

The Full Works

The early 1960s period was the heyday of special railtour trains for loco-spotters, arranged to visit the principal railway workshops and sheds at bargain excursion fare rates and often using unusual or interesting motive power. Forthcoming trips were advertised in the small ads section of "Trains Illustrated" magazine and a stamped addressed envelope brought forth full details and a booking form. Many of the tours from the London area were organized by Ian Allan Ltd, with their "Locospotters Club" books and badges image active since the early 1950s, but other groups large and small also participated; in our area the Home Counties Railway Society (HCRS) were also quite prolific. In the period 1960 to 1963 I visited that wonderful mecca which was Swindon first and last, and in between participated in one trip to each of Ashford, Eastleigh, Doncaster and Derby. I never did get to go to that other well known place, Crewe either then or since its more recent reincarnation as a Heritage Centre!

Paddington to Swindon, Sunday 9th October 1960

This HCRS outing was scheduled to use the then only months old "last steam locomotive built for BR", no. 92220 "Evening Star" for a fast run down the GWR main line. It was a special pre Birthday treat for me, accompanied by my father; we travelled up to London early by the 9.08am railcar from Staines West - at this time our local branch line still provided a Sunday service! The weather could not have been worse; it seemed not to get properly light all day, more reminiscent of the depths of winter than early autumn, and there was a constant drizzle interspersed with periods of heavier rain. We peered out of steamed up windows passing Old Oak Common on the suburban train into Paddington, hoping to catch a glimpse of "our" locomotive being made ready, but it was nowhere to be seen.

Due to the late arrival of the excursion stock at the platform, and the weather, it was not possible to inspect the motive power before departure; we quickly took up our allotted seats in a dank and cold compartment, again with steamed-up and well begrimed windows. One of our fellow travellers produced some old rags from his duffle bag and tried to clean an area of the glass outside to enable clearer vision, but with limited success.

Departure was unexpectedly prompt at 10.40 and there followed a most exhilarating run down the main line, so much so that we did not think that this small wheeled 2-10-0, basically a mere heavy freight engine type despite its green livery, nameplates and polished copper embellishments, could possibly manage such a turn of speed. Surely it must have been found necessary to substitute something else - a Castle or a King, maybe - at the last minute?

After just one and a half hours we halted at Swindon Junction station then took another 25 minutes or so of anticipation crawling very slowly into the works yard itself, arriving at 12.35. We detrained to ground level as was then customary by means of portable wooden steps placed at each carriage door. Sure enough "Evening Star" was there at the head, shrouded in damp steam; most of the tour participants thronged around it in the rain. We had certainly gained the experience that, despite our doubts, this BR standard type was no mean "express" performer! Photography, though attempted, was futile due to the miserable light level; I still have the few pathetic 620-sized negatives we exposed that day, comprising grey outline shapes of locomotives completely devoid of any detail.

We tramped around inside the workshops trying to dry out a bit, encountering engines in all states of repair and disrepair, attempting to positively identify some of the more stripped down examples and wondering whether these should properly count as having been "seen" in our spotting log. Swindon at that time was still turning out major overhauls in pristine ex works condition in the traditional manner, with perfect green paintwork fully lined out and complemented by burnished brass and copper work, even on the lowly prairie tanks and 14xx class 0-4-2 tanks. Several of that weeks' output stood outside, some of the "Halls" and "Castles" parked cab to cab awaiting their tenders, still being dealt with in a different department. The rain ran quickly off their shiny gloss painted boilers in rivulets. In stark contrast were those locomotives which had obviously arrived on their last journey, some a considerable time previously, and awaited only the attention of

the breakers; this was before the policy of selling scrap locos to outside contractors was widely adopted, and each main workshop still dealt exclusively with its own - a considerable backlog was clearly building up with the increasing pace of modernization.

I had hoped to encounter some very old or quaint looking machines, and there were indeed a few of these, notably one of the last "Dukedog" 4-4-0s, 9015 and a strange assortment not listed in our "ABC" booklets but which were claimed to be earmarked for possible preservation (though at the time nothing could be assumed certain in that respect); no's 4003 "Lode Star", 4073 "Caerphilly Castle" and Dean Goods 2516, this last being incongruously paired with a huge ROD type tender from a scrapped 30xx series Robinson GC design 2-8-0. All these looked rather woebegone, not yet having been given any restoration treatment. 2516 carried the name "Puffing Billy" chalked on the centre wheel splasher! Also present was famous 4-4-0 "City of Truro" (then briefly in 3440 guise, between its 3717 periods) stored under cover unlike the others and looking quite smart as it had been working until recently, since its restoration in 1957.

Nearby in and around the stock shed we found three of the elegant original series streamlined diesel railcars, no's 4 (the one later preserved), 8 and 17, also the little outside cylindered tank locos 1361, 64 and 5 and 1371, the last a pannier type we had seen previously shunting on Weymouth Quay. Some of these were in steam and all seemed in good condition. Various diesels including both the large and small "Warship" main-line types and several new 350hp and 200hp shunters were in evidence, though by no means dominant. One of the large shunters was under test, and filled the whole workshop with acrid choking diesel fumes, which we thought an extremely unhealthy practice and not at all as pleasant as the typical atmosphere of the steam sheds! The rest of the working contingent of Swindon running shed that day comprised a couple of 0-4-2 tanks, 1410 and 1426, exchanging their weekly stints on the Cirencester auto trains; several 16xx and numerous 57xx panniers, 63xx 2-6-0s and 28xx 2-8-0s, 3 of the 2251 0-6-0s, 3 9F 2-10-0s in plain black freight livery and my first two "small auto" panniers 7421 and 27, presumably for the Highworth branch workings. There was a sprinkling of Standard 4-6-0s and 2-6-2 tanks, some cheekily out-shopped in fully lined green passenger livery - a recent Swindon practice though, one suspects, probably not an officially sanctioned policy.

