder Pacific, No 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*, was allocated to Swindon between October 1954 and May 1955 for testing purposes. Although never used in ordinary service, No 71000 was put through its paces on the stationary plant and on controlled road tests. It was found to have a poor boiler performance, but proved to be the most economical in steam consumption per indicated horsepower of any locomotive tested in Britain. After returning to Crewe North it was not seen on the Western Region again before being withdrawn in November 1962.

Although the BR 'Clan' Pacifics made occasional forays into the Western Region there is only one authenticated working of an engine of the class out of Paddington when No 72006 *Clan Mackenzie* was used to work a Home Counties Railway Society special to Swindon and back on a foggy Sunday, 8 December 1963. Brought down from Carlisle (Kingmoor), its stay at Old Oak Common was brief.

With 258 'Halls', 71 'Modified Halls', thirty 'Counties', eighty 'Granges', and thirty 'Manors', the Standard '5MT' 4-6-0s were not initially allocated to Western Region sheds, but in September 1953 no less than 25 were transferred from the London Midland Region. Shrewsbury received thirteen, Nos 73012-15/17/18/25/26/33-37, Chester five, Nos 73020/21/23/24/38, and Bristol (St. Philip's Marsh) seven, Nos 73019/22/27-29/32/39. The Shrewsbury locomotives were put to work over the North to West route, those at Bristol over the lines to Salisbury and Newton Abbot, while those

allocated to Chester were used mainly on goods turns.

The Winter 1957/58 Timetable saw 35 of the '5MT' 4-6-0s on the Western Region divided between Swindon, Chester, Cardiff (Canton), St. Philip's Marsh, Wolverhampton (Oxley), Tyseley, and Shrewsbury. When the Western Region took over the Somerset & Dorset lines from the Southern Region it gained those members of the class allocated to Bath (Green Park). By 1964 the Western Region possessed nineteen examples, and as the Western Region withdrew its remaining steam locomotives in 1965 the last examples were to be found at Oxford and Bristol, with Nos 73001, 73003 and 73068 withdrawn in December from Oxford.

The '4MT' 4-6-0s would be associated with the Western Region from May 1951 to December 1965. Nos 75000 remained at Swindon until September 1951 for testing, No 75004 went to Bristol (Bath Road) shed, and Nos 75001-03/05/07-09 went to Shrewsbury. By September 1953 Nos 75005-09 were allocated to Cardiff (Canton) depot. The region's next allocation, Nos 75020-29, were not delivered until the six months between November 1953 and May 1954, with Nos 75020, 75023 and 75024 going to Oswestry, Nos 75021 and 75022 to Cardiff (Canton), and Nos 75025-29 to Plymouth (Laira). Oswestry used its three, turn and turn about, with the 'Manor' class 4-6-0s, while those at Laira were used on banking and pilot duties, as well as on freight turns. At Cardiff, engines of the class were used on local trains to Bristol, Salisbury, and Birmingham, along with freights to the Oxford area.





Below: The Swindon-built Standards were all run-in from Swindon shed, and on 14 August 1953 the No 75035 is being tried out on the 2.40pm Gloucester to Swindon local passenger train and is seen at Gloucester (Central). Within days this locomotive will make its way to Bletchley, but in February 1955 it was transferred to Chester (Midland) shed. By the time it was condemned from Tebay in July 1967 it had been on the books of Bangor, Llandudno Junction, Rhyl, Nuneaton, and Stoke sheds. L.B. Lapper/W. Potter Collection/ Kidderminster Railway Museum

The final development of the Swindon-built BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0s is illustrated by No 75029 at Machynlleth at the head of a Shrewsbury-bound working in late 1966. The May 1954-built 4-6-0 was fitted with a double blastpipe and chimney in May 1957, and the original experimental version was replaced in February 1960 by the one seen. First painted in lined passenger green in May 1957, No 75029 now carries unlined green which was applied at Eastleigh Works in April 1964. When withdrawn in August 1967, No 75029 was bought by artist David Shepherd and is now owned by the North York Moors Railway. Colour-Rail.com





**BR Standard '5MT' 4-6-0 No 73022 became a Western Region locomotive in September 1953 when transferred from Chester (Midland) to Bristol (St. Philip's Marsh). On 12 January 1957 we find it passing Old Oak Common shed with a down local passenger working while this engine was allocated to Swindon. In September 1958 it was re-allocated to the Southern Region at Weymouth and was destined to be withdrawn in April 1967 from Nine Elms.**  
R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury

**Below left: Destined for the Southern Region, BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0 No 75073 stands in the Swindon Works yard in mint condition on 6 November 1955 awaiting allocation and appropriate shed plate. Its first shed would Exmouth Junction and its last Templecombe, with withdrawal occurring in December 1965. The Southern Region's BR '4MT' 4-6-0s differed from the rest of the class in being coupled to high capacity BRIB tenders, although Nos 75050-64 were given BR2A types in place of the more usual BR2. Brian Morrison**



By July 1957 the twenty '4MT' 4-6-0s were divided between Swindon (5), Oxford (3), Cardiff Canton (6), and Oswestry (6). Between May 1957 and October 1962 Swindon fitted nine of its allocation, Nos 75003-06/08/20/22/26/29 with double chimneys which improved their steaming. Also between September 1957 and December 1960 eighteen engines of the class were painted in British Railways lined-green livery, only Nos 75009 and 75028 remaining in lined mixed-traffic black.

In May 1961 the Western Region's allocation of BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0s was twenty-two locomotives. The Tyseley allocation, Nos 75003/06/24/29, was often seen on the Cambrian lines during the summer supplementing Nos 75020 and 75026 at Machynlleth. Once at Aberystwyth, locomotives were often used over the Carmarthen line and north to Pwllheli, and turns on the 'Cambrian Land Cruise' also came their way. By 1964, however, only eleven '4MT' 4-6-0s remained on the region, and by 1965 they were only found at Worcester and Templecombe sheds. The region's surviving examples, Nos 75000/03/08/22/25, were finally condemned at the end of 1965.

Although none of the '3MT' class 2-6-0s were allocated to Western Region sheds all engines of the class were run-in on the region. Some spent more than a month being used on the Swindon to Ludgershall and Tidworth branch pick-up goods, and on local passenger work between Swindon and Bristol, although No 77006 was recorded at Exeter on Good Friday, 1954.

**Table Three  
Construction details of BR Standards built at Swindon Works, 1951-1960**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>'4MT' 4-6-0s</b>                        | <b>'3MT' 2-6-2Ts</b>                        |
| 75000 5/51, 75001-15 8-12/51               | 82000 4/52, 82001-19 4-9/52                 |
| 75016-19 1-3/51                            | 82020-31 9-12/54                            |
| 75010-24 11-12/53, 75030-49 6-10/53        | 82032-44 1-8/55                             |
| 75025-28 4-5/54                            | 82000-09 Lot No. 392, 82010-19 Lot No. 393  |
| 75050-52 11-12/56, 75065-77 8-12/55        | 82020-29 Lot No. 398, 82030-34 Lot No. 399  |
| 75053-64 1-6/57                            | 82035-44 Lot No. 410                        |
| 75000-09 Lot No.390, 75010-19 Lot No. 391  |   |
| 75020-29 Lot No.400, 75030-49 Lot No. 401, | <b>'9F' 2-10-0s</b>                         |
| 75050-64 Lot No. 408, 75065-79 Lot No.409  | 92087-92 8-12/56                            |
|  | 92093-96 1-4/57, 92178-183 9-12/57          |
| <b>'3MT' 2-6-0s</b>                        | 92184-202, 1-12/58                          |
| 77000 2/54, 77001-19 2-9/54                | 92203-217 4-12/58                           |
| 77000-04 Lot No. 406, 77005-9 Lot No. 407  | 92218-220 1-3/60                            |
| 77010-14 Lot No. 406, 77015-19 Lot No. 407 | 92087-92 Lot No. 421, 92178-202 Lot No. 422 |
|  | 92203-220 Lot No. 429                       |

**The third of the BR Standard '3MT' class 2-6-0s, No 77002, is seen on yard-pilot duties at Stourton, Leeds, in the summer of 1966 before being transferred to York in October 1966. When new, in February 1954, this locomotive was sent to Darlington, and after being on the books of West Auckland and Hull (Dairycoates) sheds it was allocated to Stourton in September 1963, but in November 1964 was sent to Tweedmouth before returning to Stourton in July 1966. Withdrawal came in June 1967. Joe Richardson/Colour-Rail.com**





In February 1954 the brand-new BR '3MT' 2-6-0 No 77002 stands outside 'A' shop at Swindon Works awaiting the completion of its BR2A tender. The '3MT' Moguls were tender versions of the '3MT' 2-6-2Ts, and all twenty engines of the class were constructed between February and September 1954. The running-in of the '77000s' was rather protracted as the Western Region's operating department took a liking to the class yet, once despatched to their first sheds, none of the class returned to Swindon. A.J. Locke/Kidderminster Railway Museum

The last BR '3MT' 2-6-0 in traffic was No 77014, which found itself transferred to Guildford in March 1966 to work a rail tour. The Southern Region was getting short of serviceable locomotives and No 77014 became regarded as a very useful engine. On 29 July 1966 it is seen in charge of a weed-killing train at Farringdon on the last remaining section of the Meon Valley railway. Withdrawn in July 1967, it was sold to Bird's scrapyards at Risca, South Wales, and was quickly cut up. John H. Bird/SOUTHERN-IMAGES.CO.UK

The first ten '2MT' class 2-6-0s delivered from Darlington Works, Nos 78000-09, were allocated to Oswestry to work on the former Cambrian Railways lines. Here they could be seen at Ellesmere and on the coast road between Machynlleth, Aberystwyth, and Pwllheli. In July 1953 Nos 78008 and 78009 were transferred to Worcester, and were joined by No 78004 in the October. By April 1957 all ten locomotives of the class were allocated to either Machynlleth (6) or Worcester (4), but with the regional changes of 1963 the London Midland Region moved them on, leaving only Nos 78001/04/08/09 at Worcester. All ten were repainted into green livery between March 1957 and October 1963, and when the region's remaining steam sheds were closed at the end of 1965 No 78001/04/05/06 had found their way to Gloucester (Horton Road) shed.

The '4MT' 2-6-4Ts had a somewhat ephemeral association with the Western Region, thanks to the 1963 boundary changes, with Nos 80079 and 80080 allocated to Croes Newydd, No 80105 to Machynlleth, Nos 80070/98/102/104/131/132 to Old Oak Common, Nos 80078/96/100/101/135/136 to Shrewsbury, and Nos 80069/72/97/99/133/134 to Cardiff East Dock in July 1962. At the same time the former Southern Region sheds in Devon and Cornwall came under Western Region control, bringing Nos 80035-43/59/64/67 into the Western Region's stock. The last active members of the class in 1965 and 1966 were on the Somerset & Dorset line where Nos 80037/41/43 were the last to be steamed in service.

The '3MT' 2-6-2Ts were associated with the Western Region from April 1952 until New Year's Eve, 1965. Nos 82000-09 went new to



The first ten of the Darlington-built BR '2MT' 2-6-0s destined for the Western Region were all delivered to Swindon before being released to Oswestry. On 24 January 1953 No 78002 stands in the yard outside Swindon Works in company with Churchward 'Saint' class 4-6-0 No 2933 *Bibury Court*. Nos 78000-09 were all delivered in mixed-traffic black livery, but by March 1957 Swindon had started to repaint them into lined passenger green. No 78002 would end its days at Lostock Hall shed from where it was withdrawn in June 1966.

R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury

Due to boundary changes, the BR Standard '4MT' 2-6-4Ts had only a brief flirtation with the Western Region, and on 12 August 1962 at least six engines of the class are seen stored behind the coal stage at Old Oak Common with No 80134 nearest the camera. A number were found work in Wales, but no sooner had they arrived than the sheds in mid-Wales were transferred to the London Midland Region. At least one engine of the class, sent to Old Oak Common, was tried out on the empty coaching stock duties in and out of Paddington but was regarded as inferior to the indigenous pannier tanks and GWR '6100' class 2-6-2Ts.

T.B. Owen/Colour-Rail.com/394243



Looking immaculate outside Swindon Works on 17 August 1952 is BR '3MT' 2-6-2T No 82016, destined to go to the Southern Region at Eastleigh, illustrating the lined mixed-traffic livery applied to the class when new. The side tanks suffered from stressed welds and leaking early in their careers, which was only cured by fitting additional bracing. No 82016 moved to Guildford in November 1962 and then to Nine Ems in March 1963, the shed where 23 engines of the class ended their working lives. No 82016 would be condemned from there in April 1965.

R.A. Wheeler/Rail Archive Stephenson



During the summer of 1964, BR Standard '9F' 2-10-0 No 92220 *Evening Star*, the last steam locomotive to be built at Swindon Works, carrying a Cardiff East Dock shed plate, stands at Oxford at the head of a goods train. It is hard to believe that under the grime and limescale is a lined-out green passenger livery and a copper-capped chimney. Entering traffic in March 1960 at Cardiff (Canton) shed No 92220 ended its working life at Cardiff East Dock after spells at Old Oak Common, Oxford, and Bath (Green Park).  
Joe Richardson/Colour-Rail.com





Tyseley shed, but by the end of December 1954 were at Treherbert and Barry where their 3-ton bunker capacity was found to be insufficient, leading to the last batch being given 3½-ton bunkers. Nos 82030-44 were delivered to Barry and Newton Abbot between November 1954 and August 1955. By the end of 1961 the Western Region was home to nineteen engines of the class with nine at Machynlleth, two at Bath (Green Park), two at Bristol (St. Philip's Marsh), four at Taunton, and two at Shrewsbury. The region withdrew its allocation between February 1964 and the end of December 1965.

No less than 25 BR '3MT' 2-6-2Ts were repainted in green livery between January 1957 and April 1964. Some were painted in fully lined-out passenger green while others appeared in plain green, while both large and small totems were applied to the tank sides of both the cycling lion and heraldic devices.

Despite not wanting the '9F' 2-10-0s, the Western Region eventually made good use of the class on duties once performed by the '2800/2884' class 2-8-0s, '4200/5205' class 2-8-0Ts, and '7200' class 2-8-2Ts. In January and February 1954 Nos 92000-09 were sent to Newport (Ebbw Junction) shed where, after

some initial problems with the regulators and brakes, they settled down to prove their worth. There was then a five-year gap before any more were delivered. Then between April 1959 and March 1960 Nos 92203-92250 were divided between St. Philip's Marsh, Plymouth (Laira), Cardiff (Canton), Old Oak Common, Banbury, Pontypool Road and Newport (Ebbw Junction) sheds. No 92220 achieved celebrity status in becoming the last steam locomotive to be built at Swindon, and was outshopped with due ceremony in March 1960 in passenger green, complete with copper-capped chimney, commemorative plaques, and *Evening Star* nameplates.

Once the footplatemen realised what versatile locomotives the BR '9F' 2-10-0s were, these engines were often pressed into passenger service, and No 92220 even worked three 'Red Dragon' diagrams until higher authority put an end to such exploits. When the final locomotives of the class were withdrawn at the end of 1965, the Western Region's survivors were allocated to Gloucester (Horton Road), Bath (Green Park), Southall, Severn Tunnel Junction, Newport (Ebbw Junction), and Cardiff East Dock sheds.

**Crewe Works-built, but Western Region-operated BR '9F' 2-10-0 No 92238, allocated to Old Oak Common, passes Westbourne bridge as it leaves Paddington in charge of the 11.35am service to South Wales on 6 August 1960. New to Ebbw Junction shed in September 1958, No 92238 would be withdrawn from Severn Tunnel Junction in September 1965 and cut-up by Cashmore's, Newport, in the following December. R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury**

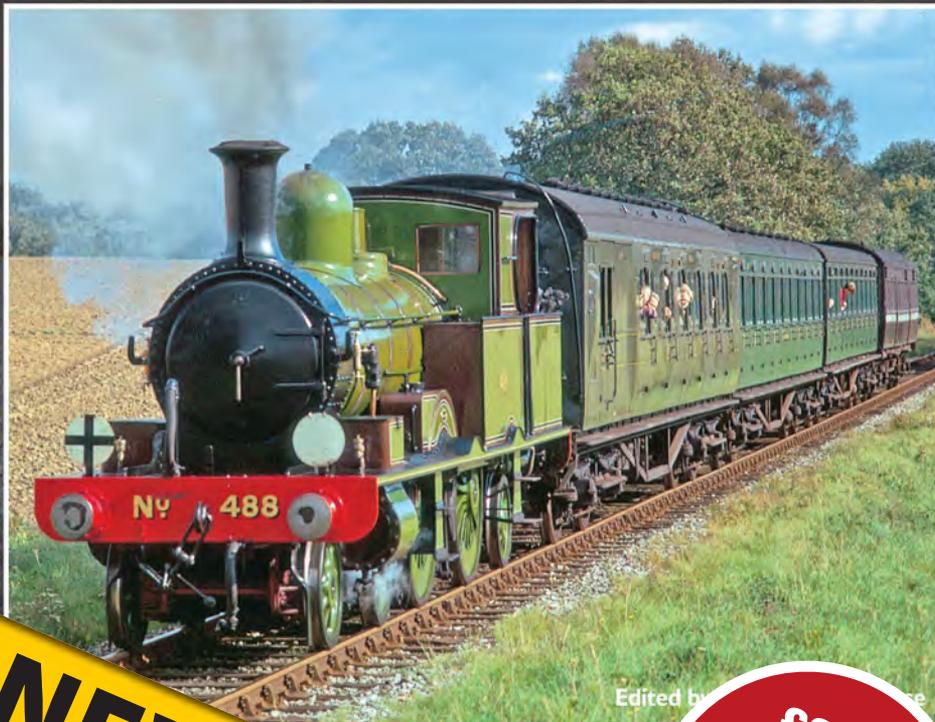
**Newport (Ebbw Junction) shed's BR '9F' 2-10-0 No 92206 coasts into Reading station at the head of a long freight working on 17 August 1963. Completed at Swindon Works in June 1959 it went new to Bristol (St. Philip's Marsh), and by the time it arrived at Ebbw Junction it had already been allocated to Plymouth (Laira) and Cardiff (Canton). Moved to Cardiff East Dock in September 1963 it would be sent to Southall, Cardiff East Dock again, Bristol (Barrow Road), and then Bath (Green Park), from where it was withdrawn at the end of December 1965. It was cut-up in March 1966 by Cashmore's of Newport. Colour-Rail.com/10045**



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# STEAM DAYS

In Colour

## Paddington and its London Suburbs

*A pictorial tribute in colour to the GWR's London terminus at Paddington and its suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s, together with the four-turntable roundhouse at Old Oak Common and Ranelagh Bridge yard.*

It was not only the powerful express types that were seen in and around Paddington, as this photograph of '1400' class 0-4-2T No 1420, allocated to Southall shed, illustrates as it takes a parcels train out of the depot and heads west. For many years the ex-Great Western diesel railcars built for parcels work (Nos 17 and 34) were a common sight on workings such as this, but with the parcels depot being beyond the main platforms at Paddington they were not often seen in the terminus proper. R.C. Riley







Great Western 'King' class 4-6-0 No 6023 *King Edward II* passes Subway Junction in charge of an express F46, heading for Cardiff, the furthest west that engines of the class were allowed to work on this main line. To the right can be seen the Hammersmith & City lines of London Transport burrowing beneath No 6023's train as they head for Royal Oak station. The 'Kings' had a relatively short time on the Cardiff expresses as having replaced Cardiff (Canton) shed's 'Britannia' Pacifics they were in turn displaced by the 'Hymek' diesel-hydraulic locomotives. R.C. Riley

Bottom left: An immaculate 'Castle' class 4-6-0, No 5049 *Earl of Plymouth* of Plymouth (Laira) shed, sits outside the roundhouse at Old Oak Common on 16 August 1959. Only recently released back into traffic from Swindon Works after receiving a Heavy Intermediate repair and repaint, it makes an interesting comparison with the '5700' 0-6-0PT, No 7754, in the background. R.C. Riley

Below: The fireman of 'Castle' class 4-6-0 No 5014 *Goodrich Castle*, seen wearing a beret that was at the time a trademark of Old Oak Common, has his fire and the boiler ready for departure from Paddington on a down express on 18 August 1962. Noise and smoke abatement regulations in London made the fireman's job hard as he balanced the need to have the boiler on the mark and a good, deep, well-burned-through fire at departure time. No 5014 *Goodrich Castle* was allocated to Old Oak Common from December 1942 through to June 1964. Geoff Rixon







The '6100' class 2-6-2Ts were allocated to Old Oak Common to handle the intensive suburban services, both inner and outer, that ran in and out of Paddington. On 1 June 1957 No 6120 nears West Ealing at the head of a typical five-coach set of compartment stock that was used on these services. Within a couple of years the allocation of diesel-multiple-units would see the '6100s' relegated to empty stock movements, with many of Old Oak Common's allocation moved elsewhere to find useful employment. R.C. Riley

Bottom left: A busy scene at Ranelagh Bridge on 6 August 1960 shows the importance of the yard with no less than five 4-6-0s and a 'Britannia' Pacific being serviced in readiness to work trains out of Paddington. Although of great convenience to the railway, the residents of the tenement buildings backing on to the yard must have been plagued by smoke and noise pollution, and this in the days before double glazing was readily available. R.C. Riley

Below: A row of nine pannier tanks sit on the ash road at Old Oak Common shed awaiting alongside the coal stage and water tank for their next duty on 16 August 1959. The first engine in the row, No 8763, is actually painted in British Railways mixed-traffic black livery with full lining, an idea dreamt up to make the class more attractive when sat at the buffers at Paddington but, apart from a '1500' 0-6-0PT being so treated, the idea was quietly abandoned as the pannier tanks were rarely on shed long enough to be thoroughly cleaned. R.C. Riley







Old Oak Common-allocated '8750' class 0-6-0PT No 8761 works a down empty coaching stock train out of Paddington on 10 September 1960 and is seen approaching Royal Oak station en route to Old Oak Common carriage sidings. In 1960 Old Oak Common had an allocation of six '1500' class 0-6-0PTs, 42 '5700/8750' class tanks, and twelve '9400' class pannier tanks, of which ten were condenser-fitted for working through the tunnels to Smithfield Market, to cover the numerous pilot and transfer duties at the shed. R.C. Riley

Bottom left: One of Old Oak Common's allocation of Hawksworth '9400' class 0-6-0PTs, No 9420, is seen at Paddington on pilot duty No 23. Along with the '5700/8750' pannier tanks the '9400s' could be found on empty coaching stock duties from Old Oak Common carriage sidings to Paddington round the clock. These surefooted tank engines seemed to have little difficulty in taking up to 14-coach trains over the flyover from Scrubbs Lane to Westbourne Park and were still at work on such trains up to the closure of Old Oak Common shed to steam in March 1965. Geoff Rixon

Below: A scene familiar to regular travellers on entering the concourse at Brunel's great terminus at Paddington station as 'Castle' class 4-6-0 No 4082 Windsor Castle', the renamed and renumbered No 7013 Bristol Castle, stands at Platform 10 on 18 August 1962 after arriving with an up express. Once the empty stock has been taken out, inevitably by a pannier tank, the 'Castle' class locomotive will be able to either run to Ranelagh Bridge or Old Oak Common for servicing. Geoff Rixon





Great Western Collett 'Hall' class 4-6-0 No 4962 *Ragley Hall* eases a parcel train out of Paddington's goods depot and under Westbourne bridge on to the main lines as it heads for Subway Junction on 4 April 1957. Allocated to Reading shed at the time, the 'Hall' will be working one of its home shed's duties that will take it to Reading and Swindon. A considerable volume of parcels and newspaper traffic was handled by the Western Region at this time, most of which is now conveyed by road. R.C. Riley

The low angle of the sun on 30 March 1957 highlights 'King' class 4-6-0 No 6006 *King George I*, now fitted with a double chimney, as it is turned at Ranelagh Bridge depot prior to working back to Wolverhampton later in the day. In the background is 'County' class 4-6-0 No 1009 *County of Carmarthen* and an unidentified 'King' which have already been turned and serviced and are waiting to back down to Paddington to pick up their respective down workings. R.C. Riley



# Boundary changes – 1958



**Jeremy English** looks at the boundary changes that took place on British Railways in 1958, and the termination of passenger services up to that year, together with the changes that were made regarding the Somerset & Dorset line.

Politicians may come and go, but the civil servants go on forever. The Conservative Government had, much against its better judgment, decided not to de-nationalise the railways and had then made provision for massive funding of the British Railways 'Modernisation Plan' in 1955. Two years later they doubled the money when it was apparent that even more was needed to speed the process up, but the civil servants were still obsessed with the 'penetrating lines', and were desperate to tidy the map up further.

