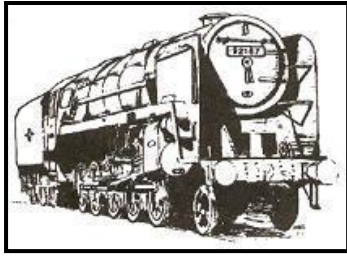
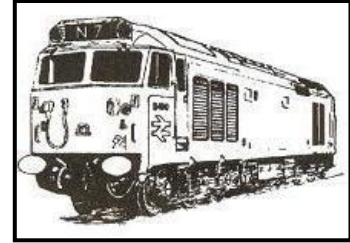


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JULY 2020 SUMMER SPECIAL



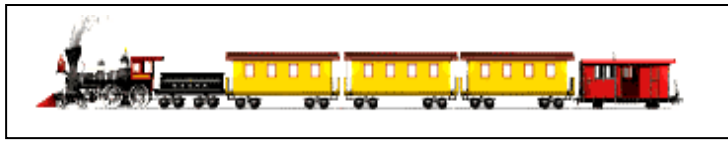
***Buffer
Stop***



To help us keep in touch – and to keep up a bit of mental challenge through our quizzes – we thought you might like a little extra in these exceptional times, if you'll forgive a little editorial reminiscence.



This year we should have been celebrating fifty years of the Severn Valley Railway as a preserved line: the first public train, the 2pm from Bridgnorth to Hampton Loade, ran on 23 May 1970 hauled by GWR 3205. I was originally going to claim that I hadn't known the line for that long until finding the snapshot reproduced overleaf which (because I wrote the date on the back) shows that I visited the line with my school railway society only about six weeks later. To be honest, I'm not sure that it impressed me greatly at that stage: there was still plenty of slightly run-down steam age atmosphere, if not actual steam engines, on BR at the time and the scenery on the SVR's northern section is not as fine as further south. The bus trip to Bridgnorth on a Wolverhampton Corporation service (a curious successor to the GWR on the route) and from Wolverhampton Low Level to Birmingham Snow Hill in the line's dying days by "bubble car" single unit were nearly as memorable. Roll on a decade, and I'm back in Wolverhampton on a training placement and spending my weekends exploring the geographical Severn valley. Bewdley station is full of well-restored GW coaches and this is beginning to look like something rather special, even though, being January, nothing is running. Another couple



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of years and I'm living in Birmingham, and watching the steady enhancements year on year. I think what brought home to me just how far the line – and the whole heritage railway movement – had come was seeing the Kidderminster carriage shed, in particular its extent as seen in an aerial view in *Severn Valley Railway News*. I imagine if you'd asked the pioneers of 1970 how many carriages they'd expect to have, their ambitions would hardly have exceeded the couple of five- or six-car trains they were then running. I have other favourite heritage railways and I'm sure you do too, but I will proclaim that the Severn Valley is in that select class which cannot be beaten on overall quality of presentation. It has survived the worst the unstable geology of its location has thrown at it, so I look forward to resuming visits; at the time of writing it is hoped services will resume in some form on 1 August. Oh, and the next time I travelled between Snow Hill and Wolverhampton, it was by tram – who would have guessed at that fifty years ago? P.S. For a virtual celebration of the SVR reopening see <https://www.svr.co.uk/svr50years.aspx> . Coming up to date, Vivarail have been testing the first class 230 they have built for Transport for Wales around Kidderminster and along the Cotswold line – see <https://twitter.com/jackboskett/status/1263772287851003910?s=20> .



MORE AUDIO & VISUAL

Just a couple more bits of online entertainment which have come to notice are a slow radio audio of a trip on *Flying Scotsman* from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08fmjfn> or other podcast sources, and a film of the 1925 Stockton & Darlington centenary celebrations on the British Film Institute site at <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-the-official-film-of-the-railway-centenary-1925-online> .

Didcot Railway Centre is planned to be open from 4 July for pre-booked Open-air Discovery Days.