Returning to the drear scrapping lines, these were found to be dominated by various sorts of pannier tank, again, as might be expected numerous 57xx examples plus five of the rarer 54, 64 and 74xx types. I was however surprised by the sheer number of very modern machines now condemned; we counted no less than 33 examples of the large 84 and 94xx variety awaiting their fate, none more than eleven years old, and with many of their brethren still very active in the London area, plus seven of the 16xx type, even newer, and a solitary 15xx, no. 1509. Half a dozen 4575 prairie tanks, and only one of the earlier straight tank version, 4556, by now quite rare, also all the non-standard large prairies 3100, 1 & 2 together with an early 51xx, no. 5103 stood silent and rusting in the rain. Even more depressing was the sight of two condemned "Castles" 4084 (Aberystwyth) and 5009 (Shrewsbury), both old favourites at Paddington; how are the mighty fallen!

Thus was my spotting log for this hectic first visit to a major steam railway workshops complex, and by this time we were thoroughly fed up with the incessant cold and very damp weather. Drying out as best we could on the 3.45pm return departure hauled once more by "Evening Star" I was annoyed to learn, comparing notes with other travellers, that we had completely missed a further tranche of some 30 or so condemned locomotives in the traditional Swindon "scrapping area" west of the main works, where most of the engines were eventually to be dismantled. These included a couple of the older series 53xx moguls, some of the old steam braked 67xx shunters and several more 4575 prairie tanks.

Someone even claimed that the two Welshpool & Llanfair line narrow gauge tanks 822 and 823 were stored minus name and number plates in a corner of one of the workshop buildings, but this is unlikely since they were both reported as being at Oswestry at this time, though eventually returned to their old haunts a couple of years later under the auspices of the W&LLR Preservation Society. Obviously we were somewhat lacking in the seasoned spotters' techniques of covering all possible areas of interest in the limited time available completely

undeterred by the weather; an improvement was called for next time! The return journey was somewhat slower, arrival back at Paddington being around 5.35pm.

Paddington - Swindon, Sunday 8th December 1963

Three years on from our original visit and a contrast in all sorts of ways. The weather it has to be said was different: instead of incessant rain it was now freezing cold with patchy fog, once again ideal conditions for some very mediocre photography! The locomotive hauling our train was again a mere “standard” type, but no ordinary Western Region one this time as the HCRS excelled themselves to procure from BR the use of a “Clan” pacific, no. 72006 “Clan Mackenzie”, never before seen in these southern parts, brought specially all the way down from Carlisle during the previous week. This caused something of a sensation in enthusiast circles at the time and was a major coup for the tour organizers; that it was possible readily demonstrates the amazing degree of helpful compliance then exhibited by BR management, soon to disappear in the dark days towards the end of steam traction and for some years beyond. On this occasion I got together a small school party for the trip (Paul Chamberlain and the two Hooker brothers) and again we hit a quiet Sunday morning Paddington early, albeit having to travel via the Southern to Waterloo as a result of the recent demise of the Sunday service on our local Staines West branch line. There was not a lot going on at the GW terminus and little of what there was involved steam locos, but we were amazed to observe and photograph familiar old “tanner-one” prairie tank 6142, a type by now quite uncommon in the London area, struggling valiantly to bring the empty stock of the “Cornish Riviera” into platform 2 just on a quarter past ten.....



Only a couple of minutes later, our stock - mainly of Hawksworth GW design and all in maroon livery by now - arrived alongside in platform 1 behind a clean no. 6937 “Coyningham Hall”. A well groomed 72006 soon emerged from the wintry gloom at the further end and coupled up ready for a prompt departure at 10.40am. Along the first few miles there were many spectators at the lineside, some straying dangerously onto adjacent tracks, waiting to see our special locomotive pass despite the bitter cold and poor visibility. Unfortunately for them and for us, 72006 for some reason made very heavy weather of the journey down the main line. Along the way several steam locomotives were noted still at work, including a couple of panniers engaged in shunting at Acton and Hayes, SR mogul 31622 on a Guildford train at Reading South and grubby no. 7817 “Garsington Manor” as the pilot at the main station there. 9F 2-10-0 no. 92240 was glimpsed on a freight in the sidings by Reading West Junction, and modern pannier 1636 fussed around at Didcot. By dint of the lethargic running 72006 succeeded in lopping about 20 minutes off our already tight schedule to visit Swindon Works; we compensated by tucking into an early lunch from the contents of our duffle bags before disembarking from the train at around 12.45 down the usual wooden stepladder.

We jostled with the assembled throng trying to obtain some kind of souvenir photo of the “Clan” pacific, by now standing shrouded in a mixture of damp steam and the prevailing mist; the only clear view to be had was of the front of the locomotive.....



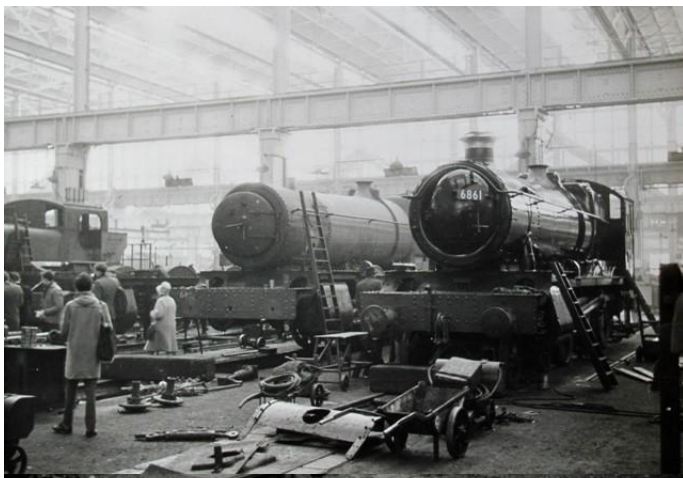
I was very disappointed with this side view at the time, but after more the passage of more than forty years the variety and dress style of the tour participants is probably more interesting than the locomotive.....