Accordingly, in 1958, almost one might think to celebrate a full decade of British Railways, yet more changes were made to the regional boundaries, this time not just the British Transport Commission's pet administrative duties, but now the whole thing, commercial and operating control as well.

Britain's railways, still well and truly in the steam age despite the 'Modernisation Plan', were beginning to be seen as out of date, with little future prospect of recovering their former glory. Many branch lines and some secondary lines had closed throughout the country, the Western Region mostly closing the inherited former LMS lines and its own branch lines such as those to Abbotsbury (1 December 1952), Princetown (5 March 1956) and, unfortunately, quite a large number of Welsh ones. The vast majority just lost their passenger services and soldiered on as goods-only lines, or at least parts of them did. The full list, to the end of January 1958, is as follows. The first-listed dates are closures to passengers, and closures to all public traffic are shown in brackets.

In Dorset, the Abbotsbury branch from Upwey Junction was closed to all traffic on 1 December 1952, and during the line's last year, in May 1952 we see a motor train having arrived from Weymouth, with Collett 0-4-2T No 1454 in charge. In early BR days there were seven up and seven down trains each weekday (including one SX and one SO service), between Weymouth and Abbotsbury, six of these being auto trains, with one down freight working and one mixed up train.

23 Sep 1950 (12 July 1965) Swansea (St. Thomas) to Brynamman (East)  
 15 Jan 1951 (1 July 1952) Oswestry to Llangynog  
 5 Feb 1951 (2 Nov 1959) Ebbw Vale (High Level) to Beaufort  
 5 Feb 1951 (1 May 1967) Hanwood to Minsterley  
 5 Feb 1951 (31 Dec 1951) Kington to New Radnor  
 12 Feb 1951 (9 May 1960) Merthyr to Quaker's Yard  
 7 May 1951 (5 Apr 1965) Lampeter to Aberayron  
 4 Jun 1951 (4 Nov 1963) Banbury to Chipping Norton  
 4 Jun 1951 (28 Sep 1964) Titley to Presteign  
 10 Sep 1951 (12 Nov 1962) Malmesbury to Little Somerford  
 10 Sep 1951 (2 Oct 1961) Turnchapel to Plymouth (Friary)  
 10 Sep 1951 (7 Oct 1963) Plymstock to Plymouth (Friary)  
 29 Oct 1951 (20 May 1963) Highbridge (East) to Burnham on Sea  
 29 Oct 1951 (29 Oct 1951) Glastonbury & Street to Wells (Priory Road)  
 26 Nov 1951 (26 Nov 1951) Llantrisant to Cowbridge  
 31 Dec 1951 (2 Dec 1963) Craven Arms to Much Wenlock  
 31 Dec 1951 (1 July 1963) Uffington to Faringdon  
 31 Mar 1952 (9 May 1960) Llantrisant to Pontypridd  
 2 Jun 1952 (6 July 1964) Wellington (Hadley) to Coalport (East)  
 28 Jul 1952 (line still open) Pontypridd to Abercynon  
 15 Sep 1952 (15 Sep 1952) Leominster to Bromyard  
 15 Sep 1952 (22 Sep 1973) Pencader to Newcastle Emlyn  
 1 Dec 1952 (1 Dec 1952) Upwey Junction to Abbotsbury  
 1 Dec 1952 (1 Dec 1952) Bridgwater (North) to Edington Junction  
 9 Feb 1953 (22 Mar 1965) Blaengarw to Brynmenny

2 Mar 1953 (6 Aug 1962) Swindon to Highworth  
 21 Sep 1953 (29 Mar 1996) Burry Port to Cwm Mawr  
 21 Sep 1953 (22 Nov 1954) Rhymney to Rhymney Bridge  
 1 Mar 1954 (1 Mar 1954) Kidlington to Blenheim & Woodstock  
 7 Feb 1955 (28 Sep 1964) Leominster to Kington  
 7 Feb 1955 (6 Jul 1959) Titley to Kington  
 13 Jun 1955 (13 Jun 1955) Monmouth (Troy) to Pontypool Road  
 19 Sep 1955 (still in use) Ludgershall to Tidworth  
 5 Mar 1956 (5 Mar 1956) Yelverton to Princetown  
 11 Jun 1956 (still part used) Neath to Swansea (High Street)  
 11 Jun 1956 (4 Oct 1965) Felin Fran to Swansea (High Street)  
 11 Jun 1956 (still in use) Felin Fran to Skewen  
 17 Sep 1956 (20 Nov 1967) Caerphilly to Machen  
 17 Sep 1956 (1965) Caerphilly to Pontypridd  
 1 Jul 1957 (2 Jan 1961\*) Princes Risborough to Watlington \*partly preserved  
 6 Jan 1958 (6 Jan 1958) Merthyr to Abergavenny Junction  
 6 Jan 1958 (6 Jan 1958) Brynmawr to Merthyr

The process of closures was speeding up. The 1949-inherited former LMS lines, including the Heads of the Valley line in South Wales, had gone at the beginning of 1958, closing on 6 January 1958 following a 'last train' organized by the Stephenson Locomotive Society. The Western Region has taken a lot of criticism from enthusiasts and, indeed, former BR staff for its closures of former rivals' lines, but it was merely doing what the BTC intended, which was to eliminate the 'penetrating lines'. The 1958 boundary changes would see it fully inherit what would become the most controversial of those eliminations, but more of that shortly.

The 1958 transfers were introduced by the BTC which emphasized that the changes



Passenger trains over the Princetown branch over Dartmoor to and from Plymouth continued to run until March 1956, and on 29 October 1955 2-6-2T No 4591 is pictured at the Princetown terminus with its two coach train. Until 1955 the '4400' class 2-6-2Ts worked the trains over the line, but these were replaced by the '4500/4575' class 2-6-2Ts as the '4400s' were restricted to 120tons (four coaches) between Yelverton and Princetown. Rex Kennedy Collection

would not of themselves affect the way that public services by British Railways as a whole were provided. The principal objective was still to eliminate 'penetrating lines'. The 1950 transfers had been primarily aimed at eliminating administration cost duplication, but it was now time to transfer operating control as well, so that operating areas would coincide with regions for all purposes. At first glance this was a very sensible tidying-up plan.

The lines which were transferred to or from the Western Region with effect from 1 February 1958 were as follows.

*To the London Midland Region*

Roman Bridge to Blaenau Festiniog (North)  
 Birmingham to Barnt Green, including the Halesowen Joint line  
 Marylebone to Northolt Jn and Harrow (South)  
 Wellington to Nantwich  
 Chester motive power depot  
 Bromsgrove wagon repair depot

*From the London Midland Region*

Bicester (London Road) to Oxford  
 Banbury (Merton Street)  
 Leamington Spa (Avenue) GW Junction and Leamington Spa (Milverton)

Coalport to Wellington

Cefn-y-Bedd (exclusive) to Wrexham (Central)  
 Barnt Green (exclusive) to Bristol, via Evesham and Dunhampton and branches  
 Broom Junction to Fenny Compton  
 Wrexham wagon repair depot

*To the Southern Region*

All former Southern Railway lines west of Exeter (i.e., they returned to the Southern Region) except Plymouth (Friary), Turnchapel, and Cattewater lines  
 Barnstaple (Victoria Road) station  
 Launceston station (both parts)

The Tanat Valley line to Llangynog in mid-Wales closed to passenger traffic on 15 January 1951, and to freight eighteen months later. Over the years, this branch line's trains were hauled by a variety of motive power, from Cambrian Railways 0-6-0s and 2-4-0Ts, to former Liskeard & Looe Railway 2-4-0T No 1308 *Lady Margaret*, ex-Whitland & Cardigan Railway 0-6-0T No 1331, Collett '5800' class 0-4-2Ts, GWR 'Dean Goods' 0-6-0s, and '2MT' Ivatt 2-6-0s, even into BR days. In this September 1950 scene at Llangynog, 'Dean Goods' 0-6-0 No 2408 is pictured shunting goods wagons at the terminus. R.G. Nelson





The passenger services on the Burry Port to Cwm Mawr line in West Wales soldiered on until September 1953, and freight continued to use the line until 1996, using cut-down 204hp diesel shunters because of the low bridges on the line. In July 1950 Wolverhampton-built '1901' class 0-6-0PT No 2021 is pictured at Burry Port station with its two-coach train for Cwm Mawr. Special low-roof carriages that had to be used for this line, due to the low bridges, as seen here, were special BP&GVR profile stock.



The Woodstock branch, from Kidlington in Oxfordshire not only served the village of Woodstock but also Blenheim Palace. All traffic over this short branch line ceased on 1 March 1954, and in August 1950 we see Collett '1400' class 0-4-2T No 1450, a regular engine used on this line, awaiting departure from the Blenheim & Woodstock terminus with a motor-train for Kidlington on the main Oxford to Banbury line, where a bay platform was used for these branch line trains. The 0-4-2T pictured spent its last years in service in the West Country, until withdrawn from service in July 1964.

At the Tidworth terminus on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border in August 1950, Swindon-based '4500' class 2-6-2T No 4551 is seen in the station with empty stock, still with the letters G W R on its tank sides, but appears that the engine's tank sides have only been cleaned around the lettering. This short branch line from Ludgershall, with no stations between the starting and finishing points, continued to be used for passenger services until September 1955, and is still open today to service the military camps at Tidworth.





**Passenger services over the Princes Risborough to Watlington branch, a line that is now partly preserved, ceased on 1 July 1957, although freight continued until January 1961. In July 1951 we see '7400' class 0-6-0PT No 7442 at the Watlington terminus with a one-coach train for Princes Risborough on the main line from Paddington to Banbury. Despite this branch line being quite short, six stations and halts were between Princes Risborough and Watlington.**

*From the Southern Region*

- Chard Junction to Thornfalcon, including Chard (Town) goods and Chard (Central)
- The Somerset & Dorset Joint north of Templecombe
- The Midland & South Western Junction line from Grafton to Andover

Most of the map now looked slightly neater, but the Southern and Western regions once again had a cross-over at Exeter.

The transfers of lines to and from the London Midland Region were mostly small lines, or parts thereof, so had no real impact on the Western Region. The principal

exception, however, was that it now had full control of the former Midland Railway's main line south of Birmingham, together with the loop around Redditch and Evesham to Ashchurch and a few smaller lines. The latter was a rather odd tidy-up as the main line was a through route from Birmingham to Bristol, and the majority of its traffic was of a through nature.

The Western Region now lost control of most of its old Southern rival's lines in the West Country, but still kept the Plymouth area, so the return to the Southern of its former lines beyond Exeter, the famous 'Withered Arm', known as such due to its

appearance on a map, was a logical step. The Southern had dominated the countryside north and west of Dartmoor whilst the Western Region equally dominated the eastern and southern parts of the high ground. There was no real penetration of one another's territory here.

The return of the old Midland & South Western Junction line north of Andover to the Western Region was logical as the line had been fully 'Westernised' during the Grouping years. Although its trains ran over Southern metals from Andover to Southampton, that part of the line was effectively a separate Southern route which had just been incorporated in the Hampshire dieselisation scheme of 1957. The Southern had no real interest in the northern part of the line, and the division at Grafton Junction had been completely without any operational merit whatsoever.

Most notable, of course, was the fact that the Western Region had now gained complete control of the Somerset & Dorset (S&D) once Joint line at least as far south as Templecombe. No longer would the London Midland Region have to provide the locomotives. Effectively the S&D had been



**One of the stations that was transferred from the London Midland Region to the Western Region on 1 February 1958 was Leamington Spa (Avenue), which is pictured here in 1952, as former L&NWR 'IP' 2-4-2T No 46654 awaits departure with a push-pull service for Nuneaton (Trent Valley). Although, under the Western Region, these trains officially ceased to run from 18 January 1965, services were reinstated between Coventry (half way along this route) and Leamington Spa on 2 May 1977. Patrick Kingston**



On 1 February 1958 the Western Region lost Launceston station, on the Devon/Cornwall border, to the Southern Region. Prior to this, the Western Region ran trains from Plymouth, via Lydford to Launceston, and the Southern Region ran trains through Launceston from Barnstaple to Bude, via Halwill Junction. This scene dates from August 1961, and shows a 2-coach train for Plymouth about to depart. The main traffic over the branch to Plymouth was china clay from Marsh Mills and Bickleigh, and a survey in 1955 revealed that just 181 local passengers used the line each weekday. Rex Kennedy Collection

split into a Western Region half and a Southern Region half. Trains still ran throughout the system and, on Summer Saturdays, London Midland Region engines still ran right through from Bath to Bournemouth, but in reality the Western Region had been handed a real sow's ear — the proverbial poisoned chalice.

The Somerset & Dorset Railway had never made a profit, and almost inevitably the cost

of the Bath extension, opened in 1874, bankrupted the company, so the Directors looked around to see if they could sell it. The most obvious contender was the GWR through whose heartland the railway ran. It was approached, but turned the Directors down flat. The L&SWR and the Midland Railway, whose systems it connected, saw an opportunity and joined forces to make a bid for a lease on the line. As this was the only bid

the S&D Directors accepted it, and thus the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway was born on 1 November 1875, the lease being for 999 years. The two companies split the costs of running the line by way of the Midland taking responsibility for locomotives and rolling stock and the L&SWR the civil engineering and signalling.

The L&SWR became part of the Southern Railway at the Grouping and the Midland

The changes to the Somerset & Dorset line and its future was a long and involved affair, as related in the text here, and among the changes that took place on this line from 1 February 1958 was the transfer of that stretch of the S&D north of Templecombe from the Southern Region to the Western Region. In this interesting scene from 6 July 1959, when under Western Region control, unrebuilt 'West Country' class Pacific No 34044 Woolacombe pauses at Evercreech Junction with an up empty coaching stock working. On the right, BR '5MT' 4-6-0 No 73028 has arrived and recessed back into the up sidings with the 1.15pm goods train from Templecombe, ten miles south of here. After carrying out shunting duties the BR '5MT' 4-6-0 will depart for Evercreech (New) at 4.00pm with a trip working. R.C. Riley





Despite the fact that the former Midland & South Western Junction line from Grafton to Andover Junction was under Southern Region control until being transferred to the Western Region on 1 February 1958, the M&SWJ line from Andoversford to Andover had been virtually 'Westernised' since the Grouping in 1923, although it was used by Southern motive power as well. In August 1950 this view of Cirencester (Watermoor) station at the north of the line pictures a Cheltenham to Southampton train, hauled by Gloucester-based Great Western 4-6-0 No 7818 *Granville Manor*.

became part of the LMS, so joint operation continued after 1923. The S&DJR continued to make losses, but the larger companies could absorb them and offset some of the expense as they had no need to route traffic via the GWR. Thus after considerable economies made in the 1930s to try to at least minimise the financial losses, the S&DJR came into nationalised ownership in 1948.

As we have seen, one of the great claims made for nationalisation was that all railways were now in one 'pot', so there was no benefit to keeping traffic on any one region's lines. The S&D's *raison d'être* had simply vanished, and British Railways was now tasked with

doing something about it. As recorded earlier, the BTC initially gave ownership to the Western Region for administrative purposes and kept the former lessees' equivalent regions responsible for day-to-day operational needs. During that period the Western Region had closed the branches from Highbridge to Burnham-on-Sea to passengers, and those to Bridgwater (North) and to Wells from Glastonbury completely.

Now, in 1958, it was time to foist the whole thing on to the Western Region and closure was inevitable, and not just from a railway point of view. The Somerset coalfield had not been as productive as those of the

north, and many of its seams and thus collieries were in terminal decline by the mid-20th century. Some had closed already by 1958, and others, now also in national ownership as part of the NCB, would soon go. Rail traffic associated with those collieries was now under threat.

The 1950s would see the last hurrah for rail-borne holiday traffic as road transport was growing rapidly through the decade, but holidays with pay became common before many had cars. Greater prosperity meant holiday-makers could spread their wings somewhat, albeit mostly within the United Kingdom, thus the railways experienced a

In early BR days, former Midland Railway Johnson 0-4-4T No 58086, with BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering on its tank sides, prepares to leave the Burnham-on-Sea terminus with a two-coach train for Highbridge (East), a passenger service that was terminated in October 1951. This engine of the class remained in service until August 1960, sixty years after having been built. Based at Templecombe with other engines of the class, these 0-4-4Ts were regularly used on these passenger services to and from Burnham-on-Sea.





The end of the summer timetable for 1962 saw the re-routing of the 'Pines Express' — once a stalwart of the Somerset & Dorset line — its new route being via Oxford, Reading and Southampton. One of the first 'Pines Express' trains to traverse the new route is pictured here at Birmingham (Snow Hill) station, where we see the down train in September 1962 sporting the title train's headboard, awaiting departure with BR-built 4-6-0 No 7029, the now-preserved *Clun Castle*, in charge.

boom in long-distance holiday traffic during the decade, and one of the most popular resorts was Bournemouth.

Holiday patterns tended to work on a weekly basis with changeover taking place on ten to twelve Saturdays in the peak season. Thus on those Saturdays, the Somerset & Dorset line was to see a large number of through holiday expresses from the Midlands and the north, many running through the small hours. In the early morning a procession of trains would arrive at Bath (Green Park) station and follow one another down to Bournemouth. There they would be turned round to take the previous week's returning holiday-makers back up north. In the middle of the day there would be conflicting northbound and southbound extra trains that would stretch the mostly single-

track, certainly at the Bath end and south of Templecombe, of the S&D line to, and sometimes beyond, its limits.

Many of these trains were regarded as 'portions' of the daily through train from Manchester which ran via the S&D to Bournemouth, the 'Pines Express'. Although it hardly ran to express timings on the S&D, it did run past most of the stations, being regarded as a through express, rather than a train to serve local custom. The latter was accommodated in 2-coach or 3-coach stopping trains, and only a very sparse service was needed to carry the few locals to and from the rural community. Locomotives used were some old Midland Railway small goods engines and '2P' 4-4-0s on the local trains, later replaced by Southern Bulleid Pacifics and BR Standard classes for the line's passenger services.

The Western Region had acquired a railway whose goods traffic was in terminal decline, and with passenger traffic on ten to twelve days a year was contributing nothing to its operating income but was stretching its ability to function. Many signal boxes and passing loops had to be retained and maintained to provide the paths for these trains. The line had one daily through train, again contributing no income, which passed over it for convenience sake, rather than to serve its communities.

The goods traffic, once quite heavy, had necessitated a special Midland Railway design, the S&D '7F' 2-8-0. These locomotives were required as the S&D's line across the Mendip hills was severely graded, most trains requiring banking assistance before the 2-8-0s appeared. Equally important was the braking capacity in the time of non-continuous brakes, so the '7Fs' had special Ferodo brake blocks which dissipated heat more rapidly than conventional brakes. Under Southern Region ownership they carried on as the Southern had no equivalent types of locomotive; indeed, it had no eight-coupled tender locomotives at all.

Once it had acquired the S&D, the Western Region set about making changes. The first was to introduce its own locomotives as it had a number of relatively-modern counterparts to the very long-in-the-tooth Midland types which were becoming displaced on its own metals by diesel locomotives. The 1930s-era Collett '2251' class 0-6-0s replaced the smaller Midland 0-6-0s, and pannier tanks started to replace 'Jinties'. The Southern's BR Standard locomotives remained on the S&D, supplemented by similar engines from the Western Region, but no suitable replacement was found for the '7F' 2-8-0s.

The Western Region had a number of BR Standard '9F' 2-10-0s on its books but had never seemed to get on with them. However, BR allocated the Western Region many of the final builds of these engines in 1959 and 1960 and they had to use them, thus a small number were passed on to the S&D in the summer months from 1960 onwards in an effort to eliminate double-heading of the holiday expresses. It was significant that the '9F' 2-10-0s were for passenger use. The S&D '7F' 2-8-0s continued to work the freight trains on the S&D but the Western Region were making huge changes as to how the latter, a diminishing breed, were handled. Through freights were diverted to other Western Region lines and the coal trains became feeders to Western Region freight depots, rather than long-distance trains.

On the passenger side little happened after the introduction of the '9F' 2-10-0s — that is until the end of the 1962 summer timetable. With effect from the start of the winter timetable on 10 September 1962 the 'Pines Express' was re-routed to reach Bournemouth via Oxford, Reading, and Southampton. Since the summer holiday expresses were mostly 'portions' of the 'Pines Express', it followed that there would be no more of these on Summer Saturdays in the future. The S&D was now a local railway only, with rapidly-diminishing traffic, and then along came Dr. Beeching.



# Renaissance to regicide



*The Western Region rejuvenated the 'Kings' in the 1950s only for all thirty to be displaced by diesel-hydraulic locomotives in 1962, as Andrew Wilson explains.*

When introduced in June 1927, the 'King' class represented the ultimate development of the Churchward 4-cylinder 4-6-0. With its publicity-orientated tractive effort of 40,285lbs Sir Felix Pole could claim that the Great Western Railway possessed the most powerful locomotive in Great Britain. For a decade or so the performance of the thirty 'Kings' appeared to support this claim as high calorific Welsh steam coal was readily available. The development of powerful, high-speed streamlined Pacifics in the mid-1930s by the LNER and LMS, however, began to cast a shadow over the one-time superiority of Swindon, as did events in France.

The catalyst for the question mark over Swindon practice was the work of André Chapleon who was transforming the performance of ordinary locomotives into world beaters by the provision of Kylchap exhausts, high superheat boilers, streamlined steam passages, and improved cylinder design. These developments did not go unnoticed by life-long friends Stanier and Hawksworth, colleagues at Swindon until Stanier's move to the LMS in 1932. Stanier's first Pacifics, 3-cylinder and 2-cylinder 4-6-0s all suffered from low superheat, a flaw he talked to Hawksworth about.

**An unidentified 'King' is seen on 24 August 1962 at the head of a Birkenhead to Paddington express. Although the lined green livery is hidden under a coating of grime, the engine shows the modifications made by British Railways — the mechanical lubricator ahead of the modified outside steam pipes, the high-superheat boiler, double chimney, square-ended stepped inside valve covers, and strengthened bogie. Within four months all locomotives of the class will have been withdrawn from traffic.** [Colour-Rail.com/BRW1241](http://Colour-Rail.com/BRW1241)

Chapleon's rebuilding of the Paris-Orleans Compound Pacific No 231.725 was an eye-opener as at 70mph it was able to produce 60% of its nominal tractive effort, 18,000lbs, compared to a 'King' which could only manage 20%, 8,060lbs. At 80mph the French Pacific developed twice the drawbar pull of the 'King'. Tests in 1931 with No 6005 *King George II* had already shown that at 56mph only 64% of the maximum boiler pressure of a 'King', 160psi, was available for use in the steam chests. To make matters worse to maintain this, the blower had to be used, otherwise the cylinders outstripped the boiler's ability to make sufficient steam. Consequently in 1939 a junior draughtsman at Swindon looked into the theoretical redesigning of the front end of the 'Kings' in line with Chapleon's thinking. Had not the outbreak of war on 3 September brought this and further work to an abrupt end, this initiative may well have foundered on Hawksworth and Collett's innate conservatism.

After Collett's retirement in 1941 the Chief Draughtsman, F.C. Mattingly, resurrected the idea when he instructed a junior draughtsman to scheme out a Pacific front-end based on a modified 'King' layout altered to Chapleon's principles, but when the new CME, Hawksworth, found out what was afoot he stopped any further work.

Chapleon's work, however, did bear fruit, as during a General overhaul between 9 January and 5 March 1948 No 6022 *King Edward III* was fitted with a high superheat boiler. Designated 'WB', it was fitted with a 4-row superheater with 32 flue tubes, which increased the superheater's heating area by 64%. The original draughting was retained, keeping the jumper top to the blastpipe set seven inches below the centre line of the boiler. The throat of the chimney remained at sixteen inches in diameter and 35ins above the jumper top, while the chimney tapered out to twenty inches at the top. The increased temperature of the steam caused problems with the original hydrostatic lubrication, and from 1949 all the 'Kings' were fitted with mechanical lubricators which fed the cylinders, valves, and regulator, as they passed through Swindon for attention.

In traffic, No 6022 was tested against low-superheat No 6001 *King Edward VII* over the Paddington to Plymouth route in November and December 1948. The results were rather enigmatic with there being little to choose between the two, except in coal consumption. No 6022 burnt 3.1lbs per drawbar horse power an hour with No 6001 3.5lbs. This represented a saving of 11-12%, which offered not inconsequential savings if all thirty locomotives were similarly modified. The tests did, however, highlight the 'hit and miss'



After the war the Great Western Railway took steps to improve the thermal performance of the 'Kings', and the first member of the class to be fitted with a four-row superheater was No 6022 *King Edward III*, which was released back into traffic from Swindon Works on 5 March 1948. Here No 6022 is seen passing the siding at the foot of Hemerdon bank, which is equipped with a catch point, when in charge of a down express for Plymouth. The tender carries the **BRITISH RAILWAYS** legend in full in GWR style letters. Kidderminster Railway Museum

nature of testing on service trains without any control of the footplate.

