

"Midland and South Western Junction Railway"

Alan Gosling's talk, on 18th May 1998, presented his research on this little known line. Alan started his talk by pointing to his five connections with the M&SWJR: his house is named after one of the Stations, he has 2 tickets from the M&SWJR which were purchased by his parents when going on their honeymoon, he travelled on it when young, he is a member of the Swindon & Cricklade (which is one of the few remaining parts of it still extant), and finally he used it during his national service in 1953. The railway was built in parts, first was the Swindon, Marlborough and Andover section, which received its royal assent in July 1873. The southern part started as a junction with GWR, through Swindon, to Andover, then running powers over LSWR, to Southampton. Originally, there were running powers over the GWR in the centre part, but difficulties caused the M&SWJR to build a parallel route and cross-over. The usual technique of removing useful services were used to justify closure. Ludgershall to Tidworth closed in 1959 (it is now being considered for reopening to serve a new town development). General closure came in September 1961. Some sections still remained open to goods, but these gradually closed in the 1960s. The remains today are limited with a few stations converted to dwellings, with only two parts still extant: the Swindon & Cricklade, and Tidworth to Red Post Junction used by military for transporting tanks. Some notable railwaymen had connections with the M&SWJR for example Sam Fay started off as a Booking office clerk at Southampton Terminus but rose quickly in the management of M&SWJ.

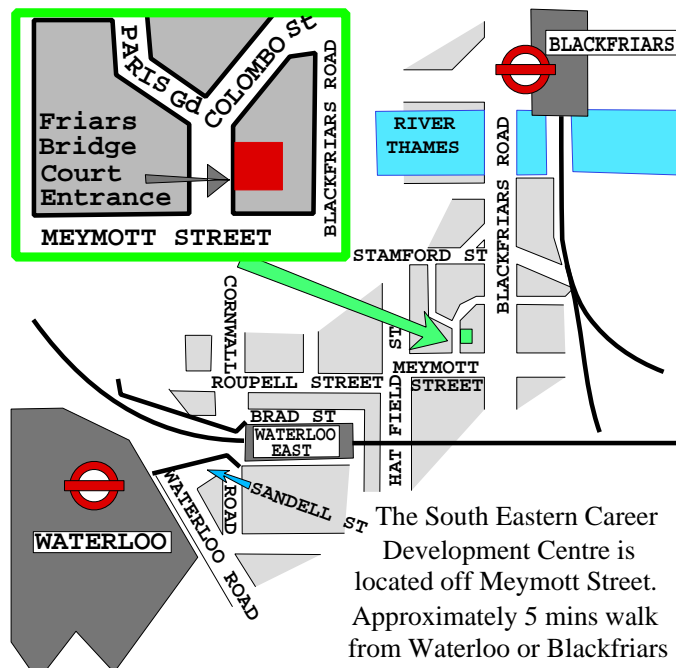
Early locomotives included Loco No 16, with its cylinders placed low down gaining the name "Galloping Alice" because of its rough riding. It lasted a long time, being transferred to the GWR, then in 1934 it was purchased by the Hartley Main Colliery in the North East, finally finishing its days at the Cramlingham Colliery under the NCB. In later years, a large number of locomotive types were used on the line; the principal classes included 2-6-2 tanks, Dean Goods, Pannier Tanks, Manors, U Class, and Standard 4-6-0s.

The Army still has an allocation of diesel mechanical shunting locos at Ludgershall. Here, there are facilities for transfer of tanks and armoured vehicles and, even, a ramp originally used to load horse cavalry. Alan finished his talk on an optimistic note. Blunsdon station was the seed from which the Swindon and Cricklade Railway has grown. The line is being extended and it could soon link in with new housing developments on the edge of Swindon. Who knows, we could even be seeing the rebirth of the M&SWJR.

An extended synopsis is available on our Web page (see below for details)

STEAM ON THE MET 1998

Our first main event has been at the welcome return of "Steam on the Met". For those of you who have not seen this operation you are certainly missing something. Where else in the UK, or anywhere in the world come to that, can you see timetabled steam hauled passenger services interleaved with an intensive suburban electric and diesel public service? Even the German "Plandampf" don't aim for this level of activity. Despite a few problems with one of the engines, the B1, the service ran to within a few minutes of schedule on all five days. Passenger loadings appeared high and everyone seemed happy. As in past years, we took the stand to Rickmansworth for the first weekend, followed by Amersham for the extended Bank Holiday weekend. We had considerable interest, so much so that we ran out of publicity material on the museum so finished up having to ration it. Our efforts were helped on the Bank Holiday by the sudden appearance of "Queen Victoria" and escort! Needless to say our stocks of the "Royalty on Wheels" rapidly went but only after we had made a presentation to her majesty. We also had a run on most of our stock of NRM and FNRM material so the funds have benefited from a useful injection of cash.



Forthcoming Events

21 Sept 1998 "London's Victorian Railways"

Mr R Brasier, London Transport Museum

16 Nov 1998 "A Railwayman Remembers"

Mr R.H.N. Hardy

11 Jan 1999 AGM and Social

plus some railway related entertainment

All evening talks are held in the South Eastern Career Development Centre, Colombo St, off Meymott Street, London (near Waterloo Station). Doors open at 18.30 and the sessions usually finish around 21.00.

OUR CONDOLENCES

It is with some regret that I inform Group members of the death of Ada Haslar, wife of George Haslar, after the recurrence of an earlier illness. Ada and George were at the formation of the Group and both have regularly attended our events. Until recently, Ada was an active member both of our group and other societies near their home in Harpenden. The funeral took place on Friday 10 July with George Rutter representing the FNRM.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The Outreach Programme continues over the summer, with visits planned to the Shuttleworth Collection Vintage Transport Day on 16 August, and final flying day on 4 October. We are also intending to be present at the Transport Bazaar at Camden Centre on 17 October (opening from 11.00 to 15.00). Following the success of our attendance at the Biggleswade Model Railway show, we will be attending the Colchester Model Railway exhibition on 31 October and 1 November. If there are any members in the locality who would like to help on the stand (and get free entry and lunch!) please contact George Rutter. Over the winter we hope to attend a few more model railway shows, so if Colchester or Biggleswade are not convenient, there will be other chances to help.

Contact Addresses for South of England Group

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