Our next port of call was inevitably the scrap line at the westernmost end of the works complex. The condemned contingent was smaller and more diverse than previously; many locos were by now being sold straight out of service to contractors for breaking up - especially in South Wales. There were still quantities of 57xx and 94xx panniers of course, augmented by several examples of 28xx 2-8-0s, 63xx moguls and 56xx 0-6-2 tanks, but sadly now also numerous "Halls" and one "Castle", no. 5013. Also present were several interesting one offs; 2-8-0 tank 5201, Birmingham area large prairie tank 8103 and little 0-4-2 tank 1468. In the fog it was difficult to be sure we had not missed anything here!



Returning to the main works complex, seeking refuge from the bitterly cold air we were surprised and heartened to see so many main-line steam overhauls in progress, apparently to the same splendid old standards, alongside the numerous diesel hydraulics which by now I was not bothering to record in my log. Steam was obviously alive and well in some parts of the Western region even if becoming quite rare in the London area. Here were several Granges, Halls and Manors together with BR standard 73xxx 4-6-0s, receiving the full traditional Swindon treatment, still including a smart lined green paint job at this late date.



Lesser breeds such as 41xx and 61xx prairie tanks seemed to be given either a plain green or plain but very glossy black finish at random, a couple of examples of each being noted. Surprisingly, pannier tanks of both 57xx and 94xx varieties were also still being repaired, presumably only the very best of those that had come in, the rest being consigned for storage or scrapping.

We were lucky to see all this in progress, as we read only a few weeks later that steam overhaul work finally ceased quite abruptly in the New Year following; we had gazed unknowingly upon some of the very last

products to pass through a long line and tradition, and felt overawed and privileged to have been there. One curiosity found tucked away in a corner caused considerable puzzling amongst the spotting fraternity, being identified only as No.67 “NCB no. 2 Durham Area” This was an 0-6-2 tank of Taff Vale Railway origin, presumably here for some specialized repair skill beyond the National Coal Board’s capability.

Outside the front of the shops stood several once proud “Kings” and “Castles”, bereft of name and number plates and some also having lost their brass safety valve covers. King 6000 himself stood forlorn without a tender, allegedly condemned due to a cracked frame, its proposed replacement in preservation being 6025. I was thus surprised that a locomotive masquerading as 6000 eventually appeared in restored condition, and I wonder if it is in reality one of the others we saw that day, as the WR did not seem to be averse to quietly swapping the identities of its engines from time to time! Nos. 6010 and 6011 were also found stored nearby along with several more “Granges” and assorted panniers. It was not easy to tell whether any of these would be lucky enough to be taken into the works once more; it seemed likely that most would not.



Next we visited the running sheds, where “Granges” and “Halls” predominated, but we were surprised to find no less than 5 “Counties”, nos. 1013 and 1024 in steam and 1012, 28 & 20 dead, the latter with all plates removed. Prairie tank 4161 was obviously just returned to traffic from the works, in gleaming black livery. Collett 0-6-0s 2232 & 2291 and panniers 1658 & 1664 were also present though not in steam.

Behind the shed, the storage area over towards the Gloucester line yielded more interesting items including the last of the non-auto 0-4-2 tanks, very rusty no. 5815, a

local engine stored since its duties on the Highworth branch had ceased, and looking a likely preservation candidate (though not to be). Here also was one of the last GW railcars W23, still in faded red and cream livery but very woebegone with most windows broken.

We found long lost familiar old London tank no. 5410, two further "Counties" 1006 & 1027 and the last condemned 45xx small prairie, 4507.

The latter's classmate 4555 was stabled separately and alone on the main turntable, already assured of a better fate in preservation though still in very dirty BR colours, waiting its turn in the works for a contract refurbishment. 0-4-2 tank 1420 which we had noted earlier was also said to be in safe hands; both these of course ended up on the Dart Valley Railway in Devon.

Before returning for the train home, at the head of which 72006 now stood waiting patiently after being turned and serviced, we looked in quickly at the newly opened GWR museum in the chapel across the road. It was good to see all the veterans we had noted in 1960 had now been taken to this place of safety, under cover, after a good clean up and painting and polishing session in the workshops. I was pleased to note that they had managed to find a much more suitable tender to accompany the Dean Goods engine!

Departing homeward at 3.40pm, the "Clan" put up a much more spirited performance on the return journey to London, largely unappreciated by its tired patrons on this cold dark December evening, and arriving five minutes ahead of schedule at 5.25pm.

A very detailed original log of this trip was sent to me by John Tyler of St. Albans, supplementing and confirming my bare list of numbers and bringing the day back to life vividly after 30 years. However like myself he also omitted to record the many diesel locomotives we must have encountered!



Charing Cross to Ashford and Eastleigh, Wednesday 12th April 1961.

This epic excursion in the best traditions of Ian Allan Ltd. could not possibly be missed. Not only did it offer one of the last opportunities to see many familiar old friends of L&SWR origin (and some not so familiar LB&SCR and SE&CR ones) which were fast vanishing, but was to utilize some of these as motive power; it also involved an unusual cross country journey. From London to Ashford the train was scheduled to be double headed by a pair of vintage 4-4-0s "on their very last journey to the scrap yard". Imagine our disappointment therefore when despite early application we were informed that all seats had already been sold! This was for the originally announced date of 5th April. A few days later came a further letter saying that due to enormous demand, a second complete train with near identical routing and motive power had been arranged for the

following week, still fortunately within our Easter school holidays, and that we were definitely booked on this. It seems that the pair of 4-4-0s was to be miraculously resurrected for the second trip! Once again, this gesture on BR's part illustrates the generally helpful attitude then prevailing.