With declining supplies of good quality steam coal, the desirability of fitting 'WB' boilers to all the class was plainly evident and authority was granted, and between 1951 and 1955 a total of 34 new 'WB' boilers were built. With Nos 6010 *King Charles I* and 6013 *King Henry VIII* updated in October 1951, the last two locomotives to receive 'WB' boilers were Nos 6014 *King Henry VII* and 6026 *King John* in October 1956.

With the tantalizing prospect of further economies to be made by modifying the draughting of the class, the experimental section of the locomotive drawing office at Swindon, under Sam Ell, was instructed to investigate how the draughting of the 'Kings' could be improved. Theoretical studies showed how the blastpipe could limit the discharge rate of used steam, and hence the steaming capacity of the boiler.

The redraughting of the 'Kings' was improved by the well-tried method of trial and error, and a number of the class were put on the stationary test plant at Swindon Works as experimental work progressed. No 6011 *King James II* was taken into Swindon on 5 January 1953 and not released until the end of April, and during this time we see it on the test plant with the covers over the outside steam pipes removed. It would not be until March 1956 that the locomotive would be fitted with a double chimney and blastpipes. G.W. Trust

In the autumn of 1952 Nos 6001 *King Edward VII*, which was never regarded as one of the best engines of the class, and 6017 *King Edward IV*, were modified by the fitting of longer, but narrower, chimney liners and smaller-diameter blastpipes. The optimum dimensions of these were achieved by making small changes and assessing their effects, in other words by trial and error. When No 6001 was put to work on Swindon's stationary test plant it was found that continuous evaporation of water in the boiler increased by more than 30% to 33,600lbs an hour.

No 6001 *King Edward VII* was then put to work on a series of controlled road tests between Reading and Stoke Gifford sidings, outside Bristol, using the GWR dynamometer car. The load for the first runs was 23 coaches, 781 tons tare, and No 6001 was able to maintain a steaming rate of 28,700lbs an hour and an average speed of 61.7mph. At Little Somerford, on a falling 1 in 400 gradient, a maximum speed of 81mph was attained. When the load was increased to 25 coaches, 796 tons tare, the steaming rate was increased to 30,000lbs per hour, way above the





Controlled road testing in conjunction with the dynamometer car was one of the diagnostic tools used in the updating of the 'Kings'. Here we find No 6001 King Edward VII on such a test run passing Hullavington, between Wantage Road and Swindon, on 2 July 1953. The locomotive is being tried out with a modified arrangement to the single chimney blastpipe and, up the 1 in 834 bank at this point, was running at a steady 60mph with 796tons behind the tender, the small matter of 26 coaches.

Table One  
Outline history of 'King' class locomotives

| No.  | Name             | Built  | Lot No. | WB<br>Boiler | Double<br>chimney | Last heavy<br>repair | Withdrawn  |
|------|------------------|--------|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 6000 | King George V    | 6/1927 | 243     | 4/1952       | 12/1956           | 12/1959-1/1960       | 12/1962    |
| 6001 | King Edward VII  | 7/1927 | 243     | 3/1953       | 2/1956            | 11/1955-6/1956       | 9/1962     |
| 6002 | King William IV  | 7/1927 | 243     | 10/1952      | 3/1956            | 2/1962-6/1962        | 9/1962     |
| 6003 | King George IV   | 7/1927 | 243     | 10/1952      | 4/1957            | 12/1959-3/1960       | 6/1962     |
| 6004 | King George III  | 7/1927 | 243     | 9/1953       | 11/1956           | 4/1961-8/1961        | 9/1962     |
| 6005 | King George II   | 7/1927 | 243     | 1/1953       | 7/1956            | 5/1960-8/1960        | 11/1962    |
| 6006 | King George I    | 2/1928 | 243     | 4/1953       | 6/1956            | 12/1959-2/1960       | 2/1962     |
| 6007 | King William III | 3/1928 | 243‡    | 6/1955       | 9/1956            | 1/1959-2/1959        | 9/1962     |
| 6008 | King James II    | 3/1928 | 243     | 12/1955      | 7/1957            | 11/1958-1/1959       | 6/1962     |
| 6009 | King Charles II  | 3/1928 | 243     | 7/1954       | 5/1956            | 3/1961-5/1961        | 9/1962     |
| 6010 | King Charles I   | 3/1928 | 243     | 10/1951      | 3/1956            | 9/1960-10/1960       | 6/1962     |
| 6011 | King James I     | 4/1928 | 243     | 12/1952      | 3/1956            | 10/1961-2/1962       | 12/1962    |
| 6012 | King Edward VI   | 4/1928 | 243     | 10/1954      | 2/1958            | 8/1959-10/1959       | 9/1962     |
| 6013 | King Henry VIII  | 4/1928 | 243     | 10/1951      | 6/1956            | 2/1959-3/1959        | 6/1962     |
| 6014 | King Henry VII   | 5/1928 | 243     | 10/1956      | 9/1957            | 9/1961-12/1961       | 9/1962     |
| 6015 | King Richard III | 6/1928 | 243     | 10/1952      | 9/1955            | 1/1960-2/1960        | 9/1962     |
| 6016 | King Edward V    | 6/1928 | 243     | 2/1953       | 1/1958            | 8/1959-11/1959       | 9/1962     |
| 6017 | King Edward IV   | 6/1928 | 243     | 8/1952       | 12/1955           | 9/1958-11/1958       | 7/1962     |
| 6018 | King Henry VI    | 6/1928 | 243     | 12/1953      | 3/1958            | 12/1961-2/1962       | 31/12/62 # |
| 6019 | King Henry V     | 7/1928 | 243     | 9/1955       | 4/1957            | 8/1961-1/1962        | 9/1962     |
| 6020 | King Henry IV    | 5/1930 | 267     | 4/1952       | 8/1956            | 8/1957-10/1957       | 7/1962     |
| 6021 | King Richard II  | 6/1930 | 267     | 3/1956       | 3/1957            | 7/1961-9/1961        | 9/1962     |
| 6022 | King Edward III  | 6/1930 | 267     | 3/1948       | 5/1956            | 3/1959-6/1959        | 9/1962     |
| 6023 | King Edward II   | 6/1930 | 267     | 2/1955       | 6/1957            | 3/1960-6/1960        | 6/1962     |
| 6024 | King Edward I    | 6/1930 | 267     | 9/1953       | 3/1957            | 2/1960-4/1960        | 6/1962     |
| 6025 | King Henry III   | 7/1930 | 267     | 3/1952       | 3/1957            | 11/1961-2/1962       | 12/1962    |
| 6026 | King John        | 7/1930 | 267     | 10/1956      | 3/1958            | 8/1961-1/1962        | 9/1962     |
| 6027 | King Richard I   | 7/1930 | 267     | 6/1953       | 8/1956            | 1/1961-3/1961        | 9/1962     |
| 6028 | King Henry II*   | 7/1930 | 267     | 3/1952       | 1/1957            | 11/1961-1/1962       | 11/1962    |
| 6029 | King Stephen†    | 8/1930 | 267     | 10/1953      | 12/1957           | 1/1961-3/1961        | 7/1962     |

Key: \*King George VI from 12 January 1937, † King Edward VIII from 14 May 1936, ‡ Rebuild Lot 309, # Reinstated and withdrawn on 28 April 1963

On 15 August 1954 No 6013 *King Henry VIII* is in Swindon 'A' shop in the middle of a Heavy General repair which included the replacement of the front end of the frames between the leading and centre driving axle. New inside cylinders were also fitted, but the opportunity was lost in improving the steam passages and ports. The locomotive entered the Works on 30 June and was not released back into traffic until 22 September when it was effectively a new engine, as a newly-built WB boiler, No 8616, was fitted, although a double chimney was not installed until June 1956.

W. Potter/Kidderminster Railway Museum

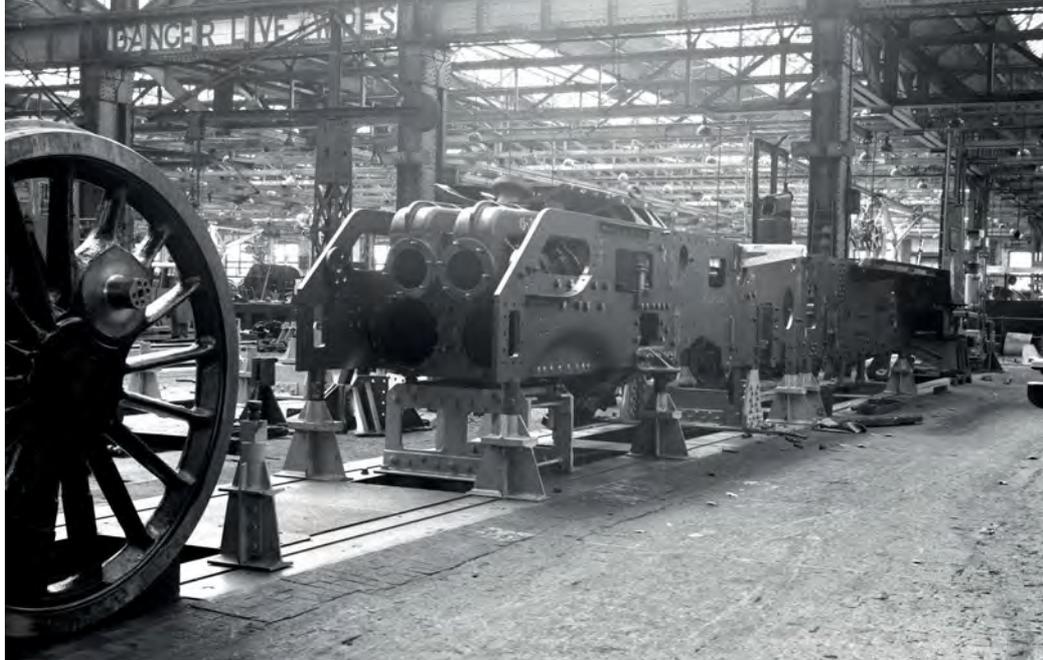
maximum a single fireman could be expected to maintain. The maximum speed recorded with this train was 77mph through Wantage Road.

The improved steaming rates permitted the development of accelerated services, and as a dress rehearsal No 6001 was tried out on the up 'Cornish Riviera Express' with a load of twelve coaches, 430 tons. The 173½ miles between Exeter and Paddington were covered in 174 minutes, with a maximum evaporation rate of 18,000lbs an hour. A maximum speed of 85mph was touched on the descent through Wellington, the seemingly comfortable top speed of the class.

Thoughts next turned to speeding up 'The Bristolian' to pre-war standards and No 6003 *King George IV* was pulled out of Old Oak Common's Top Link without any special preparations and coupled to the dynamometer car to ascertain the feasibility of returning to the 105-minute timings. Both the up and down high-speed runs on 30 April 1954 were a success, and with 260tons behind the tender No 6003 ran the 117.9miles from Paddington to Dr. Day's Bridge Junction in 99mins 19secs, touching 96½ mph on the down gradient through Dauntsey. On the up run, the 116miles between Stapleton Road and Paddington were covered in 95mins 35secs with a maximum speed of 93mph through Little Somerford. After these tests the accelerated 'Bristolian' entered the public timetable in June 1954, and was initially worked by 'Kings'.

Although rejuvenated, Sam Ell and his team realised that there were still issues with the 'Kings' that needed to be resolved. The high back pressure in the cylinders, particularly the inside pair, when working hard was throttling the class at high speed, so in March 1955 another set of trials was arranged with Old Oak Common's average-performing No 6013 *King Henry VIII*, the incentive being a proposal to accelerate the 'Cornish Riviera Express' to a 4-hour schedule between Paddington and Plymouth, the desired load being fourteen coaches from Paddington to Heywood Road and twelve on to Plymouth.

The Western Region's CME, R.A. Smeddle, who had arrived at Swindon from the Eastern Region in 1951, was well aware of the improved performance of the four 'A4' Pacifics that Gresley had fitted with Kylchap exhausts over the single chimney members of the class. He and his staff believed that redraughting of the 'Kings' would enable the operating department to achieve their aim of running to Plymouth in



four hours. Smeddle's plan was to test a Stanier 'Princess Coronation' Pacific, an Eastern Region Pacific, and Riddles '8P' No 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* on the 'Cornish Riviera Express', but in the event only the Stanier Pacific was tested.

Although Stanier Pacific No 46237 *City of Bristol* put in workmanlike performances and showed a 7% economy in coal consumption, No 6013 *King Henry VIII* was pushed to the limits of what a single fireman could sustain. The dynamometer car records clearly showed a weakness in the draughting of No 6013, the high back pressure in the cylinders restricting high rates of evaporation. Neither the double-chimney LMS Pacific, nor the similarly-fitted No 71000, when tested at Swindon, showed this defect. The answer to the 'King' dilemma was to fit a double exhaust, something first mooted, albeit at a junior level, in 1939.

The first 'King' that was scheduled for overhaul at Swindon in mid-1955 was Old Oak Common's No 6015 *King Richard III* which entered the Works on 28 June. The double exhaust was fitted, and a fabricated steel double chimney, complete with copper cap, was mounted on the smokebox. Returning to Old Oak Common on 8 September, initial reports from Running Inspectors were very positive, and so it was arranged that *King Richard III* would work down to Plymouth in charge of the 'Cornish Riviera Express' on Monday, 26 September. Although the load was only ten coaches, some 331tons gross, No 6015 ran freely, and steamed well with reduced coal and water consumption due to the reduced tearing action on the fire by the double chimney. More remarkable was that where a 'King' would run up to 85mph, No 6015 reached 100mph without being thrashed, and a top speed of 103mph was touched through Lavington. A repeat run on the following Thursday saw 107½mph attained for a quarter of a mile near Lavington.

*'No 6003 ran the 117.9miles from Paddington to Dr. Day's Bridge Junction in 99mins 19secs touching 96½ mph on the down gradient through Dauntsey'*

Delighted with the performance of No 6015, authority was granted to convert all engines of the class, and the last to receive a double chimney was No 6026 *King John*, which emerged from Swindon Works on 6 March 1958. From November 1956 the fabricated chimney was replaced by a more elegant cast-iron elliptical version. Around this time the 'King' class 4-6-0s were being fitted with new cylinders, but a problem with bogie failures in January 1956 saw the class sidelined until repairs could be made, strengthening pieces being welded to the frames. Fatigue cracks in the main frames also manifested themselves at the same time and so new frames were welded on ahead of the motion brackets where and when required.

After these modifications the 'Kings' were rejuvenated and day to day running was very good. It might have been even better if the 1956 plan to fit Timken roller bearings to the coupled wheels had been followed through. Eight sets of bearings were delivered to Swindon during 1957/58 but were never used as the design work involved in modifying the frames was not deemed cost effective, with the first of the Western Region's diesel-hydraulic locomotives nearing completion at the North British Locomotive Company in Glasgow.

During their last five to six years in traffic the 'Kings' were producing enhanced performances and greater reliability, despite declining standards of maintenance. New routes had already been opened up for them as on 1 February 1949 No 6000 *King George V* took the first 'King'-hailed passenger train through the Severn Tunnel. This led to the class being allowed over the North & West route from Newport to Shrewsbury via the Severn Tunnel in 1951. Two years later, after Shifnal viaduct was rebuilt, the 'King' class 4-6-0s were allowed to work through to Shrewsbury from Wolverhampton. It would be 1959 before their use became regular,



Paddington was one of the principal stations served by the 'Kings' from their introduction through to their withdrawal, and all the class regularly worked in and out of Brunel's great train shed. On Thursday, 30 June 1960 No 6015 *King Richard III* waits at Paddington's Platform 2 at the head of the 3.10pm train to Wolverhampton (Low Level). Despite the design of the 'Kings' dating back to 1926/27, No 6015 is in effect a rebuilt 'King' of the mid-1950s. R.J. Blenkinsop

owing to platform clearance problems at some of the intermediate stations.

The introduction of the Western Region's two classes of 'Warship' diesel-hydraulic locomotives in the West of England released members of the class to be transferred to the Paddington to Cardiff services in late 1959. Here they reigned supreme until March 1962 when the 'Hymek' diesel-hydraulics were introduced on the Cardiff to Paddington expresses.

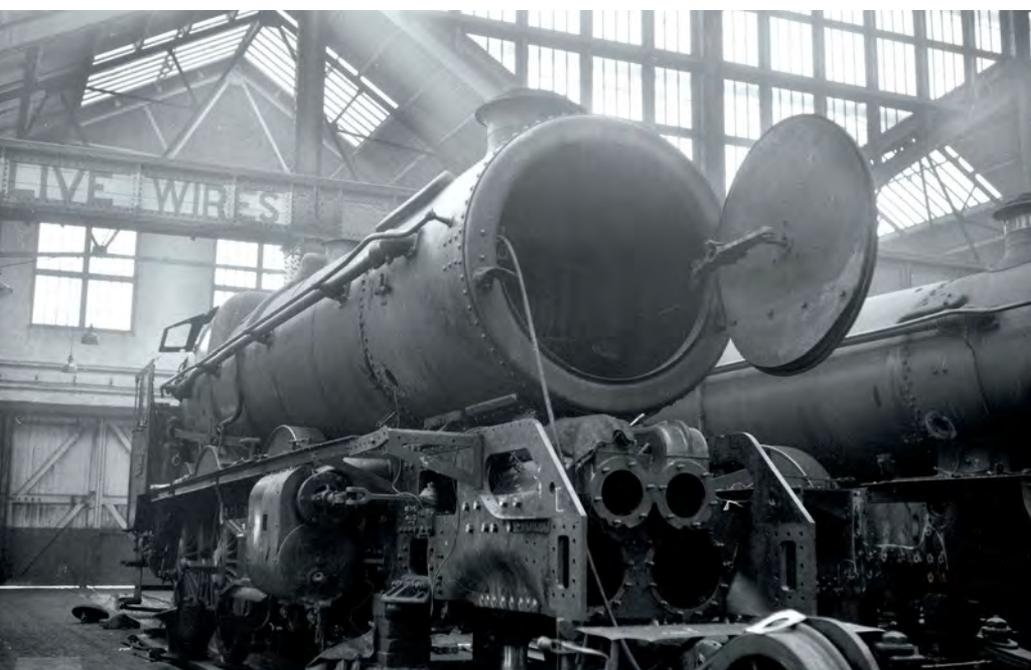
The 'Kings' retained a foothold on the Bristol service until the end of the summer of

1962 when the 'Warships' took over. Old Oak Common often rostered a member of the class to the down 'Bristolian' on Summer Saturdays. The 'King' then usually returned to London in charge of the 2.35pm service from Weston-super-Mare, which loaded to up to fourteen coaches.

On the Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Shrewsbury trains the class remained active until the end of the Summer 1962 Timetable when the 'Western' class diesel-hydraulics replaced them. Diesel failures, however, saw substitutions until the end of

December. As late as November 1962 Nos 6000 *King George V* and 6025 *King Henry III* were turned out in immaculate external condition to work race specials to and from Newbury. The last 'King' to work a scheduled train was almost certainly No 6011 *King James I* on 22 December 1962 when it worked an up relief to the 'Cambrian Coast Express' from Shrewsbury to Paddington.

All the 'Kings' were withdrawn between February and December 1962, with No 6018 *King Henry VI* retained to work a Stephenson Locomotive Society special from Birmingham to Swindon and back on 28 April 1963. What was surprising was the number of the class given Heavy repairs at Swindon in 1962 — eight in all. This at a time when a Heavy repair cost in the region of £5,000. The most amazing repair was the Heavy Casual repair given to No 6002 *King William IV* between April and June 1962 which was completed only three months before the locomotive was withdrawn.



No 6022 *King Edward III* is seen inside Swindon Works 'A' shop in the middle of a Heavy General repair on 5 October 1955. With the inside cylinder exposed, the layout of the cylinders is apparent, and the rocking levers from the inside valves to the outside one can also be seen. At this time the 'Kings' were going 18 to 20 months between major attention, but light repair and casual repairs occurred more often. By this date No 6022 was credited with having run over 1.3million miles almost exclusively on Top Link duties, a feat other '8P' class locomotives rarely achieved.

J. Marshall/Kidderminster Railway Museum



The last 'King' to be rebuilt with a double chimney and blastpipe was No 6026 *King John*, seen here on Swindon shed on 16 June 1953 after receiving a Heavy General repair. Behind No 6026 is the penultimate '2884' class 2-8-0 to be put into traffic, No 3845, and 'Star' class 4-6-0 No 4062 *Malmesbury Abbey*. When withdrawn from Old Oak Common in July 1962, *King John* had run an estimated 1.6million miles in 32 years. R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury

In early 1956 the 'Kings', with the exception of Nos 6000, 6006, and 6022, were temporarily withdrawn for inspection of their bogies after a number were found to have serious fatigue cracks. Most were laid up at either Old Oak Common, Plymouth (Laira), or Wolverhampton (Stafford Road) sheds, and on 4 February 1956 three 'Kings', Nos 6013 *King Henry VIII*, 6028 *King George VI*, and an unidentified member of the class, are seen at Old Oak Common minus their bogies. The problem was solved by welding strengthening pieces to the top and bottom of the frames.

R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury





The decision to fit the 'Kings' with double chimneys and blastpipes turned the class into heavyweight greyhounds capable of exceeding 100mph in ordinary traffic. The first engine of the class to be fitted with one was No 6015 *King Richard III*, which is pictured on 19 September 1955 reversing on to Bristol (Bath Road) shed. It carries the original design of fabricated chimney that was replaced by a more shapely cast version. The whole class was rebuilt in this way by March 1958. R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury

The 9.10am Paddington to Birkenhead express passes under the Grand Union Canal to the west of Leamington Spa on 15 May 1956 in the charge of Old Oak Common's No 6015 *King Richard III*. Although thirty 'Kings' were built, during their 30-plus years as the flagship locomotives of the GWR and Western Region there were rarely more than 25 in traffic at any one time as the cyclical nature of their overhauls meant that Swindon Works could have as many as five under repair at any one time. In February 1952 no less than eight 'Kings' were in the Works. R.J. Blenkinsop





On 6 May 1961 No 6022 *King Edward III* heads for Birmingham with a heavy down express as it passes Denham Golf Club. The engine appears to be running well, with a light grey haze at the chimney top indicating good combustion in the firebox, while there is no blowing-off wasting steam and water. When withdrawn from Wolverhampton (Stafford Road) shed in September 1962 No 6022 was estimated to have run over 1.7 million miles in service. L. Rowe/Colour-Rail.com

On 30 May 1962 the doyen of the 'Kings', No 6000 *King George V*, complete with presentation bell, is pictured from an overbridge at West Bromwich on the former GWR line from Birmingham to Wolverhampton. The locomotive is approaching when in charge of the 8.10am Paddington to Wolverhampton 'Inter-City' at 10.45am. Set aside for preservation, No 6000 returned to the main line in 1971, courtesy of Bulmer's, but was retired in April 1990 as No 6024 *King Edward I* was main-line certified. R. Amos/Kidderminster Railway Museum





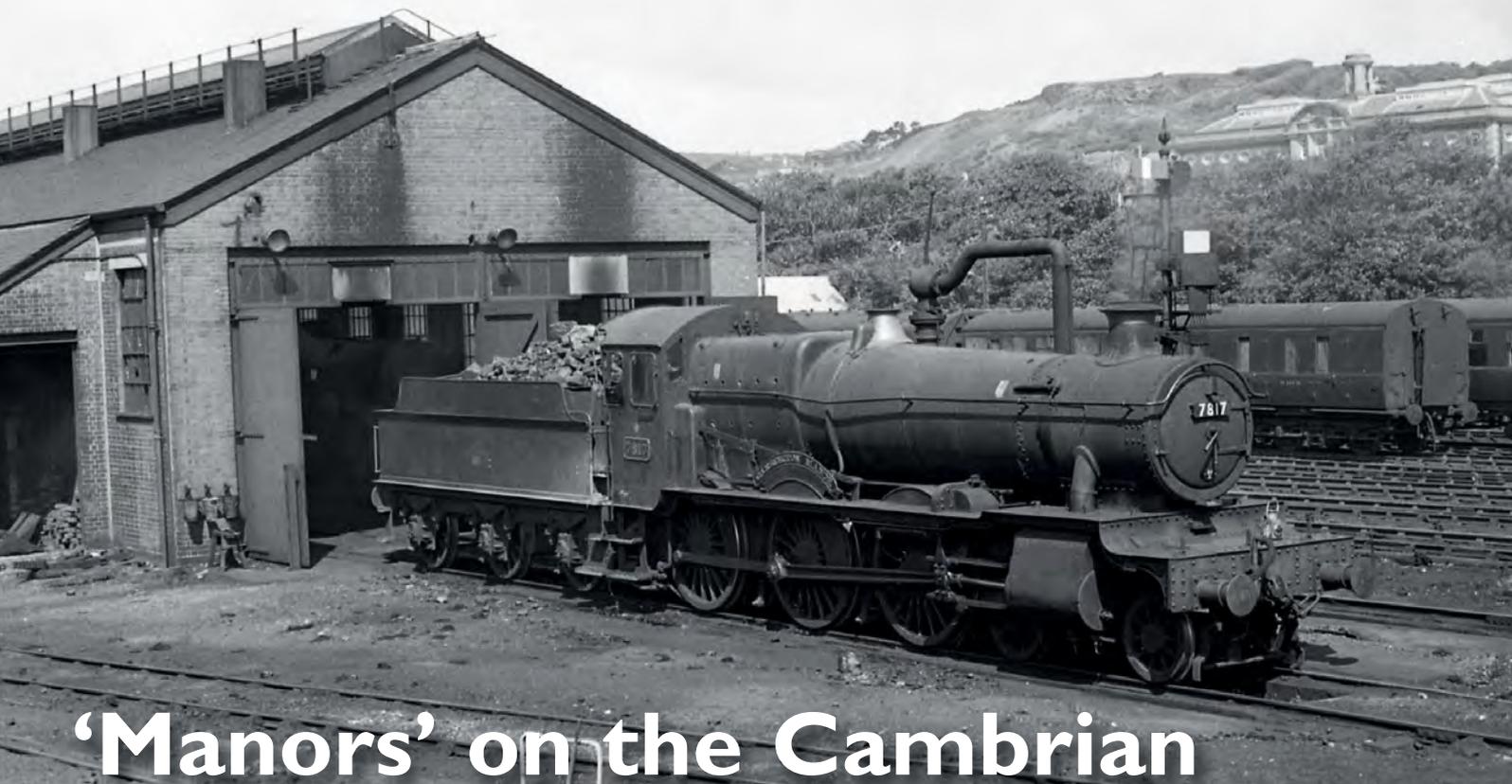
With at least thirteen engines of the class in good condition, work could have been found for them, like the last of the 'Castles', but their 'double red' route restriction made

this impossible. At least the class went out on Top Link duties and did not suffer the indignity of running without name and number plates on freight duties.