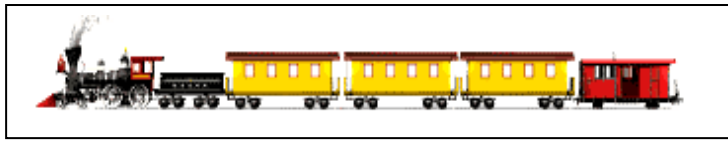
RAILWAY RACES OF 1962

A slightly cryptic cutting in the editorial files claims that for six months in 1962 there was rivalry (apparently orchestrated by young gentlemen of the University) between the 17.30 Oxford–Paddington and an evening express from Paris Est to Chaumont (I guess this means Chaumont-sur-Loire, which is a similar distance) with both averaging 63.5 mph start to stop. “By an extra decimal the French train won”, apparently. I wonder if anyone can now remember what all the fuss was about; in retrospect, we can only wonder that the timing seemed in any way remarkable.

Buffer Stop will now take a month's break. Although we can't be sure when, how or with what on the programme the Society can next get back together, we aim at least to bring you the next Buffer Stop for the traditional date of the second Wednesday in September. Meanwhile here are the answers to last month's quiz, and a new one to keep you amused or infuriated over the break (with thanks to the anonymous providers of some of the pictures)

JUNE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A Six bells; B H.A. Ivatt; C Two cars, No lavatories; D 999; E Great Central
2. A Newburn House; B First narrow gauge locomotive built at Swindon; C Barnum & Bailey's Circus; D Rotary cam poppet valve gear; E Helston and The Lizard
3. A 0-4-0T; B 4-6-0; C 0-8-4T; D 4-8-2+2-8-4; E C-C (*not* Co-Co)
4. A Lickey; B Rattery; C Whitrope; D Bincombe; E Freshfield
5. A Portugal; B Hungary; C Austria; D Slovenia; E Finland
- 6 (picture questions). A Wolferton; B Swindon Town; C Volks Railway (Brighton); D. Narvik (Norway); E Burton upon Trent; F Liverpool (Canning Dock)



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SUMMER QUIZ

1. Some general questions.

- A. What is the name of the locomotive which was operated by the Duke of Sutherland over the Highland Railway?
- B. What was the type of rail fatigue fracture which caused the 2000 Hatfield accident?
- C. By what name did Wales & West rebrand its westcountry services in 2001?
- D. What is the current most westerly station on Irish Rail?
- E. In 1963 the Tri-ang Minic Narrow Gauge Railways system was introduced. What gauge?

2. Some questions on the modern scene.

- A. What is the make of diesel engine in class 88 locomotives?
- B. Which branch line has been regularly operated by a Parry People Mover?
- C. EMU classes 357, 375–379 and 387 belong to which family of units?
- D. Where is Hitachi's UK production facility?
- E. Which overseas rail company now owns c2c?

3. How many locomotives were built in each of the following classes?

- A. (G)WR 'Manor'
- B. LMS Black 5
- C. LNER A4
- D. LNER V4
- E. BR production Deltic

4. Identify the following railway people from their very brief biographies

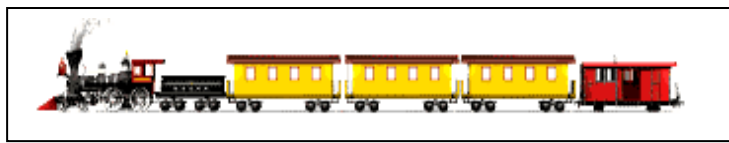
- A. Moved from CME to General Manager of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway
- B. Reputation ruined by fall of the Tay Bridge
- C. Began career on London & South Western, revived fortunes of Midland & South Western Junction and Great Central
- D. Oxford-educated creator of ScotRail and Network SouthEast brands
- E. Westinghouse signalling engineer best known as a writer on locomotive performance

5. Some local knowledge questions.

- A. What was the only intermediate halt on the Woodstock branch?
- B. What was unusual about Oxford North Junction up main starting semaphore signal after 1950?
- C. Most local trains are now controlled from TVSC. What does that stand for?
- D. Which locomotive was involved in the 1955 Milton accident?
- E. In what year was a coach last slipped at Bicester North?

6. Picture questions (*overleaf*)

The premises at A have now vanished; B is still there but disused; C (disused) and D are seaside lines; E and F are continental stations



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A



B



C



D



E



F

*“Buffer Stop” is edited by **Matthew Searle** <matthew904@btinternet.com> and published by the Oxfordshire Railway Society; the views therein are not necessarily those of the Society. Closing date for next issue: 1 September*