Thus it was that myself and school friend Nigel Walters arrived at Charing Cross station towards the end of the morning commuter rush, to find a short train of about 8 vehicles of Bulleid stock in which we were allocated seats in the leading corridor brake second - a pity they could not have mustered an older rake of say Maunsell era carriages, more in keeping with the motive power. The pair of groomed and gleaming black 4-4-0s backed down across Hungerford Bridge admired by a throng of spectators including a few bowler hatted businessmen, but we had a very restricted view due to the narrow platform and the crowd of enthusiasts which congregated at the end of it. We had L&SWR T9 class loco no. 30117 which had apparently been brought out of storage at Eastleigh specially and had also worked the previous week's train, leading SE&CR D1 rebuild 31749. They made such a fine sight that many participants seemed reluctant to board the train, despite frantic whistling and waving of arms by the guard and station staff!

Departing at 8.52am, as befitting these elegant and elderly locomotives progress down the main line to Ashford was leisurely and gentle. Along the way we spotted some of the D1's stable mates, nos. 31019 (which had worked the previous excursion) and 31067 of the very similar E1 class both in steam on standby or pottering around with empty stock workings, though we sensed they were probably not long for this world. Sharing stock movement in the south east London suburbs that busy weekday morning was Wainwright H tank no. 31305. There was also a heavy volume of freight traffic on the move around the complex junctions at Hither Green and Chislehurst, and our stately progress enabled us to log several more interesting locos; E4 tank 32565, SE&C C class 0-6-0 31690 and Brighton C2X 0-6-0 32550 together with quite a number of the usual SR moguls. Another H tank waited with the Westerham Branch auto set at Dunton Green and yet more examples of this type were obviously still very active as we passed Tonbridge station and sheds, and at Paddock Wood on the Hawkhurst train.

Also prevalent at Tonbridge were more SR moguls of the N1 and U1 classes together with a solitary Q1 (33031) and a pair of BR 2-6-4 tanks 80038 & 95. All these were glimpsed only briefly, and as complete a list as possible was compiled by consultation (and some measure of argument!) amongst our fellow travellers.

In due course we disembarked onto the main down platform at Ashford station around 10.25 and went over immediately to the far side to see the two 4-4-0s detached, to run quietly and solemnly both together off into the depot area - a poignant moment which passed all too quickly. The empty stock was removed from the platform by E1 class 4-4-0 31507, the regular Ashford station pilot, which looked to be in very good order. Then the whole enthusiast contingent trooped in a straggling line off the end of the platform ramp, crossing over a couple of loop tracks to reach the tarmac path alongside the main running lines, and so into the works area.

Few major steam overhauls were in progress, and it has to be said the main interest was again the contents of the scrap lines. There were yet more 4-4-0s here, comprising another D1, 31487 and several of the more modern looking Ls and LIs, types with which we had become quite familiar over the last year or so on the South Western lines, displaced from their traditional haunts by Phase 1 of the Kent Coast electrification scheme in the Summer of 1959.

I photographed L1 31782, class H tank 31193 and a Brighton interloper E4 32505 using my father's Kodak bellows camera, borrowed for the day with a new 8-exposures per roll 620 size film loaded. The viewfinder was a small lens which had to be rotated carefully through exactly 90 degrees once the camera case was opened before it could be used. Unfortunately, once set it had a tendency to wander adrift and this, coupled with a total lack of photographic nous on my part, resulted in these



broadside engine shots (of which I felt quite proud at the time) making their subjects appear to be parked on a 1-in-10 gradient (corrected here by the modern wonder of digital technology!)



We did not on this occasion get to visit the locomotive depot, visible at a distance across the main running lines, but a further 3 stored D1 4-4-0s were identifiable over on the nearest siding, no's 31246, 31545 and 31727, awaiting transfer across to the works area for cutting up. I was disappointed to find I had seen all three previously as they had been stored in Feltham yard during 1959 and 1960.

The works pilot was a grubby and neglected "C" 0-6-0 31218 moving amidst more modern machinery; several N class Moguls, "Schools" 4-4-0's 30932 and 30933, numerous standard 80xxx tanks and, surprisingly to us at any rate, the small motor fitted 2-6-2 tank 84028, a type not normally associated with the Southern and presumably to be tried out as a replacement for the surviving H class locos. There was a smattering of diesels, mainly of the Sulzer D50xx variety plus a couple of the then new D65xx type and the inevitable 350hp shunters.

On completion of the serious spotting, lunch was partaken from duffle bags amidst soot and ash, sitting comfortably on a sleeper end with our backs to a driving wheel of 31193, glad to rest our legs for a while. Soon enough it was time to wander back across to the station for the next leg of our journey, in the same carriages which had by now been brought round to the up platform. We were very surprised to find the pair of 4-4-0s which had brought the train down from London now turned and serviced, and back in command once more; yet another last minute reprieve! (In fact 31749 survived in service for several months longer, until towards the end of 1961, as the last of its class in use). Departure from Ashford was at 12.25, due in Redhill just over an hour later.

The cross country trek to Redhill gave a further opportunity to check our logs on passing Tonbridge, which did nothing but provoke further dispute! The staple motive power around Redhill, where our train had to reverse, seemed again to be SR moguls, now mainly of class "N", but we noted a couple of S15 4-6-0s and "Schools" 30910, together with yet another D1 4-4-0, 31247. Accompanying this on the shed were a couple of representatives only of the expected "Brighton" contingent, C2X 32451 and E4 tank 32470. While we waited, the "Schools" moved off shed, ran past and backed down on to the rear of our train, while the 4-4-0s at the other end were taken off. We thus finally said goodbye to this veteran pair and at 1.40pm embarked upon the second stage of the complex journey to Eastleigh via Guildford. Yet another reversal was necessary at Woking (2.20 – 2.30pm) - a pity they could not have taken us via Farnham and Alton "over the Alps" - and another "Schools" loco came onto the far end of the train for a fast run down the South Western main line. Back on familiar territory, I had now seen most of the locomotives we passed many times; in some cases they were so well known to me that I did not even bother to record them in my notebook.