The Western Region had withdrawn the last of the Collett 'King' class 4-6-0s from service in 1962 but retained No 6018 *King Henry VI* to work a commemorative rail tour in 1963. In order to keep this locomotive in good condition it was used on some local passenger work in the Birmingham area, and on Thursday, 25 April it is seen at Solihull station in charge of the 6.05pm Birmingham (Snow Hill) to Leamington train. Three days later No 6018 worked the SLS 'Farewell to the Kings' rail tour from Birmingham (Snow Hill) to Swindon and back. Robin Nelson

The preserved No 6023 *King Edward II* is seen at Didcot, home of the Great Western Society, on 6 May 2013, illustrating the single-chimney 'Kings' fitted with WB boilers and painted in the second version of the short-lived British Railways blue livery. The large superheater cover on the right-hand side of the smokebox is the indicator that the boiler is now the high-superheat four-row version developed under the supervision of Sam Eil. An improvement over the low-superheat 'Kings', it was not until engines of the class were fitted with double blastpipes and chimneys that the full potential of the design was realised. Paul Chancellor/Colour-Rail





# 'Manors' on the Cambrian

**Rex Kennedy** recalls the days when the 'Manor' class 4-6-0s were the chosen motive power for trains operating through mid-Wales between Shrewsbury and the Cambrian coast.

The first 4-6-0 locomotive to work over Cambrian metals was the now-preserved Great Western 'Manor' No 7808 *Cookham Manor*, in 1943, where, prior to that, nothing larger than a Churchward Mogul had been seen. Twenty of these locomotives were constructed between January 1938 and February 1939 at Swindon Works for restricted route availability, and being a lighter version of the 'Granges' were 'Blue' engines, a category for locomotives over 16tons but below 17tons 12cwt; they had a tractive effort of 27,340lbs (Category 'D') and were fitted with 3,500 gallon tenders. They were intended to replace the early Churchward '4300' class Moguls and were fitted with certain parts from the withdrawn engines of that class. The 'Manors' were originally used on the Banbury-Cheltenham-Swansea section of trains heading to South Wales from Newcastle-upon-Tyne; they were also initially employed on the Devizes line.

In 1947, the former Cambrian locomotive depot at Oswestry had three 'Manors' allocated, Nos 7807, 7808 and 7819, and Machynlleth had two, Nos 7802 and 7803, and little changed in this respect until the early 1950s. Also in 1947, Croes Newydd shed at Wrexham had No 7817 *Garsington Manor* based there, remaining there until February 1961, after which date five more 'Manors' were allocated to that shed, and often seen on trains over Cambrian metals, although they

Aberystwyth shed never had its own shed code in BR days as it came under the 89C code of Machynlleth. On 21 August 1963, during the year that the Cambrian lines were transferred to the London Midland Region, No 7817 *Garsington Manor* is pictured on shed at Aberystwyth awaiting its return trip to the English border. This engine of the class was based at Croes Newydd from arrival when new in January 1939 until February 1961, except for two months at Shrewsbury in 1958, making it the longest period at any one shed by a 'Manor' class 4-6-0.

K. Fairey/Colour-Rail 11655

On 8 August 1962, Aberystwyth-based No 7802 *Bradley Manor* is pictured arriving at Oswestry with the two-coach 4.10pm Whitchurch to Welshpool train. In the distance can be seen Oswestry's locomotive depot with the former Cambrian Railways Works on the right. On the far left, passing to the left of the signal box, is the former line to Gobowen and Wrexham. S.D. Wainwright





This fine study in colour from September 1961 of one of Oswestry's 'Manor' class 4-6-0s, No 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, sporting the lined-green livery applied to the locomotive at Swindon Works in January 1959, shows the locomotive preparing to leave Cemmes Road station with a passenger working for Welshpool and Shrewsbury. The driver is seen awaiting the all-clear to depart, and the cab-side clearly displays the 'D' classification for this 'Blue Group' engine. In two months time this Oswestry engine would be transferred to Croes Newydd shed, and would eventually avoid the cutter's torch and be preserved. J.G. Dewing/Colour-Rail BRW621

were mainly used on trains over the Llangollen line.

In the following years more 'Manors' were moved to the Cambrian section to replace the ageing 'Dukedog' 4-4-0s, resulting in Oswestry's allocation, by 1952, being increased to six 'Manors', Nos 7807, 7808, 7819, 7820, 7821, and 7822. Three of these were from the ten BR-built engines of that class, Nos 7820-7829 (an order held over because of the war) that were completed at Swindon Works in November and December 1950, The Machynlleth allocation remained the same at this time, and Shrewsbury

acquired three engines of the class in 1953 for Cambrian duties. By November 1951, all twenty of the Great Western-built engines of the class carried smokebox numberplates, with the exception of No 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, also now preserved.

The livery for the Great Western-built 'Manors' was originally unlined mid-chrome green, but from December 1948 they started to receive the unlined black livery. However, the BR-built engines of the class, constructed at Swindon Works during 1950, carried the lined black livery when built. From July 1956, Swindon Works then painted all the 'Manors'

in the attractive lined green livery, No 7828 *Odney Manor* being the first to be so treated. This change of livery carried on into 1960, with No 7819 *Hinton Manor* being the last to receive the lined green livery in February of that year. However, No 7804 *Baydon Manor*, an engine of the class that never worked over Cambrian metals, retained an unlined green livery as it was regularly used to pilot the 'Cornish Riviera Express' over the South Devon banks.

With the introduction of the diesel-hydraulic locomotives to the West Country the need for 'Manors' to no longer bank trains up the South Devon banks resulted in some of the West Country-based engines of the class being transferred to Shrewsbury and the Cambrian depots, and by June 1959 Oswestry had ten 'Manors' allocated, and by December 1963 Machynlleth depot had an allocation of ten engines of the class, two of these based at Aberystwyth. In January 1960, Machynlleth's

**Although the 'Manors' were more often than not seen working passenger trains, especially the 'Cambrian Coast Express', they also worked over the Cambrian lines with freight trains. In this early 1950s scene from 11 May 1951 we see one of the newly BR-built engines of the class, Oswestry-based No 7820 *Dinmore Manor*, on a mixed freight working, having only left Swindon Works after its construction in the previous November. It is pictured near Llanbadarn, soon after leaving Aberystwyth. T.B. Owen/Colour-Rail 90120**





Carno station was situated just two miles from Talerddig summit on the Moat Lane side of the steep climb, and on 19 August 1963 we see BR-built No 7821 *Ditcheat Manor* passing through the station with a freight train from Aberystwyth to Oswestry, having descended from the summit after its 1 in 52 climb on the Aberystwyth side. This engine of the class had arrived at Machynlleth shed from Croes Newydd in March 1963. M.J. Fox

allocation of two 'Manors', Nos 7814 and 7823, was strengthened by the addition of No 7815 from Gloucester and No 7818 from Wolverhampton (Oxley). In the early 1950s

No 7818 had also been a Gloucester engine, both of these 'Manors', whilst based there, working trains over the former M&SWJ line from Cheltenham to Southampton.

The 'Manor' class 4-6-0s were regular performers on the 'Cambrian Coast Express', the inaugural run of this titled train dating back to 1927, although a restaurant car service

This interesting October 1962 scene at Welshpool shows Machynlleth shed's BR-built No 7823 *Hook Norton Manor* at the up platform, as Oswestry's Collett '2251' class 0-6-0 No 2214 passes through the station. The 0-6-0 is bringing in a steam crane with the Welshpool & Llanfair Railway's 0-6-0T No 823 *Countess* back on to narrow gauge metals after overhaul at Oswestry Works. No 7823 was one of the earlier withdrawals from the 'Manor' class, being taken out of service in July 1964. J.I.C. Boyd





Machynlleth was a great place to visit, with trains for the Cambrian coast splitting, portions of down trains going south to Aberystwyth, and those for the north heading for Barmouth and Pwllheli. Machynlleth's locomotive shed, sheltered by a large cliff, was also an interesting depot to visit from the early days the Cambrian Railways 0-6-0s to the latter days of steam. During the final months of Western Region control on the Cambrian, on 6 September 1963 we see No 7819 *Hinton Manor* having arrived at Machynlleth with the down 'Cambrian Coast Express'. Colour-Rail 321530

No 7800 *Torquay Manor* is seen running into Moat Lane Junction station on 15 August 1962 with the 12.34pm Aberystwyth to Crewe service. Allocated to Oswestry shed at this time, the train will leave Cambrian metals at Whitchurch and then continue over the former L&NWR line to its destination at Crewe. L.V. Rowe/Colour-Rail 94135





**Dovey Junction, on 4 April 1959, where we see the now-preserved BR-built No 7827 *Lydham Manor* entering the station with an up passenger train for Machynlleth and beyond. To the left can be seen a train having worked up from Aberystwyth. When built at Swindon Works in 1950, none of the BR-built 'Manors' were initially allocated to Cambrian sheds. K. Fairey/Colour-Rail 11278**

had operated between Paddington and Aberystwyth and Pwllheli since 1921. In 1939 the 'Cambrian Coast Express' became a Saturdays-only working. The titled train would initially be hauled as far as Wolverhampton (Low Level) by a 'Castle' class 4-6-0 and replaced by a 'Duke' class 4-4-0, but in later days a 'Manor' would take over the train, this change of locomotive being necessary as the train ran non-stop from Wolverhampton to Welshpool, using the Abbey Foregate curve at Shrewsbury.

During the war years most titled trains ceased to run, but in 1951 the name 'Cambrian Coast Express' were reinstated and became a daily working stopping at Banbury, *en route* to Birmingham, and instead of running non-stop between Wolverhampton and Welshpool it now ran into Shrewsbury, where it reversed, and where an engine change took place, with a 'King' or 'Castle' class 4-6-0 being replaced by a 'Manor' for the journey into Wales, with Aberystwyth being reached in six hours from Paddington; through coaches for Barmouth

and Pwllheli were detached at Machynlleth. The last 'Cambrian Coast Express' ran on 4 March 1967, the last up train hauled by BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0 No 75033 as far as Shrewsbury, and the last down train was in the charge of No 75021.

Apart from No 7809 *Childrey Manor*, which was withdrawn in April 1963, the remaining engines of the class remained in traffic until 1964/65, the last to be withdrawn being Nos 7808 and 7829, in December 1965 – the final month of Western Region steam –

**Displaying its white painted buffers, No 7803 *Barcote Manor* is seen awaiting departure from Welshpool station on 5 July 1961 with the up 'Cambrian Coast Express'. This locomotive, carrying the shed code 89C, together with No 7802 was Aberystwyth depot's pride and joy, and always kept in immaculate condition. L.W. Rowe/Colour-Rail 94103**



On 27 December 1958 the up 'Cambrian Coast Express' is seen leaning the curve towards Llanbadarn, having just left Aberystwyth hauled by No 7811 *Dunley Manor*. The 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard seen here is the second version; the original version did not include the crest which displayed the coat of arms of the Cambrian Railways, comprising a conjoined wyvern and Tudor rose. T.B. Owen



although in 1963 the Cambrian lines became part of the London Midland Region. Some 'Manors' were still working the 'Cambrian Coast Express' in late 1965.

It was recorded in the RCTS book, *Locomotives of the Great Western, Part Twelve* (referred to when compiling this short summary) that No 7807 *Compton Manor*, one

of the early arrivals at Oswestry depot in the mid 1940s, may well have covered one million miles during its working life by 1964.

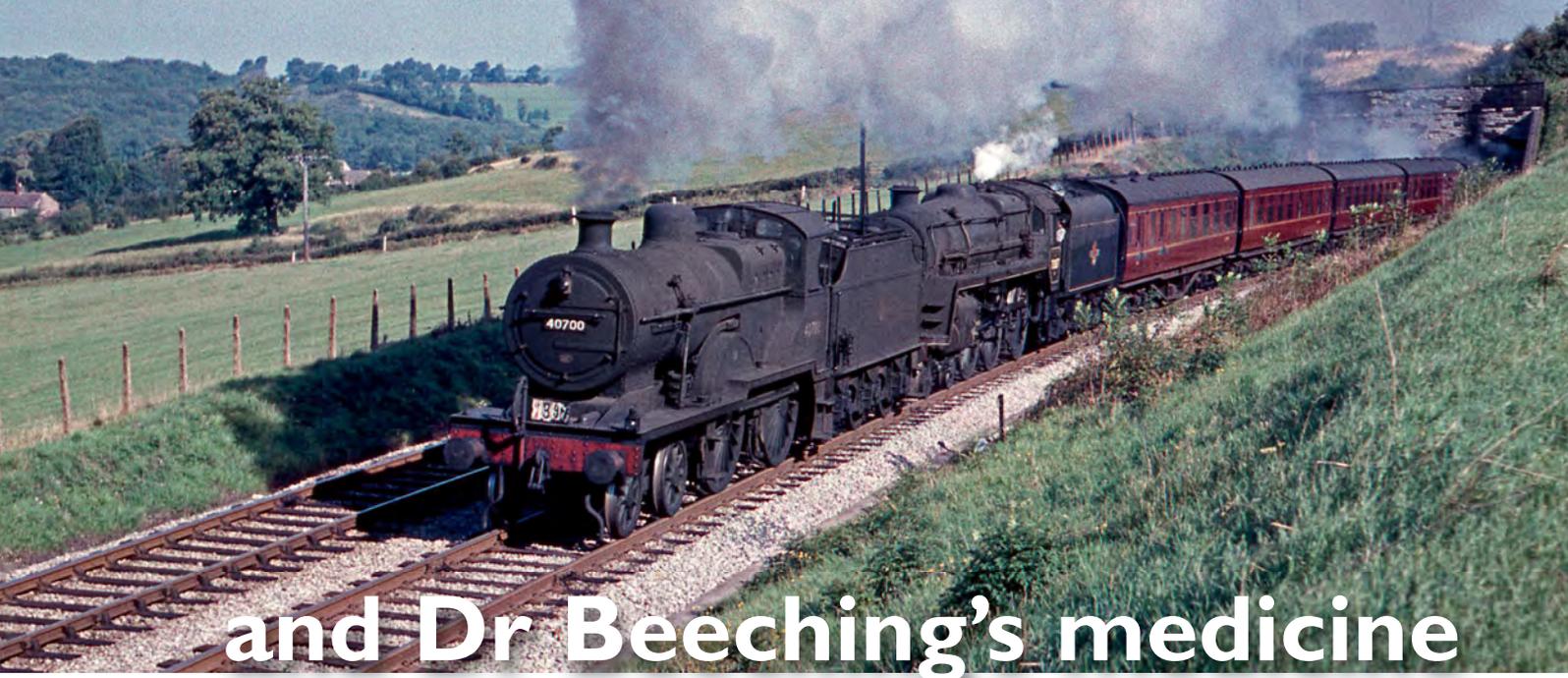
Fortunately nine 'Manors' have been saved from the cutter's torch, Nos 7802, 7808, 7812, 7819, 7820, 7821, 7822, 7827, and 7828, five of these being BR-built locomotives. All these, except No 7808 *Cookham Manor*, were sent to

Woodham's scrapyards at Barry Docks for scrapping but lay dormant there for many years, whereas most other scrapyards cut up the locomotives they received. This feature on those 'Manor' class 4-6-0s working over Cambrian metals illustrates them on a variety of duties in mid Wales and its coastal lines, including the 'Cambrian Coast Express'.

On more than one occasion the Royal family travelled over Cambrian metals, and the motive power for these trains was always the reliable 'Manor' class 4-6-0, cleaned to perfection and creating a magnificent sight for the enthusiast. On 9 August 1963 we see Nos 7822, 7819, 7827, and 7828 on shed at Machynlleth prior to Nos 7819 *Hinton Manor* (a favourite for 'Cambrian Coast Express' duties) and No 7822 *Foxcote Manor* proceeding to Pwllheli where the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh met Billy Butlin at the holiday camp before heading south on the Royal train, hauled by these two 'Manors', to visit the outward bound school at Aberdovey the next day. The other two 'Manors' seen on shed, being the spare engines in case of an emergency, also went to Pwllheli and performed empty coaching stock duties. T.B. Owen/Colour-Rail BRW420



# 1963 regional changes ...



## and Dr Beeching's medicine

**Jeremy English** reviews the regional changes on British Railways in 1963 and provides an overview of the Beeching Report.

Acquisition of the Somerset & Dorset line by the Western Region was referred to in some circles as a 'poison chalice' as the line was busy during the summer months with Saturday holiday traffic to and from the south coast and, as some enthusiasts found, very little action throughout the rest of the year. Pictured here on Saturday, 9 September 1961, with BR '5MT' 4-6-0 No 73086 being piloted by former LMS '2P' 4-4-0 No 40700, and bursting out of Chilcompton tunnel, is one of the many Saturday holiday trains that headed south during those busy summer months. This is the summer-only 1090 service – the 9.08am Birmingham (New Street) to Bournemouth (West) train. G.W. Morrison

If the transfer of the Somerset & Dorset line to the Western Region might be seen as a poisoned chalice, the whole of the nationalised railway might have been seen as one in Tory eyes. As recounted earlier in this publication, the incoming Conservative Government of 1952 had considered de-nationalisation, but not considered it financially possible and had found it necessary to make huge funds available to modernise the system in the mid-1950s.

Led from January 1957 by a former Great Western Director, Harold Macmillan, the Conservatives realised that something drastic had to be done to try and stem the mounting losses incurred by British Railways. Ideologically they were opposed to public ownership of business, and were rather more inclined towards the growing road industry than to the railways. To this end they had started to modernise the roads with a programme of road construction, such as long-distance motorways, which was seen by the public as the future of transport.

No Conservative embraced this view more than the man promoted to Minister of Transport on 14 October 1959, some six days after Harold Macmillan won that year's General Election, and shortly after a small change to operating control affected the Western Region when all Channel Islands boat trains were concentrated on Waterloo from the winter 1959 timetable onwards.

Ernest Marples was a controversial figure as his personal wealth was derived from a

company that he, together with Reginald Ridgway, had created in 1948, which had grown large on the back of, amongst other things, road building contracts. Required upon his appointment to divest himself of his holdings in this company, Marples Ridgway — he held 80% of the shares — he failed to do so for some time until the *Evening Standard* revealed this breach of the House of Commons 'conflicts of interest' rules. Following that, he 'sold' the shares to his wife which, apparently, was considered acceptable.

As Transport Minister, Ernest Marples opened the first part of the M1 motorway and very clearly showed his true colours, aligning himself with the road lobby. His former company was then awarded contracts to build the Hammersmith and Chiswick flyovers, and later the M1 motorway's extension into London.

With such a man in overall control of transport policy, and the railways continuing to make losses, it is hardly surprising that a major change would take place in the structure of British Railways. This came in the form of the Transport Act of 1962. Passed into law on 1 August 1962, the Act's long title gave a brief summary of its objectives.

'An Act to provide for the re-organisation of the nationalised transport undertakings now carried on under the Transport Act, 1947, and for that purpose to provide for the establishment of public authorities as successors to the British Transport Commission, and for the transfer to them of

undertakings, parts of undertakings, property, rights, obligations and liabilities; to repeal certain enactments relating to transport charges and facilities and to amend in other respects the law relating to transport, inland waterways, harbours and port facilities; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.'

The provisions to achieve these aims were described as 'the most momentous piece of legislation in the field of railway law to have been enacted since the Railway & Canal Traffic Act of 1854', and were effectively a complete reversal of the 1948 Act which had ushered in nationalisation, except that there was no de-nationalisation. Instead, the Minister of Transport was given new powers to simplify the procedures to close railway lines.

The British Transport Commission (BTC) was abolished and its debts, now nearly one billion pounds, an enormous sum in those days, were written off or transferred to the Treasury. In its place came four new undertakings, constituted as public corporations, those for the railways being the British Railways Board and the London Transport Board; only the latter was an integrated business. The four Boards inherited the property, liabilities, and functions of the BTC, but their activities were to be co-ordinated by the Minister of Transport, rather than a body separate from the Government. Significantly, the Boards needed the consent of the Minister to borrow, and for approval for projects involving large sums of money.

A line which was closed to passenger traffic in November 1958, and to freight in September 1962, is the Totnes to Ashburton branch in Devon, a section of which (Totnes to Buckfastleigh) is now one of Britain's preserved railways. In August 1953 we see ex-GWR '1400' class 0-4-2T No 1427 at the Ashburton terminus awaiting departure with a train for Totnes on the West of England main line. The scene provides an excellent view of the train shed and the long platform at this rural terminus.

Under Section 22, the British Railways Board was now required to run its business so that its operating profits were 'not less than sufficient' for meeting running costs and, under Section 3(1), 'to provide railway services in Great Britain and, in connection with the provision of railway services, to provide such other services and facilities as appear to the Board to be expedient, and to have due regard, as respects all those railway and other services and facilities, to efficiency, economy and safety of operation'. Section 18 (1) stated that 'Each of the Boards shall so conduct their business as to secure that their revenue is not less than sufficient for making provision for the meeting of charges properly chargeable to revenue, taking one year with another.'

These would be tough conditions for a business that had been losing £100million a year, although that did include interest on the debts now written off. Section 18 (2) stated 'Each Board shall charge to revenue in every year all charges which are proper to be made to revenue, including, in particular, proper provision for the depreciation or renewal of assets and proper allocations to general reserve, and the reference in subsection (1) of this section and other references in this Act to charges properly chargeable to revenue shall be construed accordingly'. This latter provision led to a number of the regions to withdraw locomotives and rolling stock *en masse* on 31 December 1962, most notably the Southern Region, which withdrew whole classes of locomotives on that day.

Another provision was to change the nature of the regions. These would now become 'six Regional Railway Boards to be known as the Eastern Railway Board, the London Midland Railway Board, the North Eastern Railway Board, the Scottish Railway Board, the Southern Railway Board, the Western Railway Board', although provision was made to alter these names 'but the Minister may, after consulting the Railways Board, by order alter the number of Regional Railway Boards or give them names or new names'. This provision led to speculation that the new sub-Boards would become Railways, rather than Regions, but in the event the old regional names remained in use.

One particularly alarming rumour concerned abolition of the Western Region. Whilst the Transport Act was still awaiting its Royal Seal assent the *Railway Magazine*, in its July 1962 issue, reported that the BTC had issued a press release which stated, 'Some recent newspaper reports have created the



impression that Paddington station may be closed and that reorganisation of the railway regions may involve merging the Western with the Southern and London Midland Regions . . . These reports are entirely without foundation.'

In order to run this new organization Ernest Marples had recruited a member of the ICI company's Board of Directors, Dr. Richard Beeching. In anticipation of the creation of the British Railways Board (BRB) he became Chairman of the BTC on 1 June 1961 and would become Chairman of the BRB when it became activated on 1 January 1963. In this capacity he inaugurated a complete review of the railway assets and their contributions to railway income which would become the basis of his report of 1963. While the Beeching Report was being compiled, there were some leaks as to its contents, and the *Railway Magazine* article in its July 1962 issue, referred to here, used the term 'Dr. Beeching's axe'.

Of more immediate concern were regional boundary changes once again. The same BTC press release stated that 'Changes on the railways there will inevitably be, but the changes most likely to affect the present regional organisation are the adjustment of boundaries between them . . .' Such changes were announced in the October 1962 *Railway Magazine* and all concerned the Western Region, with effect from 1 January 1963:

#### *To the London Midland Region*

An area associated with Birmingham, bounded by Aylesbury in the south and Barnt Green to the west  
The main line to the north through Wellington and Shrewsbury to Chester  
The branch lines to Barmouth, Pwllheli, and Aberystwyth

#### *From the Southern Region*

The main line west from Salisbury to Exeter (Central), together with all branches and lines beyond Exeter into Devon and Cornwall

Thus was prepared the way for the downgrading of the former GWR's Birmingham main line to the north-west, and the Southern's main line to the south-west, both now considered to be 'duplicates' of main lines which had been selected for modernisation. In North Wales the former Cambrian Railway lines would now be ruled by Euston, rather than Paddington. Birmingham and district would now have no further part to play in the story of the Western Region, although its locomotives would continue to run through the area for a number of years more. The most notable change was the transfer in of former Southern lines which included a number of locomotive depots and a considerable stud of locomotives such as



Bulleid Pacifics and many BR Standard types. These locomotives and stock were rapidly sent back to the Southern and replaced by former Western Region types, notably on the branch lines off the Salisbury to Exeter line. The Southern Region had made no provision for updating these in its last years of control, so it would be Western Region diesel multiple-units and diesel-hydraulics that would be drafted in, which became the public face of the change of control.

The most significant timetable changes would take place at the end of the summer 1964 timetable, after which through trains beyond Exeter would be curtailed, and the service from there to Waterloo would become 'semi-fast', rather than 'express'. At least the line would survive, yet more speculation had been that it would be closed in its entirety, like most of the branch lines which were now under threat from the 'Beeching Axe'.

Western Region line closures from 1 February 1958 to 31 December 1962 were as follows (first-listed dates are closures to passengers, and closures to all public traffic are shown in brackets). Note that many more lines now closed entirely, and that most that survived as goods-only lines would be closed post-Beeching:

5 May 1958 (30 Apr 1965) Tondu to Nantymoel

9 Jun 1958 (4 Dec 1967) Exeter (St. Thomas) to Heathfield  
 9 Jun 1958 (12 Oct 1964) Llantrisant to Penygraig  
 9 Jun 1958 (1 Feb 1965) Llantrisant to Aberthaw  
 18 Aug 1958 (still in use) Pantyffynon to Brynamman (West)  
 15 Sep 1958 (17 June 1959) Grafton & Burbage to Marlborough  
 15 Sep 1958 (still in situ) Plymouth (Friary) to Plymouth (North Road)  
 3 Nov 1958 (1 Aug 1967) Cinderford to Newnham  
 3 Nov 1958 (10 Sep 1962\*) Totnes to Ashburton \* *part now Dart Valley Railway*  
 5 Jan 1959 (6 Jan 1964) Chepstow to Monmouth (Troy)  
 5 Jan 1959 (5 Jan 1959) Monmouth (Troy) to Ross on Wye  
 2 Mar 1959 (1 Jan 1966) Newton Abbot to Moretonhampstead  
 15 Jun 1959 (13 Sep 1965\*) Cholsey & Moulsoford to Wallingford \* *part remained open until 1981, now preserved*  
 13 Jul 1959 (1 Jun 1964) Gloucester (Central) to Ledbury  
 2 Nov 1959 (15 Jun 1964\*) Bristol (Temple Meads) to Frome \* *part remains open*  
 4 Jan 1960 (4 Jan 1960) Newbury to Lambourn  
 4 Jan 1960 (28 Jan 1961) Blaenau Festiniog (Central) to Bala

2 May 1960 (4 May 1964) Dowlais (Central) to Pant  
 13 Jun 1960 (27 May 1963) Abergwynfi to Cymmer Afan  
 13 Jun 1960 (13 Jun 1960) Nantybwlch to Risca  
 26 Oct 1960 (26 Oct 1960\*) Sharpness to Lydney (Town) \* *following collapse of Severn Bridge*  
 31 Jul 1961 (31 Jul 1961) Tenbury Wells to Woofferton  
 11 Sep 1961 (31 Mar 1964) Andover Junction to Andoversford  
 11 Sep 1961 (1 Nov 1966) Swindon (Town) to Swindon Junction  
 13 Nov 1961 (4 May 1964) Merthyr to Pontsticill Junction  
 30 Apr 1962 (7 Apr 1969) Blaenavon to Llantarnam  
 30 Apr 1962 (30 Apr 1962) Brynmawr to Bassaleg Junction  
 30 Apr 1962 (line still open) Pontypool to Llantarnam  
 30 Apr 1962 (30 Apr 1962) Blaenavon (Low Level) to Pontypool  
 30 Apr 1962 (4 Nov 1963) Aberbeeg to Ebbw Vale (Low Level)  
 30 Apr 1962 (3 May 1965) Pontypool Road to Panteg & Griffithstown  
 18 Jun 1962 (18 Jun 1962) Yarnton to Fairford  
 23 Jul 1962 (3 Dec 1963) Wellington to Much Wenlock



Passenger trains for Moretonhampstead, where the original broad-gauge engine shed stood for many years into BR days, worked up from Newton Abbot until passenger services ceased on 2 March 1959, although freight continued to this remote terminus until 1 January 1966, coincidentally the date that steam ended on the Western Region. On 9 July 1957, ex-GWR '5700' class 0-6-0PT No 3600 approaches Lustleigh, the first station out from Moretonhampstead, with the 7.00pm train for Newton Abbot. In 1955 a survey revealed that there were just 87 local passengers using the passenger trains over this branch each weekday, but freight was more encouraging, with well over 200 wagons forwarded and received each month.

Lens of Sutton Collection

The passenger services over the branch line from Bala to Blaenau Ffestiniog (Central) continued until 4 January 1960, and freight until 28 January 1961, and in May 1953 we see '7400' class 0-6-0PT No 7409 about to leave the Blaenau terminus for Bala with its two-coach train. This was slate-producing country, and the station here was overshadowed by the mountains where the slate was mined. The locomotive pictured carries an 84J shed-plate (Croes Newydd) and Bala shed was a sub shed of Croes Newydd at this time, as was Trawsfynydd and Penmaenpool.

30 Jul 1962 (still in situ) Wolverhampton to Stourbridge Junction  
 30 Jul 1962 (3 Jan 1966) Dudley to Priestfield  
 1 Aug 1962 (6 Jan 1964) Bewdley to Tenbury Wells  
 10 Sep 1962 (2 Dec 1963) Cadoxton to Treforest  
 10 Sep 1962 (10 Sep 1962) St. Fagans to Creigiau

10 Sep 1962 (6 Jul 1964) Taunton to Chard Junction  
 10 Sep 1962 (10 Sep 1962) Didcot to Newbury  
 10 Sep 1962 (10 Sep 1962) Ellesmere to Wrexham (Central)  
 10 Sep 1962 (27 May 1963) Whitland to Cardigan  
 10 Sep 1962 (1 Nov 1966) Coaley to Dursley  
 10 Sep 1962 (10 Sep 1962) Uxbridge (Vine Street) to West Drayton & Yiewsley





In May 1954 Aberbeeg-allocated BR-built Hawksworth '9400' class 0-6-0PT No 9459 is pictured here at Ebbw Vale station running bunker first with a passenger service for Aberbeeg. Signs of coal mining in the area can be seen in the background. This passenger service ceased in April 1962. Aberbeeg had several engines of the '8400/9400' class based there around this time, but No 9459, pictured here, was soon to be transferred to Cardiff (Canton).

15 Oct 1962 (15 Oct 1962) Cheltenham Spa  
(Malvern Road) to Kingham  
15 Oct 1962 (15 Jun 1964) Colbren Junction  
to Neath (Riverside)  
15 Oct 1962 (15 Oct 1962) Colbren Junction  
to Brecon  
5 Nov 1962 (5 Oct 1964) Gwinear Road to  
Helston  
3 Dec 1962 (7 Sep 1964) Kingham to  
Chipping Norton  
3 Dec 1962 (3 Aug 1964) Briton Ferry to  
Cymmer Afan

31 Dec 1962 (5 Apr 1965) Brecon to Moat  
Lane Junction  
31 Dec 1962 (31 Dec 1962) Brecon to  
Hereford  
31 Dec 1962 (4 May 1964) Brecon to  
Newport  
31 Dec 1962 (7 Sep 1964) Plymouth to  
Launceston  
31 Dec 1962 (still in use) Bassaleg Junction  
to Newport  
31 Dec 1962 (5 Jun 1964) Merthyr to  
Hirwaun

*Note:* Some parts of some lines (especially in Wales) remained in use past the closure dates shown for traffic to private sidings.

#### Beeching overview

Without going too deeply into the story of the 'Beeching Plan', or the 'Beeching Axe' as it was dubbed by the national press, this overview is given to record its effect on the Western Region as it existed on 27 March 1963 when the report entitled 'The Reshaping of British Railways' was released. It was a seismic event

At Chard Junction in May 1952, auto-fitted '5400' class 0-6-0PT No 5411, one of two engines of this class based at Taunton at this time, is seen with a passenger train for Taunton in a scene which provides an excellent view of the small signal cabin and the station's footbridge. Chard (Central) station was on the Western Region's Taunton line whereas Chard's Junction station was just south of Central station and was also the junction for the main line from Yeovil to Honiton and Exeter. Passenger services over the Taunton line from here ceased in September 1962.





All train services, both passenger and freight, over the line from Cheltenham Spa (Malvern Road) to Kingham, on the main line from Oxford to Worcester, ceased to operate from 15 October 1962. This was the line which passed through Andoversford Junction (for the former M&SWJ line to Andover), Bourton-on-the-Water, and Stow-on-the-Wold. Four years before all train services ceased over the line, on 6 November 1958 ex-GWR '4575' class 2-6-2T No 5514, from a class of locomotive regularly used for these local trains, prepares to leave Cheltenham Spa (Malvern Road) station with a local train for Kingham. Although a 'dotted red' route, during the war years some heavy engines worked over this line and, on one occasion witnessed in June 1945, 2-8-2T No 7246 was seen piloting 2-8-0 No 2867 on a long freight train just west of Andoversford.  
R.S. Carpenter Photos

The Brecon to Moat Lane Junction line in mid-Wales soldiered on for freight until April 1965, although its passenger services ceased on 31 December 1962. Both the passenger and freight trains in GWR days and early BR days had been hauled by Cambrian Railways 0-6-0s and GWR 'Dean Goods' 0-6-0s. Nr Rhayader, between Builth Wells and Moat lane Junction, on 9 October 1951 we see one of the northbound freight workings over the line, hauled by 'Dean Goods' 0-6-0 No 2538, the last engine of the class to remain in traffic, being withdrawn in 1957. Rex Kennedy Collection





The branch line for Brixham in Devon left the Torquay to Kingswear line at Churston, passenger trains leaving from Churston's bay platform. Passenger services survived until May 1963 over the short branch line with no intermediate station, and in August 1953 the local auto train is pictured at the Brixham terminus with '1400' class 0-4-2T No 1466 in charge, a locomotive now preserved. The 1955 survey revealed that there were just three local passengers, each paying just 15 shillings per day, but there was a considerable amount of fish traffic over the line, so perhaps the line stayed open longer than expected.

Amongst the proposals for line closures in the 1962 Act, certain ones were rejected by the Transport Users' Consultative Councils, and one of these was the Exmouth branch, which still thrives today as a well-used commuter service for those working in Exeter. The first twenty BR '3MT' 2-6-2Ts that were constructed at Swindon Works in 1952, Nos 82000-19, were initially based at Tyseley (10) and Exmouth Junction (10), and No 82019 is pictured in its early days, in August 1953, at Exmouth station with a passenger service for Exeter (Central).



which would change both the physical extent of the railways of Great Britain and the public perception thereof forever.

The Beeching Report was actually a logical part of the long-running tale of British Railways since nationalisation. Beeching was not actually a civil servant, but was 'on secondment' from ICI for a period of five years. His brief, formulated by Ernest Marples, was to put the railways on a profitable footing in accordance with the provisions of the 1962 Transport Act (the 1962 Act). There is no actual evidence that he was told to 'axe' the system, although that is effectively what was to happen. It is often overlooked that the Beeching Report also contained a considerable number of positive suggestions as to how the railways could be developed to attract new business, as well as proposals to close many lines and stations.

Railway closures had been part of the evolution of railways since their early days. Many branch lines had lost their passenger

services under the 'Big Four', although the 'common carrier' restrictions meant that many continued in goods use through into BR days. These 'common carrier' restrictions were abolished under the provisions of the 1962 Act, meaning that many goods-only branches could now be closed more easily. In 1962, when Dr. Beeching's investigation started, there were large numbers of lines being proposed for closure by the British Transport Commission. These were actually put on hold pending the release of the Beeching Report and the changes to closure procedures brought in under the 1962 Act. It is interesting to observe that there were more closures to passengers of Western Region lines before the Beeching Report than after it.

Most Beeching Report suggestions would be followed through, but some would be overturned, as the provisions of the 1962 Act included the requirement that proposed closures should be approved by Transport Users' Consultative Councils before being submitted to

the Minister. Most notable amongst the rejected proposals were the Central Wales line from Craven Arms through Llandovery to Swansea, and the Exmouth branch.

The Beeching proposals gave rise to a realisation amongst the general populace that their railway system was being devastated, even if they didn't use it! This became a major plank in the election strategy of a revived Labour Party led by Harold Wilson that won the 1964 General Election, albeit with a tiny majority of just four seats on 15 October 1964. The Labour Party had promised to re-examine the Beeching proposals but, in the event, found that almost all were justified, and most were not rescinded.

One thing that Dr. Beeching proposed, which had not previously been a major consideration, was to close many intermediate stations on main lines that would continue to host express trains. This was most notable on the two West of England main lines now in the Western Region and it produced what



appeared to be a bizarre situation. As we have already noted, the former Southern West of England main line beyond Salisbury was now in the Western Region's orbit, and a semi-fast service was to be invoked. Thus the line was to retain nearly a third of its stations, closures being only to the least-used ones at Wilton, Dinton, Semley, Templecombe, Milborne Port, Sutton Bingham, Chard Junction, Seaton Junction, Sidmouth Junction, Whimble, Broad Clyst, and Pinhoe. Beeching proposed the closures of all but Gillingham, Sherborne, Yeovil Junction, Crewkerne, Axminster, and Honiton; the Western Region retained Tisbury.

The Southern Region's line would be singled in 1966, but the Western Region's own West of England main line through Westbury and Castle Cary would be kept as the main line to South Devon and Cornwall, but it would suffer the closure of most of its intermediate stations between Newbury and Taunton. The survivors were Hungerford, Pewsey, Westbury, and Castle Cary which remained to be served by the expresses, whilst others were served by Weymouth to Bristol services (Bruton and Frome) or outer suburban ones from Reading (Kintbury and Bedwyn).

Closures implemented from 1 January 1963 to 31 December 1965, all included in Dr. Beeching's proposals, were as follows.

- 7 Jan 1963 Oxford to Princes Risborough
- 4 Feb 1963 Chasewater to Newquay
- 13 May 1963 Churston to Brixham

Following Dr. Beeching's proposals, amongst the passenger services that were to terminate were those over Devon's Kingsbridge branch from Brent on the West of England main line, and these ceased on 16 September 1963. The running-in board on Brent station that faces the Kingsbridge platform states 'BRENT, CHANGE FOR MAIN LINE TRAINS, where the other side would state the opposite. In the Kingsbridge platform the local branch train is about to leave bunker-first hauled by an unidentified ex-GWR '4500' class 2-6-2T. Rex Kennedy Collection

From 6 April 1964 passenger services ceased to run over the branch from Cirencester (Town) to Kemble in Gloucestershire, and in this earlier scene, captured on film fourteen years prior to this event. In August 1950 station staff and locomotive crew of Swindon-based '7400' class 0-6-0PT No 7418 pose for a picture at Cirencester (Town) station after arriving from Kemble with a local train. By 1959 these local passenger services were operated by one of the new BR railbuses, No W79978 being a regular performer.

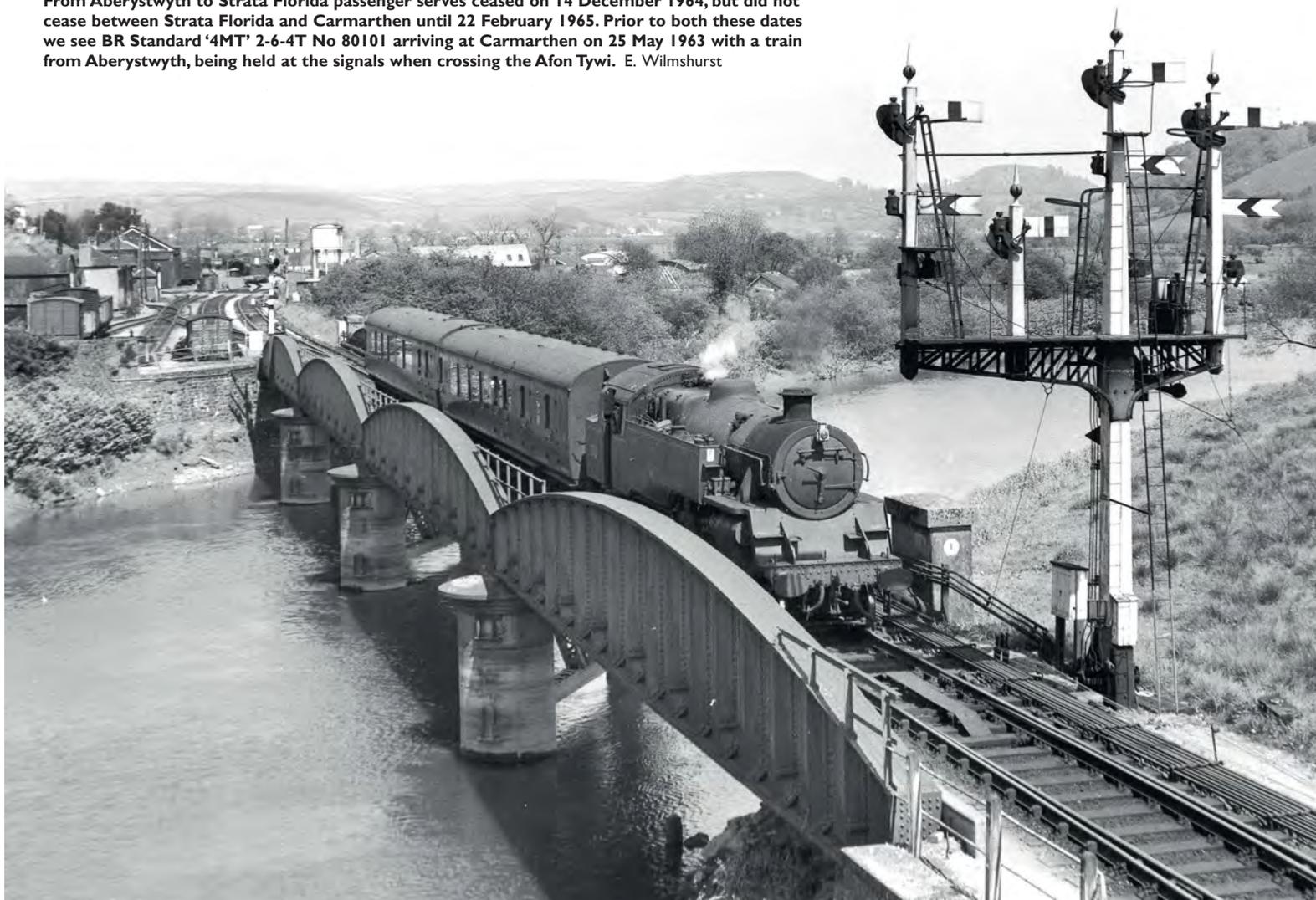




- 9 Sep 1963 Witham to Yatton
- 9 Sep 1963 Abingdon to Radley
- 9 Sep 1963 Carmarthen to Llandilo
- 9 Sep 1963 Tiverton Junction to Hemyock
- 9 Sep 1963 Tondou to Porthcawl
- 16 Sep 1963 Brent to Kingsbridge
- 7 Oct 1963 Tiverton to Exeter (Stoke Canon)
- 16 Mar 1964 Aberdare to Abercynon
- 6 Apr 1964 Kemble to Cirencester (Town)
- 6 Apr 1964 Kemble to Tetbury
- 15 Jun 1964 Athelney to Durston
- 15 Jun 1964 Taunton to Yeovil (Town)
- 15 Jun 1964 Bridgend to Barry
- 15 Jun 1964 Dowlais (Caeharris) to Nelson & Llancaiach
- 15 Jun 1964 Maerdy to Porth
- 15 Jun 1964 Neath (General) to Hirwaun
- 15 Jun 1964 Neath (General) to Pontypool Road
- 15 Jun 1964 Nelson & Llancaiach to Ystrad Mynach
- 15 Jun 1964 Johnston to Neyland
- 15 Jun 1964 Sengenydd to Aber Junction halt
- 15 Jun 1964 Swansea (Victoria) to Pontardulais
- 7 Sep 1964 Henwick to Bromyard
- 7 Sep 1964 Bristol (Parson Street) to Portishead
- 7 Sep 1964 Plymouth to St. Budeaux (Victoria Road)
- 5 Oct 1964 Tiverton to Tiverton Junction
- 2 Nov 1964 Berkeley Road to Sharpness
- 2 Nov 1964 Grange Court to Hereford
- 2 Nov 1964 Kidderminster to Woofferton
- 23 Nov 1964 Oswestry to Welshpool
- 23 Nov 1964 Oswestry to Whitchurch
- 23 Nov 1964 Filton Junction to St. Andrew's Road
- 14 Dec 1964 Aberystwyth to Strata Florida
- 4 Jan 1965 Lostwithiel to Fowey
- 22 Feb 1965 Strata Florida to Carmarthen
- 1 Mar 1965 Torrington to Halwill Junction
- 29 Mar 1965 Staines (West) to West Drayton & Yiewsley
- 4 Jun 1965 Briton Ferry to Llanely
- 6 Sep 1965 Reading (South) to Earley
- 20 Sep 1965 Chippenham to Calne
- 4 Oct 1965 Barnstaple Junction to Torrington
- 29 Nov 1965 Yeovil (Town) to Yeovil (Pen Mill)

Many more lines would close to passengers in 1966, but the Western Region had announced that all steam would be eliminated by 31 December 1965. However there was a final 'kick in the teeth' from the erstwhile Somerset & Dorset (S&D) line, which was, at last, confirmed for closure on that same date. An applicant to run replacement bus services, which had been one of the conditions of closure, withdrew at the last moment, so an emergency service had to be instituted from 1 January 1966, and the S&D still used steam! Thus it soldiered on until 6 March 1966, a *cause célèbre* which still resonates to this day.

**The line from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen closed to passenger traffic at two periods of time. From Aberystwyth to Strata Florida passenger services ceased on 14 December 1964, but did not cease between Strata Florida and Carmarthen until 22 February 1965. Prior to both these dates we see BR Standard '4MT' 2-6-4T No 80101 arriving at Carmarthen on 25 May 1963 with a train from Aberystwyth, being held at the signals when crossing the Afon Tywi. E. Wilmshurst**



# STEAM DAYS

In Colour

## Cornish gold!

Residing in the West Country for many years, **Peter W. Gray** was a prolific railway photographer in the steam era of the 1950s and 1960s, and is renowned for his excellent photography, particularly in his coverage of the branch lines in the area. In this short photo-feature Peter's travels, with his camera, takes him to the rural branch lines of Cornwall and those to the coastal holiday resorts.

Truthall halt is the penultimate stopping place on the Helston branch before reaching the terminus, and on 15 July 1961 we see '4500' class 2-6-2T No 4570 with the 1.10pm train from Helston to Gwinear Road, on the West of England main line, rounding the bend at this location. In the mid-1950s, on each weekday, just 21 local passengers paying just £1 each used the branch trains but, on average, 92 tickets were issued, many to and from long distances by Forces' traffic from R.N. Culrose. Freight over the line comprised broccoli and potatoes. Passenger services over the branch ceased on 5 November 1962.