On arrival at Eastleigh (3.40pm), I recall that the train ran straight through into the works area, as was the practice at Swindon; it was obviously deemed undesirable to have hoards of enthusiasts swarming over the running lines en route from the station platforms. We noted that our locomotive from Woking had been 30913

“Christ’s Hospital” before it was detached from the train and run off to the shed for turning and servicing ready for the return run to Waterloo later. Class M7 0-4-4 tank 30377 was fussing around the yard as works pilot.

Once again there were few steam locomotives undergoing overhaul in the workshops, but unusual interest was provided by the sight of Bulleid light pacifics 34104 “Bere Alston” and 34108 “Wincanton” nearing the end of their rebuilding from original air smoothed outline to more conventional profile and mechanical layout. That this work was still being carried out only a few years before the end of steam traction on BR was most surprising, and we found out later that these two were the very last to be dealt with in the programme which had involved all 30 of the “Merchant Navy” class then 60 out of the total of 110 light pacifics since 1956.

Outside, the scrap lines had of course a strong South Western flavour, dominated by my beloved T9 class 4-4-0s; it seemed that a major purge of these was currently under way on the far west lines beyond Exeter to which most of the class had latterly been banished. Present that day were nos. 30288, 30300, 30707, 30719 and 30729, representing both the narrow cab original version with small coupling rod splashers, and the modified variety with wide cabs and full width wheel splashers; all seemed in good external condition. Stood apart from the main group we found old friend 30718, onetime Clapham Junction pilot, newly arrived but upon which the cutters were already starting work with their oxy-acetylene torches. Remarkably, this locomotive’s BR smokebox number plate was still in position; surely it was not about to be destroyed? A tongue in cheek approach to the workmen elicited the information that it was of course already reserved, and would be carefully removed in due course. All in all, a far cry from the situation in later years when such items (along with various other easily removable appendages) often went missing while the locomotives were still in normal everyday service!

Other condemned engines present were several M7 0-4-4 tanks and King Arthur 30806 “Sir Galleron” (one of the more obscure knights, this one!). I finally caught up with the last of the three Adams radial 4-4-2 tanks which formerly worked the Lyme Regis branch as no. 30584 was parked at the end of a siding awaiting its fate. Also stored here was yet another D1 4-4-0 31735 which meant we had seen virtually all the survivors of this venerable class that day. Another unusual find was the last of a small group of extensively rebuilt L&SWR 4-6-0s no. 30331, which used to work regularly on freight through Staines from Feltham yard. Nominally of class H15 it differed considerably from later members of the class, easily distinguished by its huge boiler and short, ugly stovepipe chimney, also by the primitive cab, quite out of proportion with the powerful image of the rest of the locomotive. All five members of that other famous Feltham class, the H16 pacific tanks 30516 - 30520 were also found stored in various parts of the works and shed complex, though some of these at least were destined to work again for a few months in 1962 before final withdrawal and scrapping. The condemned contingent was completed by a solitary O2 0-4-4 tank 30229, the last of those replaced by newer locomotives on the Plymouth area branches.

The running shed presented a somewhat happier picture, as here we found further examples of King Arthurs and M7s, also surprisingly another O2, 30223 all still in good order if not in steam, and LB&SC E4 radial tank 32506. The shed pilot was diminutive B4 0-4-0 tank 30096; there was also a solitary 700 “Black Motor” goods 0-6-0, no. 30316. I recorded my last “Lord Nelson”, 30853 “Sir Richard Grenville” here amongst several of the type present, and one further example of the more familiar sort of H15, no. 30476.



The freight allocation at this large running shed was made up by quantities of more modern machines; Southern class Q and Q1 0-6-0s, and a trio of BR 9F 2-10-0s in gleaming black livery.

Most of the main-line passenger engines I had seen many times before in the London area, and did not even bother to record; however I found numerous cops amongst the “mogul” classes, which in contrast to the variety seen around Tonbridge and Redhill earlier, consisted solely of SR class U and BR standard type 3MT (76xxx series) here. A cosmopolitan air was lent by the presence of LMS design Ivatt 2-6-2 tanks 41293, 41311 & 41319, a type then becoming more common in various parts of the south west replacing older engines on branch push pull duties - several more of this type were undergoing overhaul or repair in the workshops.

Our tour was completed by recording no less than four examples of the delightful LB&SC “terrier” class A1X 0-6-0 tanks, nos. 32640, 46, 50 & 61. These were the oldest surviving engines on BR by this time, dating from 1872 but still in excellent order, externally at least. We spent some time up in the cab of one of them, comparing the primitive layout and controls with those of the relatively modern 412xx tank we had “cabbed” earlier.



It was now time to return to our train standing in the works yard. Leaving on the dot of 5pm we enjoyed a fast run up the main line to Waterloo, once more behind Schools 4-4-0 30913, comparing notes and writing up our spotting logs neatly; the last scraps of food and drink were scavenged from the depths of the duffle bag and a general tidying up ensued. On arrival back in London at 6.40pm, it remained to wander wearily across to the electric train home at the end of a long but perfect day.

My log shows only the steam locomotives, and disregards the many seen, especially on the South Western section that I did not even bother to record at the time, knowing they were not “cops”. Also when writing up the day’s “haul” I neatly sorted them into classes, thus destroying the order and detail of the original log. A magazine appeal for more detailed information did not produce any response; however I did receive a copy of the very complete and original record of the previous week’s trip (5th April 1961) from M. Olley of St Helens. This included the diesel and electric locomotives, giving a good flavour of what was to be seen across the Southern Region at this time of transition. Notably though, even he did not trouble to record the everyday SR electric multiple unit set numbers!

Kings Cross to Doncaster, Thursday 26th April 1962

Continuing the theme of weekday loco spotters’ tours in the school holidays, this Ian Allan organized excursion was my first-remembered trip “North of Watford” (though we had apparently spent holidays in Norfolk when I was very young). The fare was 45/- adult, 22/6d for children and I was surprised that a journey so far north and back, including a very reasonable several hours to look round at destination, could be easily accomplished in a day trip. The reality of this venture into unknown territory was eagerly anticipated for several weeks beforehand. We learnt a little about such alien lands in school geography lessons, imparted and received with the inevitable Londoner’s superiority and bias, and I was keen to see what life was really like in these parts at first hand.

The motive power was none other than 60022 “Mallard”, a Top Shed regular seen many times before; it was cleaned and polished to perfection, but there was nothing unusual about this either, since such standards were still the Kings Cross norm for its prestige locomotives at that time. (In contrast, on a visit to the terminus a couple of weeks previously I had noted A1 pacific no. 60122 “Curlew” in a disgustingly filthy state; this being a denizen of Doncaster shed it was not lucky enough to receive the 34A treatment).

As the enormous tender of the A4 loomed out of the tunnel mouth and backed down very cautiously onto its short train of maroon painted BR mark 1 stock I thought we were to have a double-header as there was another, equally clean pacific attached ahead of it. However this soon came off and backed onto a service train standing in another platform; clearly the two engines had worked down from the shed together for operational convenience.

There was plenty of time for relaxed, close up appreciation and photography of 60022's sleek lines and the special plaque recording the 1938 speed record achievement before the main contingent of travellers arrived.



Across the platform from our train stood the 10.00 down "Flying Scotsman", now diesel hauled - on this occasion by un-named "Deltic" D9011 - but incongruously carrying the

steam locomotive type of headboard, shaped to suit the smokebox top. By the spring of 1962 the diesels had taken over quite comprehensively at Kings Cross, and there was not much else of interest present that morning.

Departure was on schedule at 10.10 and progress up the GN main line satisfyingly brisk, in pleasant weather, but no records were to be broken by our engine on this trip. After arrival (1.05pm) at an austere looking Doncaster station - part modernized in the fifties with concrete and what looked like corrugated iron used extensively in the platform canopy awnings - we trooped through a subway directly into the works area.



Activities in the famous “plant” workshops were as expected mainly concerned with modern, non steam motive power. Brand new blue and white painted main line electric locomotives in the E3073-77 series were seen in various stages of construction for the west coast electrification southward from Crewe to Birmingham then in progress.....



A few major steam overhauls were still being undertaken alongside, to the traditional standards; a recently completed and gleaming pacific 60085 “Manna” stood outside the paint shop in the sunshine, a glorious sight photographed from all angles by many enthusiasts.....



However, famous stable mate 60103 stood forlornly with other obviously condemned locos nearby, it's BR green livery faded and dirty with some rusting, nameplates removed and the smokebox door gaping open. This was the first time I had seen "Flying Scotsman" himself, and the future looked bleak indeed.....

We were however assured that full repair was intended, and I did indeed see this lovely machine back in action again, quite resplendent too, in the London area towards the end of 1962; its final run in BR service was on 14th January 1963 and the rest is of course history.



A considerable number of other LNER pacifics were found in and around the “Carr” running sheds, both local engines we had not seen previously at King’s Cross and some from the more northern sheds attending for servicing

here which rarely ventured any further south towards the metropolis. Our spotting record was enhanced by the two Gateshead based A4s 60001 "Sir Ronald Matthews" and 60002 "Sir Murrough Wilson" plus several more each of the A1, A2 and A3 classes.

V2 2-6-2s and B1 4-6-0s were numerous, mainly Doncaster based but several of each were also found standing condemned in front of the works area.....



The freight engine scene was dominated by BR standard 9F 2-10-0s and the ugly WD 2-8-0s, mostly in deplorable condition, again either locally based or worked in from New England shed at Peterborough.

I was disappointed not to see much in the way of older or more interesting engines, or many representatives of types I had not previously encountered. Doncaster was not then engaged in a large scrapping programme such as we had seen at Swindon or Eastleigh; the large variety of pre group engine types now rapidly diminishing was presumably being dealt with at the other Eastern Region workshops of Stratford, Darlington, Cowlairs etc.

Just three examples of the lovely old GCR-ROD type O4 2-8-0s were recorded, seemingly by no means near the end of their long, mundane lives; I had expected to see many more of this type judging by the local allocation shown in the current "locoshed" book. I photographed a typically grimy no. 63858 standing in light steam outside the workshops.....



There were several of the newer, powerful looking O2 class in evidence; both these 2-8-0 types were completely new to me, being very rarely seen in the London area. The only other tender engine types present were a couple each of the K1 and K3 moguls and a solitary Gresley J39 0-6-0 no. 64923, the only one of this large standard LNER class I ever saw.

Tank engines seemed few and far between in this part of the world. A pair of familiar L1 2-6-4s were spotted near their home shed of Grantham on the journey up, otherwise we saw only a couple of the little ex Great Eastern J69s renumbered into the departmental series as works shunters, a type quite unexpected here, and several of



that other familiar London type, the GN J50 no doubt retained for similar duties around the carriage works and running sheds but most still carrying their capital stock numbers in the 689xx series. There was also a weird looking small “humped back” diesel shunter D2409 similarly employed.

All in all, we enjoyed a sedate, relaxed tour but without a great deal of special or unexpected interest. As we made our way back to the station platform in good time for the return train to London, due away at 4.07pm, rare Immingham based Britannia pacific 70012 “John of Gaunt” rolled in on a cross country passenger working comprised of a mixture of maroon-painted BR mark 1 and LMS “porthole” stock and was photographed by many members of our tour contingent.....