The Newquay branch from Par, on the West of England main line, was a busy line, especially in the holiday season, as trains for the north, hauled by a variety of motive power, such as Great Western 'Castles', 'Halls' and 4-6-0 'Counties', took holiday-makers to the popular Cornish resort of Newquay. In addition to the heavy passenger traffic over the branch, freight trains conveying china clay would also work over the line, as pictured here where we see 0-6-0PT No 1664 approaching St. Blazey with a regular working from the Goonbarrow branch on 13 July 1961. The train has just descended the 1 in 40 incline through the Luxulyan Valley.

The line from Bodmin Road to Boscarne Junction, Wadebridge, and Padstow passed over to the Western Region in 1950, but from 1958 to 1962 the section from Bodmin North to Wadebridge and Padstow reverted back to Southern Region control, leaving just the section from Bodmin Road to Boscarne Junction a Western Region line. On 10 September 1960 '4500' class 2-6-2T No 4569 races through Nastallon halt, bunker first, with the 2.30pm train from Bodmin Road to Wadebridge. Nastallon Halt, situated at the end of the Western Region section of the branch, can be seen to the right of the signal post and cabin.



At 8.50am on a fresh summer Saturday morning, 9 September 1961, two '4500' class 2-6-2Ts, Nos 4566 and 4563, are seen pulling away from Lelant halt on the St. Ives branch as they skirt the bay with the ten-coach empty coaching stock train from Ponsandene carriage sidings in Penzance which then formed the 8.40am train from St. Erth to St. Ives. This set of coaches will return from St. Ives as the 9.20am through service to London (Paddington).

Bottom right: Goonbell Halt was on the Newquay branch from Chasewater, and passenger trains using this line would start their journeys at Truro. As was the case from the line's closure to passenger traffic in February 1963, one passenger, seen here on 11 July 1961, would hardly keep this halt going for much longer, as '4575' class 2-6-2T No 5562 runs into the halt with the 3-coach 11.50am train from Newquay to Truro. The halt is graced with the delightful pagoda hut painted in the Great Western Railway colours of chocolate & cream.

Below: Carbis Bay in springtime on 17 March 1960, as '4500' class 2-6-2T No 4566 arrives at the station with the 4.32pm train from St. Erth on the main line to Penzance, and the Cornish seaside town of St. Ives. Although not a great deal of locals in the mid-1950s used the branch trains, the line was well used by holiday-makers from the north spending their leisure time at the attractive resort of St. Ives, which was always bustling with visitors.









The Looe branch from Liskeard, which had its own station at the main-line location, is still open for passenger traffic today. This Cornish branch line was particularly interesting as trains had to reverse at Coombe Junction en route. On 15 August 1959 we see '4500' class 2-6-2T No 4565 leaving Coombe Junction with its 4-coach train, having just passed the junction signal box, with the 10.05am train to Looe. The line seen on the right is the line coming down from Liskeard.

Bottom left: The Fowey branch left the West of England main line at Lostwithiel, and on 2 July 1960, beside the well-tended gardens of Lostwithiel station we see '1400' class 0-4-2T No 1419 with a Fowey branch connecting train. Although passenger trains over the branch were lightly-loaded, except during the summer months, an appreciable amount of china clay was taken down the branch to Fowey docks for shipment, in the 1950s this coming from either Moorswater, Bodmin, and Plympton.

Below: At Coombe Junction on the Looe branch, trains from the Looe direction could continue north under the Liskeard viaduct to Moorswater, where a small engine shed was situated, seen here on the afternoon of 2 September 1961 where '4575' class 2-6-2T No 5573 is pictured over the inspection pit outside the two-road shed building. The locomotive is awaiting its next call to action as its fireman props up the door of the engine shed. The line alongside the engine shed was the original Looe & Caradon Railway. Freight traffic from Moorswater comprised china clay and coal to the Looe gasworks (which closed in the mid-1950s). Moorswater shed had 'officially' closed in September 1960.





## The countdown to oblivion of GW steam ... 1956 to 1965

**Philip Atkins** looks at the demise of Great Western steam locomotives in the years leading up to the end of steam on the Western Region of British Railways in December 1965.

The Western Region was the first of the six British Railways regions to eliminate steam working, which it achieved only eleven years after the publication of the very hastily conceived BR 'Modernisation Plan' in January 1955. Then it was anticipated that this would not be realised system-wide in less than twenty years, and indeed possibly not until *circa* 1990. Ironically, the Western Region had been allocated the last 48 BR Standard steam locomotives to be built, '9F' 2-10-0s Nos 92203-92250, in the years 1958-60. These were authorised for that region specifically to replace life-expired Churchward '2800' class 2-8-0s for which there was then no diesel substitute after the announcement of the 'Modernisation Plan'. The final thirty had been approved, albeit 'with reluctance', as late as August 1956, and just two months before the delivery of the final steam locomotive ordered by the GWR, No 3409, almost nine years earlier. The declining quality and availability of locomotive-grade coal, coupled with major problems concerning footplate and running shed staff recruitment, had been major issues facing British Railways ever since its formation in 1948, which were particularly acute on the Western Region.

The beginning of the end. Twenty-year-old 'Grange' class 4-6-0 No 6841 *Marlas Grange* pilots brand-new 'Warship' class 2,000hp A1A + A1A diesel No D601 *Ark Royal* (the second diesel-hydraulic locomotive to be delivered to the Western Region) on the up 'Cornish Riviera Express' at Dainton in 1958. Three years earlier, the Western Region, with as yet not a single main-line diesel locomotive to its name, had ambitiously hatched a plan to eliminate steam working west of Newton Abbot by 1959. Although this aspiration inevitably took rather longer, its also seemingly optimistic target of dieselising the whole region by 1968 was nevertheless actually achieved two years early, and by British Railways as a whole in August of that year. Ironically, by 1968 however, not only *Marlas Grange* but also D601 *Ark Royal* was no more.

The two experimental gas turbine locomotives, boldly ordered by the Great Western Railway from Brown Boveri in Switzerland and Metropolitan Vickers in Manchester in 1946, and not delivered until 1950/51, had not proved successful. The first main line diesel (hydraulic) locomotives did not appear on the Western Region until 1958, but given that the region was newly 'steam free' after barely eight years in January 1966, examination of the Western Region's motive power situation, just ten years earlier in January 1956, demonstrates just how cataclysmic the transition during the past decade had been.

In 1956 some 3,300 locomotives of former GWR design were in service which, for simple historical reasons, constituted a far more homogeneous group than were to be found on any of the other five regions. These included engines from nearly all of the George Churchward classes, some of which still remained intact. Notable exceptions were his 'County' class 4-4-0 and its 4-4-2 tank equivalent, which were withdrawn during the early 1930s, and the 2-cylinder 'Saint' class 4-6-0 which had only recently become extinct in 1953. Just three 4-cylinder 'Star' class 4-6-0s remained in traffic at the beginning of

1956, but the thirty 'Kings' and 167 'Castles', directly developed from them under Charles Collett, collectively comprised the Western Region's express passenger elite, together with fifteen BR Standard 'Britannia' Pacifics in the mid-1950s.

While the 'Castle' fleet no longer included the 1924 4-6-0 renewal (withdrawn in 1953) of the solitary 1908 4-6-2 No 111 *The Great Bear*, their number included twelve conversions from 'Stars'. These included the last ten, originally dating from 1922, but also, rather surprisingly, the pioneer No 4000 *North Star* itself, which had initially been turned out as a 4-4-2 locomotive as long ago as 1906. No 4003 *Lode Star* had already been set aside for official preservation in 1951.

The 'Second Eleven' consisted of 469 2-cylinder mixed-traffic 4-6-0s of increasing size, ie the 'Manors' (30), the 'Granges' (80), the 'Halls' (329), and the 'Counties' (30). Of these, in 1958 the ubiquitous 'Halls' covered an estimated 12.65million engine miles in aggregate. Built between 1936 and 1939 the 'Granges' and first twenty 'Manors', both having 5ft 8in diameter coupled wheels, were officially considered to be 'renewals' of, (ie, incorporating parts from) withdrawn '4300' class 2-6-0s. A total of 342 2-6-0s had



The double-chimney 'King' class 4-6-0 era lasted for barely seven years, 1956 to 1962, during which time the class was undoubtedly at the height of its powers, enjoying the combination of recent high-degree superheat with new double exhaust arrangements. By this time they had also covertly increased in weight by several tons since their first introduction in 1927. Although four 'Kings', Nos 6018, 6025, 6026, and 6028, were outshopped from Swindon during the first two months of 1962 after receiving expensive Heavy General repairs, all thirty locomotives of the class had nevertheless been condemned before the end of that year. Unusually they passed directly from front-rank passenger workings to the scrapyard; even their official weight precluded their transfer to other routes. Here, No 6026 *King John* has just passed through Gerrards Cross with the up 'Cambrian Coast Express' bound for Paddington on 16 June 1962, three months prior to its withdrawal from service. K.L. Cook/Rail Archive Stephenson

been built between 1911 and 1932, and retired from 1935, but more than two hundred nevertheless still remained twenty years later. The 'Hall' was directly derived from the 'Saint', having 6ft in place of 6ft 8½in diameter coupled wheels and an improved cab, and was highly successful. Fred Hawksworth's post-war

'County' class 4-6-0s, with non-standard 6ft 3in coupled wheels, had a somewhat mixed reputation. They were later improved during the 1950s via a reduction in boiler pressure from a very high 280lb to 250lb, and the adoption of revised tubing arrangement and double chimney.

These mixed traffic 4-6-0s collectively accounted for roughly one third of 1,300 GWR-type locomotives in service in 1956, which also included the 2-6-0s, 2-8-0s, large 2-6-2Ts, 2-8-0Ts, and 2-8-2Ts that were all characterised by Churchward's trademark lengthy 30-inch piston stroke, which had also

The prototype Hawksworth 'County' class 4-6-0, No 1000 *County of Middlesex*, is pictured on Old Oak Common shed on 5 May 1956 still retaining its original and unique rather gross GWR double chimney after repainting from BR black to green livery in that year. Virtually amounting to a 'Super Saint', although first introduced as late as 1945 the 'County' class 4-6-0s nevertheless retained the traditional (and inaccessible) internal Stephenson valve gear which dated back to 1903 on the former class, despite alternative external Walschaerts valve gear options having been submitted to F.W. Hawksworth early on in the design process. R.C. Riley





Chester-based Hawthornthorpe 'County' class 4-6-0 No 1022 *County of Northampton* is seen here ex-Works at Swindon, repainted green and newly rebuilt after receiving its revised double chimney, following extensive draughting experiments during 1954. The 'Counties', numbered 1001-29, undoubtedly looked their best with traditional GWR-style single chimneys, even when painted in BR lined black, but all, including No 1000, were later rebuilt with squat double chimneys between 1956 and 1959, as shown here. Somewhat belatedly, in 1961, the head of the Western Region, Keith Grand, suddenly strongly objected to their appearance, but after some rather half-hearted investigations it was decided that the cost of further alterations to improve matters could not be justified. Rail Archive Stephenson

A striking view of '4700' class mixed-traffic 2-8-0 No 4704, ex-Works on Old Oak Common shed on 27 October 1957. Although totalling only nine engines that had all been built more than thirty years earlier, ten new Standard No 7 boilers (which were unique to this particular class) were built for them at Swindon during the period 1955-57. Two of these were not utilised until late 1960 when they were fitted to Nos 4701 and 4708. Despite this, No 4708 was actually the first engine of the class to be withdrawn, barely two years later, in October 1962, while the last three '4700' class 2-8-0s were withdrawn in June 1964 from Old Oak Common shed. R.C. Riley

featured on his 'County' class of 4-4-0s, 4-4-2Ts, and 'Saints'. All 167 of the '2800/2884' class heavy mineral 2-8-0s, including the prototype No 2800 built in 1903, were still at work, together with the nine unusual '4700' class mixed traffic 2-8-0s dating from 1919 to 1923.

Goods tender engines were comparatively few on the GWR, which after 1899 built no 0-6-0 tender engines for thirty years (by 1934 it actually had fewer of these than the Southern Railway). It introduced the '2251' class 0-6-0s for general secondary duties in 1930. The last of these was completed in



January 1948, actually 6-7 years after the last LMS, LNER, and Southern 0-6-0s were built, bringing the class total to 120.

Compared to the overall BR proportion of about one third, tank engines accounted for an unusually high proportion of the Western Region locomotive stock, nearly two thirds in fact. Much of this was due to the huge number of inside-cylinder 0-6-0PTs, successors to numerous 0-6-0 saddle tanks, and which were first built new in this form in 1929. These continued to be added to stock well after 1947 and until as late as 1955/56, thereby bringing their grand total to around 1,200. The GWR had pioneered the 2-6-2T for heavy suburban passenger duties, and new engines, which still closely resembled the 1903 prototype, continued to be built at Swindon until 1949, bringing the 2-6-2T operating totals to a peak of about 460 (down to 380 by 1956) if one also includes the Small Prairies built for rural branch line work.

For the heavy South Wales coal traffic Swindon built a total of 205 powerful 2-8-0Ts between 1910 and 1940, and 54 of these were rebuilt, before entering traffic, as 2-8-2Ts that had the exceptionally high coal bunker capacity for a British tank engine of 6 tons (equal to that of the standard GWR 4,000 gallon tenders). Both wheel arrangements were unique on British Railways, and all were still hard at work in 1956, as were the two hundred Collett '5600' class 0-6-2Ts which had been produced in the 1920s, also for service in the Welsh valleys.

Improvements to the Western Region steam stock were still taking place in 1956 when the now nearly thirty year-old 'Kings' had recently been fortified with new 4-row superheater boilers, and they were beginning to be re-draughted with double exhaust. Although this was primarily to counter the declining quality of available coal, it is understood that another reason was the unacceptably high failure rate of their inside cylinder blocks due to the high back pressure which stemmed from the original single blast pipe arrangement. In mid-1956 new frames also were designed to accommodate Timken roller bearing axleboxes, eight sets of which were actually obtained a year or so later, but in the event not used. Several 'Kings' received modified new front end frames at this period. It is also known that latterly at least the loading on their trailing coupled axles covertly was as high as 25tons, against the official weight diagram figure of 22½tons, and which would thereby have been increased still further. A start had also been made on upgrading the 'Castles' with double chimneys in conjunction with new 4-row superheater boilers, to considerable effect, which persisted until 1961/62.

**Oil-burning '5700' class 0-6-0PT No 3711 is pictured here after withdrawal in May 1963. The oil tank is clearly visible mounted above the bunker. Despite this modification the engine retained its pre-1956 BR emblem to the end, before being cut up at Swindon in November 1963. Great Western Trust**

In 1958 a 'Castle' was considered for conversion to oil firing, in association with Laidlaw Drew Ltd, in the face of the increasingly problematical locomotive coal situation, but nothing materialised. However, also in 1958, 0-6-0PT No 3711 was converted to oil burning by Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns Ltd in Newcastle. Little is known about this experiment, which in this instance was probably associated with the recent passing of the Clean Air Act in 1956, for RSH had also recently built several new oil-burning

0-6-0Ts for the National Coal Board! No 3711 was photographed in operation at Old Oak Common in early 1963, shortly before withdrawal, apparently still thus equipped. Possibly following on from No 3711, in 1960 there was an abortive plan also to convert thirty '9400' class 0-6-0PTs to oil burning.

Up to 1956, British Railways only normally withdrew a steam locomotive when it was genuinely life-expired, which was sometimes well past its official economic life (fifty years for a 0-6-0T). This would very soon dramatically change, for 1958 witnessed the withdrawal of a 1950-built '5700' class 0-6-0PT, No 6771, and in 1959 a 1955-built larger '9400' class development of it!

During the period 1957-59 on the Western Region the withdrawal rate suddenly increased exponentially before falling back somewhat during 1960 and 1961. By this time dieselisation was proceeding apace, for revenue-earning steam-worked mileage on the Western Region declined from 66 million in 1956 to 44 million in 1961, and with it coal consumption from 2.1 million down to 1.5 million tons. Regrettably, the published statistics end at this point, when steam

nevertheless still accounted for 55 per cent of the passenger mileage, and no less than 96 per cent of the freight mileage.

The withdrawal rate roughly tripled in 1962 when the greatest number of steam locomotives ever (2,924) was retired by British

Railways as a whole. On the Western Region this had included no fewer than 75 4-6-0s during September alone. Overall, all thirty 'Kings' went, and no fewer than 55 'Castles', although ten new boilers, originally ordered back in 1958, had finally been completed for the latter class only the previous year. In the event, these would see little more than two years of service as after 1962 Swindon ceased to give this class Heavy repairs. Although

scrapping of the more recent (1944-50) Hawksworth 'Modified Halls' did not commence until 1963, it is notable that no fewer than 73 of the 259 Collett 'Halls' (built 1929-43) were condemned during 1962, yet only a single 'Grange', which some considered to be a superior design on account of its improved cylinders.

The year 1962 also saw the greatest inroads made into the ranks of 0-6-0PTs, including no fewer than 170 of the particularly prolific '5700' class variety (which at 863 was actually the most numerous single class of tank engine ever built in Britain, and which would have stretched for five miles if coupled end to end) being struck off the books, together with 42 '9400' class engines. Somewhat bizarrely, however, in 1963 several '5700' class 0-6-0PTs were overhauled in Manchester by Beyer, Peacock & Co when it was also engaged in building 'Hymek' (Class 35) diesel-hydraulic locomotives for the Western Region. Beyer Peacock had built its last steam locomotive five years earlier, and it has been suggested that this odd turn of events was associated in some way with the 'Hymek' contract.

*'Improvements to the Western Region steam stock were still taking place in 1956 when the now nearly thirty year-old 'Kings' had recently been fortified with new 4-row superheater boilers'*





Only one still to go. The penultimate BR Standard '9F' 2-10-0, No 92219, completed at Swindon Works in January 1960, is seen in repose on shed at Cardiff (Canton) on 3 March 1960. What chronologically should have been the final batch of '9Fs', Nos 92221-50, was actually completed at Crewe Works for the Western Region between May and December 1958 before Nos 92203-20 at Swindon between April 1959 and March 1960. Only twelve of these 48 BR '9F' 2-10-0s, following transfer to the London Midland Region, managed to last into 1968. R.O. Tuck/Rail Archive Stephenson

After a slackening in 1963, withdrawals on the Western Region rose again to new heights in 1964, which saw the demise of the physically-imposing yet numerically-small recently reboilered '4700' class of 2-8-0s. Also

Table One

Annual withdrawals of major\* former GWR standard steam locomotive classes during 1956-1965

| Type           | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 | 1961 | 1962 | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | Number preserved |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------------|
| 2-6-0 '2251'   |      |      | 1    | 27   | 10   | 9    | 20   | 19   | 19   | 15   | 1                |
| 2-6-0 '4300'   | 6    | 5    | 23   | 33   | 27   | 9    | 45   | 33   | 35   |      | 2                |
| 4-6-0 'Manor'  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 1    | 10   | 19   | 9                |
| 4-6-0 'Grange' |      |      |      |      | 1    | 2    | 1    | 5    | 26   | 45   | R                |
| 4-6-0 'Hall'   |      |      |      | 2    | 2    | 8    | 73   | 73   | 78   | 93   | 17               |
| 4-6-0 'County' |      |      |      |      |      |      | 9    | 13   | 8    |      | R                |
| 4-6-0 'Castle' |      | 1    | 1    | 3    | 7    | 3    | 55   | 48   | 36   | 12   | 8                |
| 4-6-0 'King'   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 30   |      |      | 3                |
| 2-8-0 '28XX'   |      |      | 6    | 29   | 14   | 1    | 7    | 33   | 42   | 35   | 15               |
| 2-8-0 '47XX'   |      |      |      |      |      |      | 3    | 2    | 4    |      | R                |
| 0-4-2T '14XX'  | 7    | 18   | 15   | 13   | 9    | 6    | 8    | 6    | 10   |      | 4                |
| 0-6-0PT '1600' |      |      |      | 6    | 9    | 5    | 11   | 6    | 18   | 12   | 1                |
| 0-6-0PT '5400' | 1    | 7    | 6    | 21   | 8    | 12   | 17   | 18   | 23   | 2    | 3                |
| 0-6-0PT '5700' | 4    | 16   | 48   | 68   | 67   | 67   | 170  | 112  | 145  | 139  | 16               |
| 0-6-0PT '94XX' | (+9) |      |      | 29   | 16   | 15   | 42   | 30   | 38   |      | 2                |
| 0-6-0PT '15XX' |      |      |      | 1    |      | 2    | 2    | 5    |      |      | 1                |
| 0-6-2T '5600'  |      |      |      |      |      | 29   | 62   | 52   | 55   |      | 9                |
| 2-6-2T small   | 2    | 8    | 24   | 16   | 32   | 14   | 21   | 9    | 13   |      | 3                |
| 2-6-2T large   | 3    | 17   | 17   | 7    | 20   | 12   | 36   | 22   | 46   | 61   | 9                |
| 2-8-0T         |      |      |      | 15   | 2    | 5    | 19   | 45   | 47   | 18   | 8                |
| 2-8-2T         |      |      |      |      |      |      | 2    | 13   | 29   | 10   | 3                |
| Total          | 23   | 72   | 141  | 270  | 224  | 199  | 633  | 545  | 682  | 461  |                  |

A small number of ex-GWR locomotives technically still remained in traffic on 1 January 1966, mainly at sheds transferred from the WR to the LMR, as detailed on page XX.

\* Classes such as the '9000' 4-4-0, '1101' 0-4-0T, and '1361' and '1366' 0-6-0Ts have been omitted for simplicity.

R - Replica currently under construction.

during that year the last main line diesel-hydraulic locomotives entered service on the Western Region, bringing the total to 309 as the heirs and successors to more than twice as many GWR-type 4-6-0s. By 1963 English Electric Type 3 (Class 37) Co-Co diesel-electrics rendered the BR '9F' 2-10-0s no longer indispensable on mineral duties on the Western Region, thereby heralding their first withdrawals in 1964 when Sulzer Type 4s (Class 47) had begun to supplement 'Warship' and 'Western' diesel-hydraulics on express passenger work.

During 1964/65 Swindon built 56 0-6-0 diesel-hydraulic locomotives, in effect successors to the numerous pannier tanks for, by then, rapidly vanishing trip working, as a consequence of which these had BR working lives of only three to five years. In 1965 British Railways dictated the phasing out of diesel-hydraulic in favour of diesel-electric traction on the Western Region (that was finally completed twelve years later), while that year witnessed a final mopping up operation of remaining steam on the Western Region, with resulting peak withdrawals of 'Manors', 'Granges', 'Halls', and Large Prairie 2-6-2Ts.

Routine steam locomotive repairs ended at Swindon Works in early 1965, seemingly without any ceremony, the last engine to be outshopped being former LMS Ivatt '4MT' 2-6-0 No 43003 in February. During the early 1960s major motive power depots on the Western Region progressively closed to steam, for example, Bristol (Bath Road) in September 1960, followed by Newton Abbot in January 1962, Penzance in September 1962, Plymouth (Laira) in April 1964, Swindon in October 1964, and Old Oak Common in March 1965.

The rapid rate of steam locomotive withdrawals on British Railways, which commenced in the late 1950s, ironically significantly contributed to the eventual preservation of a surprisingly large number of engines which consequently evaded oblivion. Hitherto, these had almost invariably been broken up at a locomotive works, often only a matter of days after their condemnation there. Now, on account of their sheer numbers, and with a modicum of financial return in prospect, these were farmed out to commercial scrapping agents. In the case of the Western Region, many of its steam locomotives were despatched to the now legendary Woodham's

yard at Barry in South Wales, where some engines lingered for many years.