After another brisk run from "Mallard" we were deposited back at Kings Cross around 7.15 on a fine spring evening.

St. Pancras to Derby, Wednesday 17th April 1963.

Completing our three year rove around the regions, this excursion was to be my last of the traditional Ian Allan Easter holiday trips. I tried to organize a school group, hopefully to fill a compartment of one of the Stanier LMS carriages ourselves but due to a waning interest in the diminishing steam scene, in the event only two of us went. We took a rare last opportunity to travel up from Staines West through to Paddington on the weekday through commuter DMU - a 3 car Pressed Steel unit. “Castles” and pannier tanks were much in evidence on the WR main line that morning and we were sorry to have to leave the terminus to catch the “Met” train to St Pancras.

No doubt someone had expended much time and effort negotiating for “unusual” motive power on the Midland route for the train, but this was completely lost on us Southern enthusiasts as it materialized as none other than very familiar West Country pacific 34031 “Torrington”, not even one of the original, unrebuilt ones which would have been more interesting. It was crewed by SR men with an LMR pilot man in attendance throughout. To be honest, tired of the run-down state of steam traction on the “grey” London Midland region by this time, I would have preferred to have had a pair of well groomed green “Jubilees” in traditional Midland double headed format. We saw a good few of those, brightening up the scene, during the course of the day.

Leaving St Pancras just on 10.00am very cautiously and passing an almost deserted Kentish Town shed, we noticed groups of railwaymen taking a short break from their work, congregated by the lineside to witness the passage of our unfamiliar engine and no doubt comment on its performance. The special was shortly overtaken by the blue diesel unit “Midland Pullman” travelling on the down fast line, and this seemed to be the cue to 34031’s crew to liven things up a bit. We stopped for water opposite Kettering shed, allowing this glimpse of an old Midland Railway American-style Pullman car body grounded there for use as a crew mess-room facility....



On this trip, as for the Doncaster one a year previously, the pace of modernization and elimination of the more ancient engine types was very evident. At the various traffic centres along the route north; Bedford, Wellingborough and Leicester, only relatively modern commonplace classes were seen, with a preponderance of 8F 2-8-0s, 4F 0-6-0s and 9F 2-10-0 freight locomotives.

Leicester shed was passed at slow speed, and the collection of begrimed and work stained machines huddled together beneath their own sulphurous smog was typical of our impressions of this route.....

What a contrast this was with the beautiful architecture and decorative ironwork of the stations we glimpsed; Bedford and Kettering particularly retaining a strong, complete and distinctive Midland Railway appearance; however some seen were being smashed up in the name of modernization.

It was during the couple of hours spent on this journey that I became very conscious not only of the rapid run-down of steam traction but also of the exceptional quality and variety of structures and hardware, signal boxes and signalling still present everywhere, previously unappreciated in the quest for engine numbers. I vowed there and then to give up the whole stupid business of train spotting forthwith (well, after that day's trip, at any rate) and embark on a study of this wonderful vista of the contemporary railway scene. I wanted to see, appreciate, compare and photograph everything in this new-found world. There were just two major snags; the train was going too fast now and it had started to rain, further obscuring the view from an already sooty compartment window. All the excited, number collecting schoolboys around me suddenly looked very childish; I was now indisputably an Adult at age 15 and a bit!

In due course the showers passed, and we detrained in weak sunshine and puddles at a disappointing modern concrete Derby station, then trooping across a long lattice footbridge directly into the works area.

It had been a long time since I had seen any of the early main-line diesels at work in the London area, and we found LMS no. 10000 and all three of the Southern Region machines (10201-3) stored in the open almost directly underneath the footbridge, in full view of the station. They were never to work again and sadly none were retained; a great pity since they would have been so much more interesting than the ranks of later

“preserved” diesels and representative of the historically significant early modernization phase now almost totally forgotten. As we positioned ourselves to photograph them a very grimy WD 2-8-0 no. 90136 clanked by, using the freight lines bypassing the station.....

The Derby works complex, like Doncaster previously, turned out to be quite predictable with a surfeit of boring Class 5s, 8Fs, 9Fs, 4F 0-6-0s and most varieties of the LMS 2-6-4



tanks. There were only one or two “Jinty” 0-6-0 tanks once so familiar to us but by now largely disappeared from London area ECS work. There was a conspicuous absence of large, named LMS express motive power; only a few representatives of the “Jubilee” class were present, in various states of repair or storage. In the workshops the emphasis was on construction of new diesels, some of which were destined to have a considerably shorter life with BR than the early pioneers; a block sequence of about 30 “Sulzer” type 2s carrying numbers from D5191 upwards was seen at all stages from bare steel frames laid out with chalked on identities, through to final painting and testing. In contrast about 12 of the quite new but ill-fated “Clayton” type 1s from D8514 upwards were stored out of use in the open air in little groups at various points around the works complex and at the running sheds. Amongst the new Sulzers, solitary BR standard 2-6-0 no. 76061 was representative of very few steam locomotive overhauls still being carried out here; it was nearly complete and resplendent in gleaming lined black livery, looking every bit as good as the day it was built.



There did not seem to be a scrap line as such. At various points in our tour we came across odd little groups of stored engines, some of which were being cut up on the spot. Amongst these, most surprisingly, was a Stanier 8F 2-8-0 no. 48009. Others included Fowler 2-6-2T 40022, 4F 44100 and a couple of the earlier Deeley variety, Jinty 47283 (later rescued for preservation) and various 2-6-4 tanks but that was it, as far as I had recorded - other logs from the tour show some I had missed, in other isolated groups, and vice versa.