Only a minority of the steam locomotives that congregated at Barry were actually cut up there. Despite progressive deterioration in the salty sea air, more than two hundred, including numerous former GWR locomotives, were rescued by various preservation groups and were lovingly restored to full working order against all the odds, a process which has been well documented elsewhere. As a result, of the 21 basic GWR classes listed in the accompanying table, only three had seemingly escaped posterity. However, a full-size working replica of each of these, ie, 'Grange' and 'County' 4-6-0s, and a '4700' class 2-8-0, is currently under construction, sometimes incorporating salvaged original components (greatly assisted by the highly-developed Swindon locomotive standardisation policy!) by the Great Western Society at Didcot, which additionally has now also almost completed a replica 'Saint' class 4-6-0. The Great Western Society even has long-term plans to complete the set with 'County' class 4-4-0 and 4-4-2T replicas, although there has been no intimation so far of a 21st century *Great Bear!*

**Finale — although by 1951 the 'Granges' were outnumbered four to one by the 'Halls', many of which were also of more recent construction. One of the former, No 6853 Morehampton Grange, was nevertheless (and perhaps significantly) among the very last steam locomotives to receive Heavy repairs and a full repaint at Swindon Works. On 16 August 1964 this locomotive was recorded ex-Works, resplendent after having just been outshopped. Withdrawal for this locomotive came in October 1965, from Tyseley shed. Roy Hobbs**





# The rail tour phenomenon

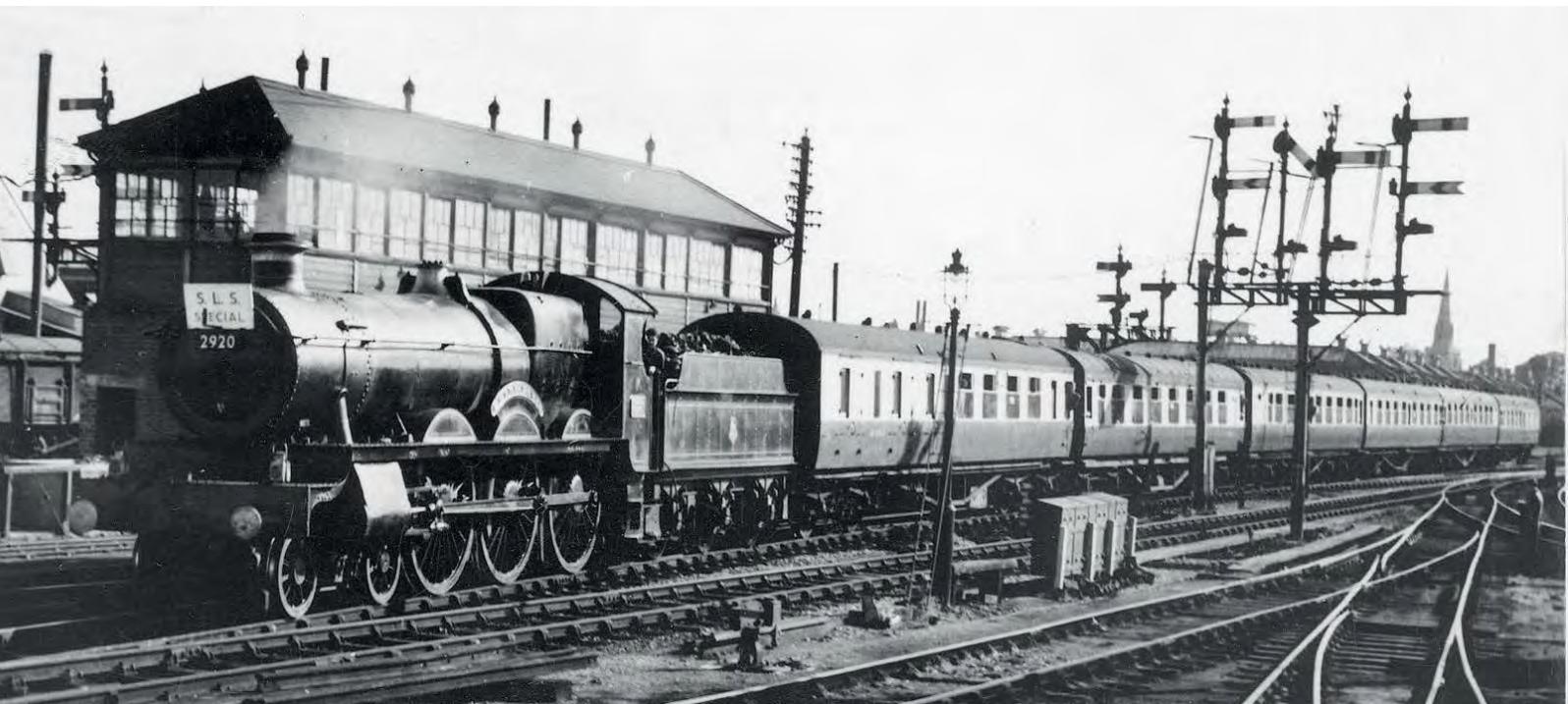
*What started as a pastime of running trains for enthusiasts to visit workshops, engine sheds and perhaps oddities and outposts of the railway network had, as the 1950s rolled on, become a mechanism for recording and commemorating notable dates, and all too often forming the last rites of many lines as they passed into history. Some railways were to have remarkably short lives, measured in just a few decades, and others were to be cut down just short of their centenaries as the more severe post-Beeching cuts took hold.*

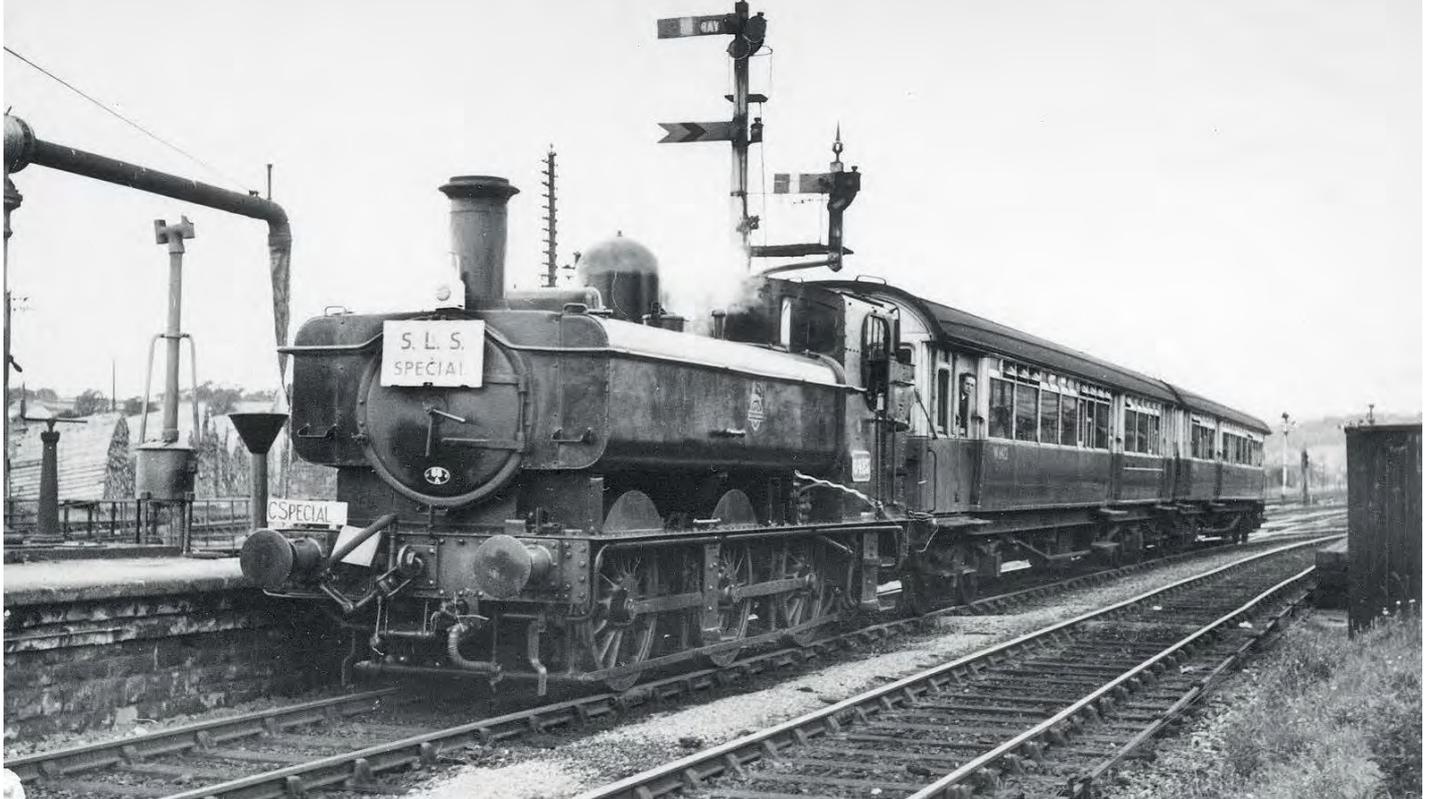
*Locomotives and working practices changed in this era too, with rail tour operators frequently requesting classes of engine that were on their way out as at first the fleet of modern BR Standard steam locomotives was introduced, and then the products of the modernisation plan.*

*Amongst the most prolific rail tour operators were the Stephenson Locomotive Society (SLS), the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society (RCTS), and the Locomotive Club of Great Britain (LCGB), with thousands of promotional flyers and itineraries printed, and then tickets issued through to the end of Western Region steam.*

On 23 September 1950 the Birmingham Locomotive Club employed ex-GWR railcar No W7W on a rail tour to the Forest of Dean. Looking north-west, the railcar is in the former Severn & Wye Railway station at Coleford, on the right, with the ex-Great Western station on the left. The latter was the terminus for the line from Monmouth, to the west of here, but that route was truncated beyond Coleford, at Whitecliffe Quarry from 1 January 1917. This tour became the last train between Serridge Junction and Drybrook Road, although the section was not taken out of use until the end of the year. Such is the fickle nature of lines that exist for goods traffic only that although regular traffic had ceased on 25 July 1949, the line would not officially close until 9 December 1951. SLS Collection

Perhaps the last rail tour to employ a Churchward 'Saint' class 4-6-0 ran on 15 June 1952. No 2920 *Saint David* arrives at Swindon off the Gloucester line with the SLS 'Saint Special' from Birmingham; by this time there were just a handful of 'Saints' on the books. The circular tour from Birmingham (Snow Hill) ran via Old Hill and returned via Leamington Spa, and took in walking visits to Gloucester shed, Swindon Works and shed, and Banbury shed. The 'Saint' class holds an important position in GWR locomotive development as it spawned the ubiquitous 'Hall' class that was still under construction in early BR days, with some surviving right until the end of Western Region steam in 1965. No 2920 would be the last 'Saint' to be withdrawn from service, in October 1953. SLS Collection





The complex network of lines built by several competing companies in South Wales would prove a regular draw for rail tour operators in the nationalised era, some of the lines traversed being mineral-only from the outset, while others had been side-tracked by economies at the Grouping, as most (but not all) were absorbed by the Great Western. The SLS 'South Wales Mineral Lines' tour of 12 July 1952, hauled by GWR pannier No 6423, carries the local train designation 'C Special' and is seen using the Penygraig bay platform at the South Wales main line station of Llantrisant. The next move would take the train to Pontypridd over a route that had recently lost its passenger service, with trains curtailed from 31 March of that year. W.A. Camwell/SLS Collection

Former Midland & South Western Junction Railway 2-4-0 No 1335 leaves Moreton-in-Marsh for Shipston-on-Stour with the SLS 'Shipston Branch' tour on 31 August 1952. This had started at Oxford, but through ticketing was available from further afield. The locomotive was supplied by Dübs & Co Ltd in 1894 and it was one of only three former M&SWJR locomotives to survive into BR (Western Region) days. It was taken out of store at Swindon to work the tour, with withdrawal occurring shortly afterwards. The Shipston-on-Stour branch followed the route of a section of the former 4ft gauge Stratford Tramway, opened in 1825. Passenger services finished in 1929, but the twice-weekly goods service would survive until 2 May 1960. SLS Collection





Ebbw Vale was a town where the LMS, over ex-L&NWR lines associated with its Heads of the Valley route, met the Great Western, although the only connection between the two was through the steelworks. In 1948 all these lines became BR (Western Region) property and it was not long before closures occurred. The passenger service from Beaufort ceased from 5 February 1951 but the SLS was still able to visit two years later, on 11 July 1953. On that day former GWR 0-6-0PT No 6403 traversed many railways that were by then goods-only, starting with the line through Newport (Mill Street), closed to passengers as long ago as 1880, via Blaenavon (High Level), which lost its passenger service in 1941, before arriving here at Ebbw Vale (High Level). Following this was the link to the GWR system at Aberbeeg and Markham Colliery, before the tour returned to Newport over the ex-L&NWR Sirhowy Valley line. The distant church here at Ebbw Vale is extant, but the railway is now lost under the A4046 relief road. SLS Collection

There are many lines that would have missed out on the dignity of a 'last train', or even a branch and remote siding that would never have seen a passenger train without this man, W.A. 'Cam' Camwell, the charismatic Secretary of the Midlands branch of the SLS. On this occasion one of the last 'Dean Goods' class 0-6-0s in traffic, No 2516, is about to set off from Birmingham (Snow Hill) on 21 May 1955 for the Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors line. This independent line was absorbed by the GWR at the Grouping and it closed to passengers in 1938. With a large depot at the terminus, 1 January 1957 saw it handed over to the Admiralty, but traffic ceased in 1960 and it was officially struck off from 16 April 1965 and handed back to the BRB, which promptly closed it three days later. Both No 2516 and 0-6-0PT No 2144, which worked the CM&DP line itself, had their GWR number positioning restored on their buffer beams for the day, and their smokebox door numbers removed. SLS Collection



An important class in GWR locomotive development was Churchward's 'Star', it being the predecessor to the 'Castles'. Here we find 'Star' class 4-6-0 No 4061 *Glastonbury Abbey* passing Foxhall Junction as it drifts into Didcot station on 11 September 1955 with the SLS 'Star Special' that should have run on 19 June, but was postponed due to an ASLEF strike. Typical of many SLS tours, it started from Birmingham (Snow Hill) and took a circular route via Long Marston and Kemble, taking in a Works visit at Swindon and shed visits at Swindon, Didcot and Oxford, with the locomotive requested because only three examples were still in traffic. In fact No 4061 served until March 1957, but by then the Western Region had already eyed up the Deutsche Bundesbahn 'V200' class diesel-hydraulic locomotives and seen in the future. SLS Collection





Many rural lines struggled for business after World War II as a surplus of ex-military vehicles and the popularity of bus services drained away traffic. All services between Worcester and Leominster were truncated at Bromyard from 15 September 1952, and this is the official closure date of the section on to Leominster. However there appears to have been reluctance to de-commission anything. Consequently on 26 April 1958 the SLS was able to run a 'Last Train' traversing the full length of line, nearly six years after this should not have been possible! The tour was hauled by ex-GWR small Prairie tank No 4571. Unhindered by any other traffic, it has paused at Steen's Bridge for a photographic call. SLS Collection

On 4 January 1959, a cold crisp day blessed with winter sunshine and snow, ex-GWR 0-6-0PT No 6412 (with No 6439 on the other end of the train), awaits departure for Ross-on-Wye from Monmouth (Troy) station with a SLS 'last train' tour. Despite forming the crossroads of several railways, passenger services at this county town bowed out completely just over a decade after nationalisation. The service to Coleford had gone as long ago as the end of 1916, and that to Pontypool Road from 13 June 1955. Finally, the services to Chepstow, where this tour had started, and that to Ross-on-Wye, went from Monday, 5 January 1959, leaving just a goods service to May Hill on the Ross-on-Wye line, until that too went from 6 January 1964. Sections of the route around here were soon adopted by an enlarged A40 road in the mid-1960s, and after a period in industrial use the Monmouth (Troy) station building went on to be preserved, being transferred stone by stone to Winchcombe on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway in the late 1980s.

SLS Collection



On 18 April 1959 former GWR 0-6-0PTs Nos 1635 and 1660 wait at the south end of Ffirth viaduct to return the SLS 'Wrexham Lines' tour from the quarry sidings here on the truncated line to Coed Talon. This remote spot marked the northern outpost of the Western Region, although nearby Wrexham was a more recognisable boundary when the revised regional map was published in 1950, with the GWR's former line north of there leading to Birkenhead passing to the London Midland Region. To the west of Wrexham most of the cobweb of mainly mineral lines in and around Brymbo also went to the Western and these were the subject of this tour which had kicked off with a trip from Wrexham to Pant Halt on the Wynn Hall line, just to the west of Ruabon; it lost its passenger service as long ago as 1915! SLS Collection





Top left: On Saturday, 28 April 1962 small Prairie tank No 4564 is back-to-back with cousin No 5531, with larger tanks, the pair standing adjacent to Bugle station on the Plymouth Railway Circle 'Cornish Mineral lines' tour. This started at Truro, and from Bugle it traversed the Carbis Wharf branch, one of four goods-only lines included in the itinerary where no passenger-carrying vehicles were permitted, so a collection of 11 brake vans was assembled to get round the problem. Bugle is still served by Newquay branch services, except on Summer Saturdays when long-distance trains take preference and a bus covers the intermediate stations. The Carbis Wharf line would survive until official closure at the end of 1989, but by then track rationalisation had moved the physical junction for the branch from just west of Bugle to the loop at Goonbarrow in the east (just beyond the horizon of this view), the branches running as two parallel lines through here, with the former down main being the Carbis Wharf line.

Peter Gray

Left: Goods traffic perhaps offered the main revenue for many branches, and for the two lines extending from the main line station at Kemble, to Tetbury and Cirencester, dieselisation of the lightly-used passenger service using four-wheel AC railbuses came as early as Monday, 2 February 1959. On 5 April 1964 steam returned for one final time when the Gloucestershire Railway Society arranged to tour both lines using ex-Great Western Railway 0-4-2T No 1472 on an auto-train seconded from the nearby Golden Valley service centred on Brimscombe. The tour returns from Tetbury and nears the closed Jackaments Bridge halt to the rear of RAF Kemble. This was also the last train on the Tetbury branch, as no Sunday service meant the last service train had run the previous day. The last service train at Cirencester ran later that day, but goods traffic continued for another 18 months. Roy Hobbs

Above: On 27 March 1965 a tour of threatened lines in Devon and Cornwall was jointly organised by the Plymouth Railway Circle and the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society. Starting at Exeter (St. David's) station, Ivatt tanks Nos 41206 and 41291 worked the 'Exmoor Ranger' to Ilfracombe via the Halwill to Torrington line, with special dispensation given to run on the section to Meeth as it had closed a few weeks earlier. Collett '2251' 0-6-0 No 3205 joined as banker for the steep climb from Braunton on the trip to Ilfracombe, and it then became the train engine for the run back to Exeter via here, Filleigh, and a reversal at Taunton, where it became probably the last engine to turn on the depot as the facilities closed within hours. Only a few steam locomotives were active in the West Country by this time, with the Ivatts being supplied by Exmouth Junction shed and the 'Collett Goods' from Templecombe.

Roy Hobbs

Below: In late summer evening light on 20 September 1964, Hawksworth 4-6-0 'County' No 1011 *County of Chester* has avoided Didcot via the link from Foxhall Junction, and now pulls away from Didcot North Junction on the run back from Swindon Works to Wolverhampton with the SLS-operated 'Farewell to the GWR County Class' tour. Eight of this class of 30 engines saw in the year, eking out a living from Swindon shed, but *County of Chester* was by now the only example left in traffic, and this is likely to have been its last working, although it would not officially be placed in store until November. Roy Hobbs



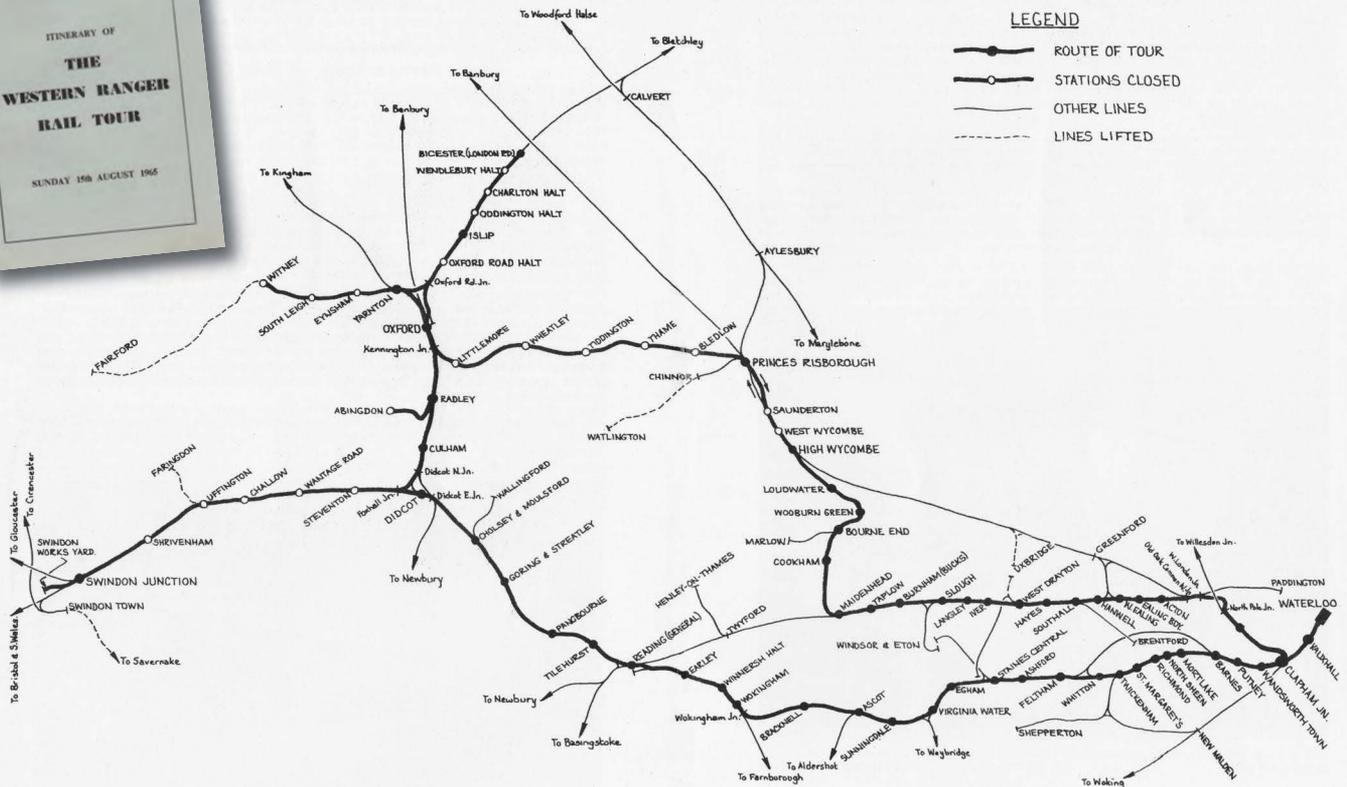
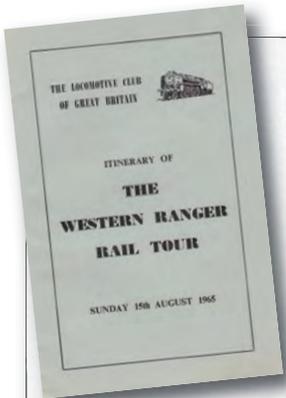


The 'Rambling 56' rail tour on 31 July 1965 was run by Swansea Railway Circle to mark the expected demise of steam in South Wales, with ex-GWR '5600' class No 6643 employed throughout. By this time there had been a significant reduction in the network, with most of the cross-valley routes closed or truncated. One route that survived, at least partially, until the 1980s was between Taffs Well and Aber Junction on the Rhymney line, with the lines here at Penrhos Junction being mid-way. After a trip over Walnut Tree viaduct to the Steetley Dolomite Co siding on the truncated route to Cadoxton, No 6643 draws away with the next leg of the tour, to Senghenydd. By the end of 1967 the route to Caerphilly, off to the right in the distance, and the lines to Steetley Siding and Pontypridd, had closed, and the last train over the remaining lines ran on 23 October 1982. Roy Hobbs

On Sunday, 15 August 1965 Oxford-allocated '5700' class 0-6-0PT No 9773 has arrived at Witney with the LCGB 'Western Ranger' rail tour. Witney had been the terminus of this branch from Yarnton in 1861, and it was again after the continuation on to Fairford (opened in 1873) had closed with the loss of the branch passenger service from 18 June 1962. Thereafter, the rails here in the former passenger station were not normally used by goods trains as they serviced the coal depot adjacent to the station, but only until 2 November 1970. Their railway lost, today the good people of Witney now fight it out with the Chipping Norton set at Charlbury, Finstock, and Handborough stations, on the Cotswold line, for the morning commute to London. Roy Hobbs

By the mid-1960s rail tour itineraries had come a long way from their origins, often foolscap sheets printed by a Roneo duplicator. The one produced by the LCGB for 'The Western Ranger' tour is typical. A5 size with 12-pages, the contents including a route history, timings and a map. Oakwood Visuals Collection

The detailed map for 'The Western Ranger' acknowledged that Witney was now the end of the Fairford branch, and it usefully provides a key to stations closed to passengers. Leaving London (Waterloo) at 09.37 and making for Swindon Works Siding (12.30 to 14.30), other reversals were booked for Abingdon (15.26 to 15.40), Witney (16.35 to 16.50), and Clapham Junction (20.55 to 21.10), with termination at Waterloo at 21.20. Oakwood Visuals Collection



THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN  
 THE WESTERN RANGER RAIL TOUR  
 Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1965.