The "unusual locomotive" interest was thus restricted to two little 0-4-0 tanks, 41535 and 47006. Amazingly, the former was receiving attention in the workshops, while the latter was very active as works pilot for the day, shunting wagon-loads of stores all over the site.....

I was disappointed not to see any of the old Midland half cab 0-6-0 tanks, or any of the 5xxxx series engines; an S & D line 2-8-0 or an old 58xxx series 0-6-0 might surely have been expected, along with a 2P 4-4-0 or two, even at that late date?



The highlight of our tour was the Derby “preserved” collection; in a dark and dingy roundhouse we found poor old no. 5 “Cecil Raikes” (Mersey Railway 0-6-4 tank) with many parts missing, the Midland “Spinner” 4-2-2 single 118, Kirtley 2-4-0 no. 158A and LT&SR 4-4-2T no. 80 “Thundersley”. All were dusty and cobwebby and attempts at photography in this oppressive environment were futile. Their better fate in preservation was still some years off and in view of events elsewhere was not by any means assured then.

The last survivor of the LMS “Tilbury” tanks, 42500 which replaced the likes of “Thundersley” in the 1930s was stored elsewhere on site, apparently also scheduled for preservation. We were sorry not to have seen the Midland Compound no. 1000 in working order and lately used on enthusiast specials - though unfortunately not ours - it had been taken out of the collection here and transported to the new Clapham museum in London a couple of months previously.

It was soon time to be making tracks back over the long footbridge to Derby station to await the arrival of our return train. We were told there was to be considerable delay due to difficulty experienced turning 34031 on the shed turntable so we ventured across the road to take a look. We also logged a further quantity of 8Fs, little

0-4-0T shed pilot 41531 and a variety of stored engines here before being summarily ejected by an angry member of the shed staff! Rejoining the throng on the station, we had a grandstand view of passing traffic - freight and light engines - on the goods avoiding lines in front of the works yard. In a short period I managed to photograph Jubilee 45669 "Fisher", 2-6-4 tanks 42225 and 42339, "Mickey Mouse" 2-6-0 46500 and black five 45407 (famous in later years!) passing slowly by.....



Only DMUs scuttled around within the station area itself, until the empty stock for our train was brought in and "Torrington" reinstalled. For some reason, perhaps due to over familiarity with this locomotive in the London area and the dull weather, I over-looked once again to photograph our engine in this strange Midland environment.



34031 was worked valiantly on the return trip in an attempt to pick up as much of the lost time as possible, but once again we passed through Leicester slowly enabling a couple more pictures of the smoky shed environs.....



.....and a quaint little piece of Midland Railway architecture at the closed station of Glendon; this looks like a goods office.....

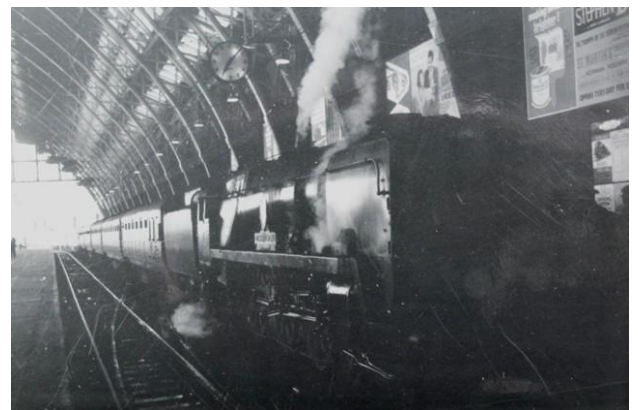
The stopwatch brigade claimed a speed of 90mph at several points after Kettering. The water stop was taken at Luton this time and it became a nice sunny evening as we coasted back through the inner London suburbs. The former Kentish Town depot - now serving merely as a servicing point for visiting locomotives - was host to a solitary Jubilee, 45698 "Mars", commendably clean, which I photographed from the moving train against the familiar backdrop of the ornate brewery buildings.....



On arrival at back at St Pancras just after seven the crowd of enthusiasts dispersed quickly, leaving a deserted platform with "Torrington" simmering quietly at the buffer stops. I attempted a belated photograph under the vast

overall roof, but by now the light was fading fast at the end of a long and tiring day; the result was disappointing.

This seems by all accounts to have been a singularly un-photographed tour; I cannot recall seeing any pictorial record in the railway press either at the time or since.



Not being in any undue hurry to return home yet we called in next door at Kings Cross to see what was on offer there. The GN terminus was by now usually full of diesels, including on this occasion the Brush type 4 prototype D0280 "Falcon" in its highly impractical white livery. The only steam presence was the customary filthy B1 pilot, 61312, lurking in the back of no. 16 platform dock in this final picture.....

When compiling these notes some 30 years later I was pleased to receive detailed logs from Messrs L. Adams of Kent and D. Williams of Surrey. The latter showed that there was in fact a second, near identical excursion run the following day, Thursday 18th April, for which 34031 was presumably kept in light steam overnight at Kentish Town depot. This second trip was similarly ignored by photographers or recorders in the contemporary railway press.



I had now visited the locomotive nerve centres of all the former “big four” companies; unbiased comparisons and judgements could be made! That summer I set about converting the model railway in my bedroom at Staines from its somewhat muddled LMS, LNER and GWR parentage - based largely on the 3-rail system products of Hornby Dublo - into one of uniform GWR. This involved not only the engines, but also extensive reappraisal of buildings, signals and all the little details, starting a loyalty that has remained with me ever since (along with a few of the artifacts!) During that long hot school summer holiday of 1963, I was also entrusted with some of the exterior repainting of our house, which gave me the opportunity to appreciate the blossoming of former junior schoolgirl neighbours into attractive young ladies, and to start thinking about careers, O-levels, university, money, cars etc. The days of locomotive number collecting seemed long past!

K.A. Jagers 1994