R.R.C.  
 10/7/65

# 1965 ... steam's final year



## Andrew Wilson recalls the last year of steam motive power on the Western Region

On New Year's Day 1965 there were 585 steam locomotives of GWR parentage at 23 Western Region and ten London Midland Region sheds (see Table One). There were fourteen other ex-GWR locomotives, the three Vale of Rheidol narrow gauge 2-6-2Ts built at Swindon Works during 1923/24, and the eleven '5700' class 0-6-0PTs still at work for London Transport, which had been built at Swindon Works, and also by Kerr Stuart and the North British Locomotive Company. These represented nineteen different classes, yet on New Year's Eve 1965 there were only 57 left, and these belonged to just three classes and were allocated to four sheds. The 35 locomotives of ex-GWR design still in service on British Railways after 3 January 1966 were all allocated to London Midland Region sheds, Tyseley, Wolverhampton (Oxley), Stourbridge, Croes Newydd, and Shrewsbury, and to this can be added the three Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2Ts at Aberystwyth.

The classes still extant at the beginning of January 1965 were the '1600' class 0-6-0PTs, all of which had been built by British Railways, the '2251' class 0-6-0s, both the '2800' and '2884' class 2-8-0s, the '5101' class 2-6-2Ts, the '9400' and '5700/8750' 0-6-0PTs, the '4200/5205' class 2-8-0Ts, the '5600' 0-6-2Ts, the '6100' and '8100' 2-6-2Ts, the '7200' 2-8-2Ts and the '7400' class 0-6-0PTs. Also running devoid of name and often

number plates were some 'Castle', 'Hall', 'Modified Hall', 'Grange' and 'Manor' class 4-6-0s.

By the beginning of 1965 the intended withdrawal of all steam locomotives in South Wales had failed to materialise. The intended influx of Brush Type 4 Co-Co diesel-electrics and English Electric Type 3 Co-Co diesels had arrived in insufficient numbers, and so the remaining '5600' class 0-6-2Ts, '4200/5205' class 2-8-0Ts, and '7200' class 2-8-2Ts were still at work on coal trains up and down the Welsh valleys on empty wagons trains,

On Sunday, 7 March 1965 Collett '2884' class 2-8-0 No 3802 is pictured on Gloucester (Horton Road) shed among the piles of ash on the ash road buffered up to an unidentified BR Standard '9F' 2-10-0. This photograph illustrates the environment in which the shed staff had to struggle to keep the Western Region's steam fleet operating. As December 1965 approached, so the conditions worsened as men sought work away from the railways. Withdrawn from Bristol (Barrow Road) shed in August 1965, 2-8-0 No 3802 was sold to Woodham Brothers' at Barry Docks. Preserved at the Llangollen Railway, No 3802 is one of nine extant '2884' class 2-8-0s. Paul Hatherley

**Table One**  
Western Region sheds open to steam on 1 January 1965

| <i>Shed</i>              | <i>Closure to steam</i> | <i>Shed</i>            | <i>Closure to steam</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aberdare                 | March                   | Oxford                 | December                |
| Bath (Green Park)        | March 1966              | Neath                  | July                    |
| Cardiff East Dock        | August                  | Pontypool Road         | May                     |
| Cardiff Radyr            | July                    | Reading                | January                 |
| Didcot                   | July                    | Severn Tunnel Junction | November                |
| Ebbw Junction            | October                 | Southall               | December                |
| Exmouth Junction         | June                    | Templecombe            | March                   |
| Gloucester (Horton Road) | December                | Treherbert             | February                |
| Leamington               | June                    | Westbury               | August                  |
| Llanelly                 | October                 | Worcester              | December                |
| Old Oak Common           | March                   | Yeovil c               | July                    |
| Oswestry                 | January                 |                        |                         |

**Ex-Western Region sheds, now LMR, open to steam on 1 January 1965**

|                       |               |                      |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Banbury               | October 1966  | Oswestry             | January 1965  |
| Bristol (Barrow Road) | November 1965 | Oxley                | March 1967    |
| Croes Newydd          | June 1967     | Shrewsbury           | March 1967    |
| Leamington            | June 1965     | Stourbridge Junction | July 1966     |
| Machynlleth           | December 1966 | Tyseley              | November 1966 |



Allocated to the former GWR shed at Tyseley, but now under London Midland Region control, 'Modified Hall' No 7908 *Henshall Hall* was no stranger to the Stratford upon Avon to Bristol via Cheltenham line, and here we see No 7908 working the 1M34 service, made up of mainly Stanier corridor stock. Having had its name and number plates removed for safe keeping this 'Modified Hall' would be withdrawn in October 1965, and within a month was sold to Cashmore's yard in Newport and cut-up in the November. Michael Mensing/RCTS Collection

BR-built 'Modified Hall' No 7927 *Willington Hall*, one of Oxford shed's allocation from November to December 1963, now devoid of its smokebox numberplate (replaced by a chalked-on number) passes through Hatton station in July 1964 with a down empty stock train. Withdrawn in December 1965 and sold to Woodham Brothers' yard at Barry, No 7927 would not be cut-up. Instead, the engine has become a donor for the new-build 'Grange', No 6880 *Betton Grange*, among others. Colour-Rail.com/9093



engineering workings, trains serving steel and tin-plate plants, as well as on demolition and track-lifting duties. The eight-coupled tank engines were also occasionally used on coal trains to Salisbury and the ironstone workings from Banbury.

The longer-distance iron workings to and from the Banbury area were still reliant on the dwindling number of '2800/2884' class 2-8-0s, BR Standard '9F' class 2-10-0s, and 'Grange' and 'Hall' class 4-6-0s. With so many of the region's indigenous steam locomotives withdrawn, the operating departments of the Western Region became adept at borrowing steam locomotives from far and wide. Eastern Region '9F' 2-10-0s were turning up on the iron-ore workings, while London Midland Region steam, including 'Britannia' Pacifics from Banbury and the ex-Great Central sheds, were purloined to cover parcels and freight duties.

By far the largest single class of locomotive on the Western Region in January 1965 was the ubiquitous '4F'-rated pannier tanks of both Collett and Hawksworth origins. On 1 January there were 166 of the '5700/8750' class and 32 of the younger '9400' class allocated to most of the sheds still operating steam. These useful tank engines were equally at home on shed-pilot duties, station-pilot turns, local passenger services, and pick-up goods work.

In South Wales, Tondy shed used its allocation on the Porthcawl branch to the limestone quarries at Cornelly as well as on shunting duties at the many local collieries. Other South Wales sheds also used their



**Oxley-allocated BR 'Britannia' Pacific No 70045, running without its *Lord Rowallan* nameplates, is seen in charge of a Summer Saturday express near Winchcombe. The use of these Pacifics was not unusual in 1965 as the Western Region barely had enough locomotives to cover the ordinary steam duties, and so summer extras often meant borrowing engines from elsewhere. No 70045 moved on from Oxley to Banbury at the beginning of October 1965, but was transferred to Carlisle (Kingmoor) in January 1966. Michael Mensing/RCTS Collection**

pannier tanks on similar trains. The Cardiff East Dock engines were also engaged on colliery and trip working. St. Philip's Marsh shed, Bristol, however, employed its 0-6-0PTs in the main on shunting duties at the large Stoke Gifford yards.

The empty carriage duties allocated to Old Oak Common remained very much a preserve of the '5700/8750' and '9400' class 0-6-0PTs until the shed closed, despite the arrival of a number of North British Type 2 B-B diesel-hydraulics, with five of the Collett design and seven of the Hawksworth type at work until the shed closed in March 1965 when the remaining Old Oak Common steam

locomotives were either transferred to Southall or withdrawn. The final months of steam working from Old Oak Common became more and more difficult as the four-turntable roundhouse was partially demolished to allow work on the new diesel depot to begin.

The Severn Tunnel Junction-allocated '5101' class 2-6-2Ts were still used as bankers through the Severn Tunnel. These were arduous turns requiring bouts of all-out effort, followed by periods of inactivity until the next train whistled up for a banker.

As 1964 drew to a close and 1965 began there was only one Top Link or Class 1

express train still booked for regular steam haulage — the trains between Bournemouth and the north of England. Two were booked for Bulleid Pacific haulage between Bournemouth and Oxford. A Friday evening extra from Birmingham (Snow Hill) to Paddington and the Sunday 00.05 Manchester to Plymouth service between Wolverhampton and Bristol which was routed over what is now the preserved Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Railway to Cheltenham relied on ex-GWR motive power. The last two trains were among the last regular workings of the 'Castles' allocated to Oxley shed. The inter-regional trains from Bournemouth also

**Cardiff East Dock shed is seen on 31 July 1965 with four '5700/8750' class pannier tanks and a lone '5600' 0-6-2T outside the 1931-built shed building. Officially closed in August 1965, the shed had, since the closure of Cardiff (Canton) shed in September 1962, been the principal steam depot in the city, and for 2½ yrs was home to 'Castles', 'Halls', 'Granges', and 'Manors', in addition to 0-6-0PTs, 2-6-0s, 2-8-0s, 2-8-0Ts, and 2-10-0s. After closure there were only three sheds open to steam in South Wales — Newport (Ebbw Junction) and Llanelly, which closed in October, and Severn Tunnel Junction, which lasted until November 1965. Roy Hobbs**



The '8750' and '9400' class pannier tanks allocated to Old Oak Common at the beginning of 1965 remained hard at work on the Paddington empty coaching stock duties until the shed closed to steam in March. On Sunday, 6 February 1965 '8750' class No 9789 runs into Paddington with a rake of empty coaches that will form a down working later in the day. Transferred to Oxford in April 1965, withdrawal came in December. Sold to Ward's of Briton Ferry, cutting-up of No 9789 took place in April 1966. Colour-Rail.com/307352

provided work as far as Banbury and sometimes Leicester for the 'Halls' and 'Modified Halls' that were allocated to Oxford.

The 'Castles' suddenly ceased work on these trains when Nos 5063 *Earl Baldwin*, 7011 *Banbury Castle*, 7019 *Fowey Castle*, 7023 *Penrice Castle* and 7024 *Powis Castle* of Oxley depot were withdrawn, along with Nos 5014 *Goodrich Castle*, 7013 *Windsor Castle* and 7014 *Caerhays Castle* of Tyseley shed. This was not, however, the end of steam as the former 'Castle' turns were invariably worked by 'Halls', 'Modified Halls', and 'Grange' class 4-6-0s, and borrowed 'Britannia' Pacifics — not diesels!

The summer inter-regional expresses between Bournemouth, Oxford, and the Midlands and the north of England were the swansong of many of the remaining 'Modified



Approaching Cheltenham on the line from Stratford-upon Avon with summer 1965 working IM39 is 'Grange' class 4-6-0 No 6827, minus its number and *Llanfrechfa Grange* nameplates, in typically poor external condition of the period. Allocated to the London Midland Region shed at Wolverhampton (Oxley), this engine would be condemned on 25 September at the end of the summer timetable. Michael Mensing/RCTS Collection





During 1965 it was very rare to find a Great Western 'Grange' in ex-Works condition, but on 26 September of that year Severn Tunnel Junction turned out No 6859 *Yiewsley Grange*, cleaned to perfection, to work the second day of the SLS/RCTS 'Farewell to Steam in West Wales' rail tour. The locomotive is seen getting away from Swansea (High Street) at 10.00am heading for Carmarthen and Fishguard Harbour via Milford Haven. Allocated to Severn Tunnel Junction from Cardiff East Dock in July, withdrawal came on 18 November 1965. Colour-Rail.com/309034

Halls' and 'Granges'. By now in appalling external condition, without names and number plates as they had been removed to stop them being stolen, they were still capable of timing these trains, providing the fireman was prepared to bend his back and put up with the increasingly rough rides. Both these classes of locomotive were also used as station pilots at Worcester and Oxford to cover diesel failures on the main lines.

Despite the closure of Old Oak Common to steam in March 1965, the official end of steam at Paddington did not come until 11 June of that year when Gloucester's No 7029 *Clun Castle* took out the station's last scheduled steam-hauled train, the 16.15 service to Banbury via Bicester. Once Nos 5042, 7022 and 7034 were withdrawn in

June 1965 No 7029 *Clun Castle* was the only engine of the class left in service and the 16.15 service was often worked by a 'Hall', 'Modified Hall' or 'Grange', so No 7029's appearance was a poignant reminder of steam's heyday. The following day, however, it was used to work an excursion from Cheltenham to Weston-super-Mare, running through to Taunton for servicing. Two days later it was on a freight turn to Bristol.

During 1965 *Clun Castle* was in demand for special workings and was recorded on eight rail tours, one of which was the Western Region's official 'Farewell to Steam' tour from Paddington to Bristol and Gloucester (Eastgate). Its last British Railways working came on New Year's Day 1966 when it powered the 17.00 service from Gloucester to

Cheltenham, despite officially being withdrawn on 31 December 1965. In January 1966 it was bought for £2,500 by Patrick Whitehouse, and despite being privately-owned it continued to work goods trains between Bordesley and Tyseley well into 1966.

No 7029 *Clun Castle* was not the only privately-owned former GWR locomotive to work specials and scheduled goods trains during 1965, as 2-6-2T No 4555, 0-4-2T No 1420, 0-6-0PT No 6435, and '2251' class 0-6-0 No 3205 were all seen in action before being delivered to Totnes and the embryonic Dart Valley Railway. After being given an overhaul at Swindon Works, which was completed in March, No 4079 *Pendennis Castle*, now in full GWR livery, was also used on four rail tours.

On Friday, 11 June 1965 the last scheduled steam-hauled train to depart from Paddington, the 16.15 service to Banbury, is seen passing Royal Oak station in the charge of 'Castle' class 4-6-0 No 7029 *Clun Castle*. The train attracted considerable media attention as there were only four 'Castles' still in traffic at this time. *Clun Castle* was the best of them, and she turned in a good performance. Officially withdrawn in December 1965, *Clun Castle* was bought for £2,400 by Patrick Whitehouse in 1966. R.C. Riley/Transport Treasury





Saturday, 3 April 1965 finds one of Oxford shed's 'Grange' class 4-6-0s, No 6841, in charge of a lengthy fitted freight as it passes through Oxford. Originally named *Marlas Grange*, it would be condemned at the beginning of June 1965, leaving Oxford with only three members of the class by December. Arguably the best of the Swindon mixed-traffic 4-6-0s, World War II stopped the building of more than the eighty that were put into traffic. Colour-Rail.com/14871

December 1965 saw the Western Region's steam stock reduced to just 55 locomotives belonging to just seven classes (see *Table Two*,

*page 112*). Of these, nineteen had been built by British Railways, leaving just 36 built by the GWR. Only four sheds were still open to

steam, Oxford (81F), Bath Green Park (82F), Worcester (85A), and Gloucester's Horton Road (85B). Bath Green Park had come under

Collett '5101' class 2-6-2T No 4100 stands between duties on Gloucester (Horton Road) shed on 7 March 1965. In unlined green livery with the large heraldic device on the side tanks No 4100 would remain in traffic until November 1965, having arrived there in mid-1957. Stored at Gloucester from December 1965 until January 1966 it was scrapped at Buttigieg's yard, Newport, during the following month. Paul Hatherley



Table Two

Former GWR steam locomotives in service on the Western Region on 31 December 1965

'8750' 0-6-0PTs

3675 (85B), 3677 (81F), 3681 (82F), 3758 (85B), 3775 (85B), 4680 (85A), 4689 (85B), 9626 (85A), 9672 (85B), 9680 (85B), 9773 (81F), 9789 (81F)

'Hall' 4-6-0s

4920 (81F), 5971 (81F), 6923 (81F), 6932 (81F), 6937 (81F), 6951 (85A), 6952 (85A), 6953 (81F), 6956 (81F)

'Modified Hall' 4-6-0

6959 (81F), 6967 (81F), 6984 (81F), 6990 (81F), 6991 (81F), 6993 (81F), 6998 (81F), 6999 (81F), 7904 (81F), 7907 (81F), 7914 (81F), 7919 (81F), 7922 (81F), 7924 (81F), 7925 (81F), 7927 (81F)

'6100' 2-6-2T

6106 (81F), 6111 (81F), 6126 (81F), 6134 (81F), 6135 (81F), 6136 (81F), 6141 (81F), 6145 (81F), 6147(81F), 6156 (81F), 6160 (81F), 6165 (81F)

'Grange' 4-6-0

6847 (85A), 6848 (85B), 6849 (81F)

'Castle' 4-6-0:

7029 (85B)

'Manor' 4-6-0

7808 (85B), 7829 (85B)

Shedcodes: 81F Oxford, 82F Bath Green Park, 85A Worcester, 85B Gloucester (Horton Road)



With the end of Western Region steam only a matter of days away, a very down-at-heel 'Modified Hall', No 6999, originally named *Capel Dewi Hall*, eases through Oxford station on Tuesday, 28 December 1965 in charge of a parcels working. No 6999's final duty was to stand here as station pilot on 3 January 1966. Upon withdrawal it was stored at Oxford until April 1966, and after being sold to Cashmore's yard in South Wales was hauled there dead. Within a month of arriving it had been cut-up and sent to the South Wales furnaces for recycling. Colour-Rail.com/14962

the Western Region as a result of the regional boundary changes of August 1950 when it was transferred from the Southern Region, and remained open until March 1966 to allow a skeleton service on the Somerset & Dorset lines until replacement bus services were put in place.

Western Region steam was officially scheduled to end on 31 December 1965, but because of the vagaries of the calendar the actual date was 3 January 1966. On this date at Oxford, '8750' class 0-6-0PT No 9773 was active in Rewley Road and 'Modified Hall'

No 6999 was the station pilot. Another 'Modified Hall', No 6998, with its *Burton Agnes Hall* nameplates reinstated, was cleaned to work the region's last steam-hauled working, the 10.30am Bournemouth to York service, which it took forward from Oxford to Banbury.

This was not the end of the GWR locomotive story as a number of locomotives worked on into 1966 from the London Midland Region sheds of Tyseley (2A), Oxley (2B), Stourbridge (2C), Croes Newydd (6C) and Shrewsbury (6D). In all, 32 standard-

gauge former GWR-designed locomotives, thirty '8750' 0-6-0PTs, and two '5600' class 0-6-2Ts soldiered on with the last in traffic, No 4646, not withdrawn from Tyseley until November. This just left the Vale of Rehidol 2-6-2Ts in capital stock, and they were to remain British Rail's only steam locomotives until the line and its stock was sold in 1989.

With Swindon, like the other surviving main-line Works, unable to cope with the numbers of withdrawn locomotives, the December 1965 withdrawals, apart from Nos 7029 *Clun Castle*, 6106, 7808 *Cookham*



On Sunday, 7 March 1965, Collett '8750' class 0-6-0PT No 4698 is pictured on Gloucester (Horton Road) shed, with classmate No 9711 in the background, around the time it was transferred to Bristol (Barrow Road) shed. Here it would remain at work until July, when condemned. Yet another ex-Great Western design to be sold to Cashmore's in Newport for cutting up, it was sent on its last journey in September, and had been reduced to piles of scrap metal within five weeks. Paul Hatherley

Cashmore's scrapyards at Newport, Monmouthshire, cut up a high proportion of the Western Region's withdrawn steam locomotives in 1965. Here we see 'Hall' No 6906 *Chicheley Hall*, which had been withdrawn from Banbury shed in April 1965 and arrived at Cashmore's in the June. Cutting-up began almost at once, with the removal of the front buffer beam and footplating. Also in the picture is a BR Standard '4MT' 4-6-0, while the yard is cluttered with the detritus of locomotive parts — cylinder castings, buffers, wheels, and boiler tubes. A. Wilson Collection





Collett '6100' class 2-6-2T No 6111 runs into Oxford at the head of a goods working on Tuesday, 28 December 1965 on what would be one of its final revenue-earning duties. Officially withdrawn on 31 December it would be cut up at Cashmore's yard in Newport. Colour-Rail.com/14962

*Manor*, and 6998 *Burton Agnes Hall*, which were bought privately, all were purchased by scrapyards. All the '8750' 0-6-0PTs went to Cashmore's of Newport, except for No 9789 which went to Ward's of Briton Ferry. The 'Halls' were all sold to Cashmore's apart from No 4920, which was the oldest in traffic, having been built in March 1929, which found its way to Woodham Brothers' yard in Barry. The 'Modified Halls' were sold to two yards, with most going to Cashmore's and the

remainder, Nos 6984, 6990 and 7927, to Woodham's. All the '6100' 2-6-2Ts were cut up by Cashmore's who also disposed of 'Manor' No 7829.

Of the 1965 withdrawals no less than 25 have escaped the cutter's torch, and apart from the four bought from traffic, 21 survive, thanks to being sold to Woodham's. Of these, eight are 'Manors', Nos 7802 *Bradley Manor*, 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, 7819 *Hinton Manor*, 7820 *Dinmore Manor*, 7821 *Ditcheat Manor*,

7822 *Foxcote Manor*, 7827 *Lydham Manor* and 7828 *Odney Manor*, the first three being built by the GWR. Also there is one '2884' class 2-8-0, No 3855, four '8750' class 0-6-0PTs, Nos 4612, 3738, 9681 and 9682, one 'Hall', No 4920 *Dumbleton Hall*, two 'Modified Halls', Nos 6990 *Witherslack Hall*, and 7927 *Willington Hall* which has become a donor engine for other restorations and new-build projects, and five '5101' class 2-6-2Ts, Nos 4110, 4121, 4144, 4160 and 4160.

**Of the many former Great Western locomotives that went to Woodham's scrapyard at Barry Docks when steam ended on the Western Region in December 1965, many were saved from the cutter's torch by preservation groups. In this scene at Woodham's yard at that time we see a line-up of former GWR locomotives awaiting disposal or a stay of execution.** Rex Kennedy



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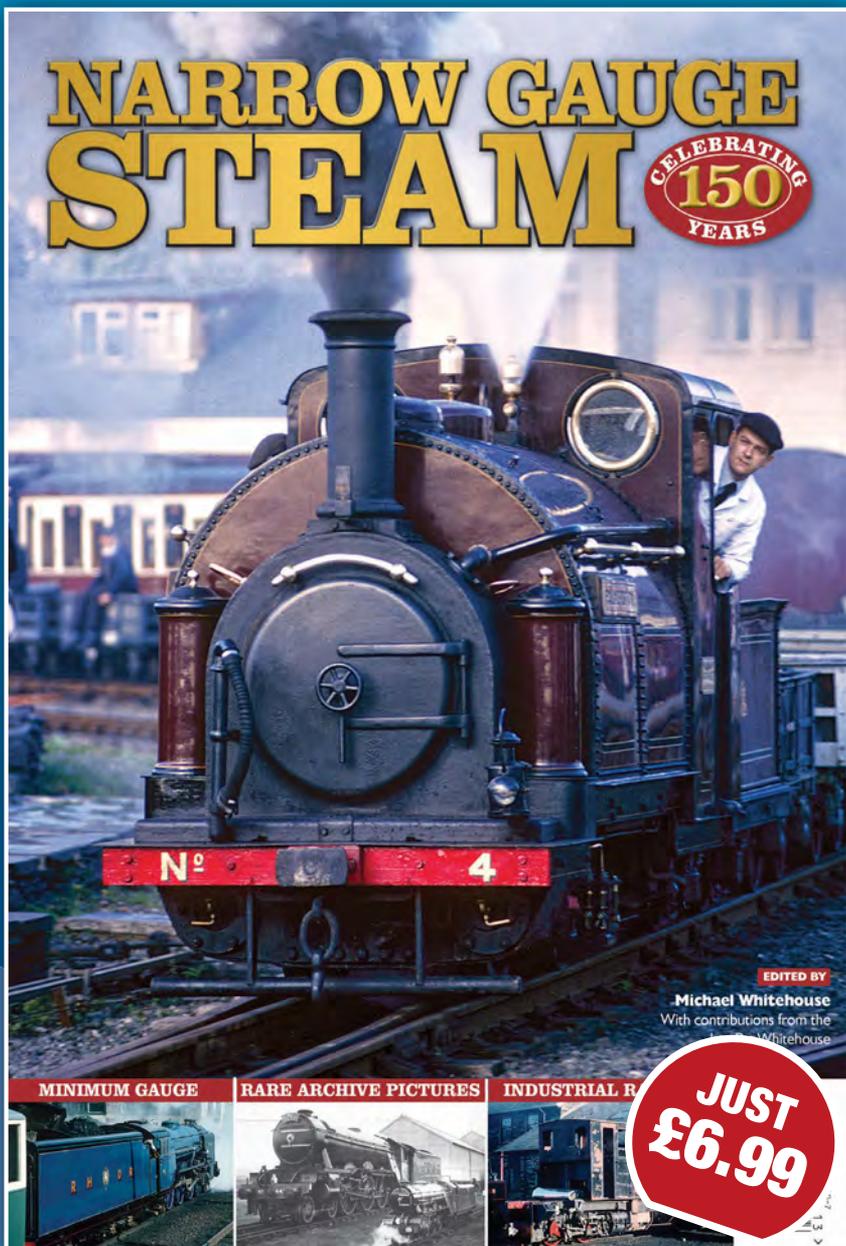


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