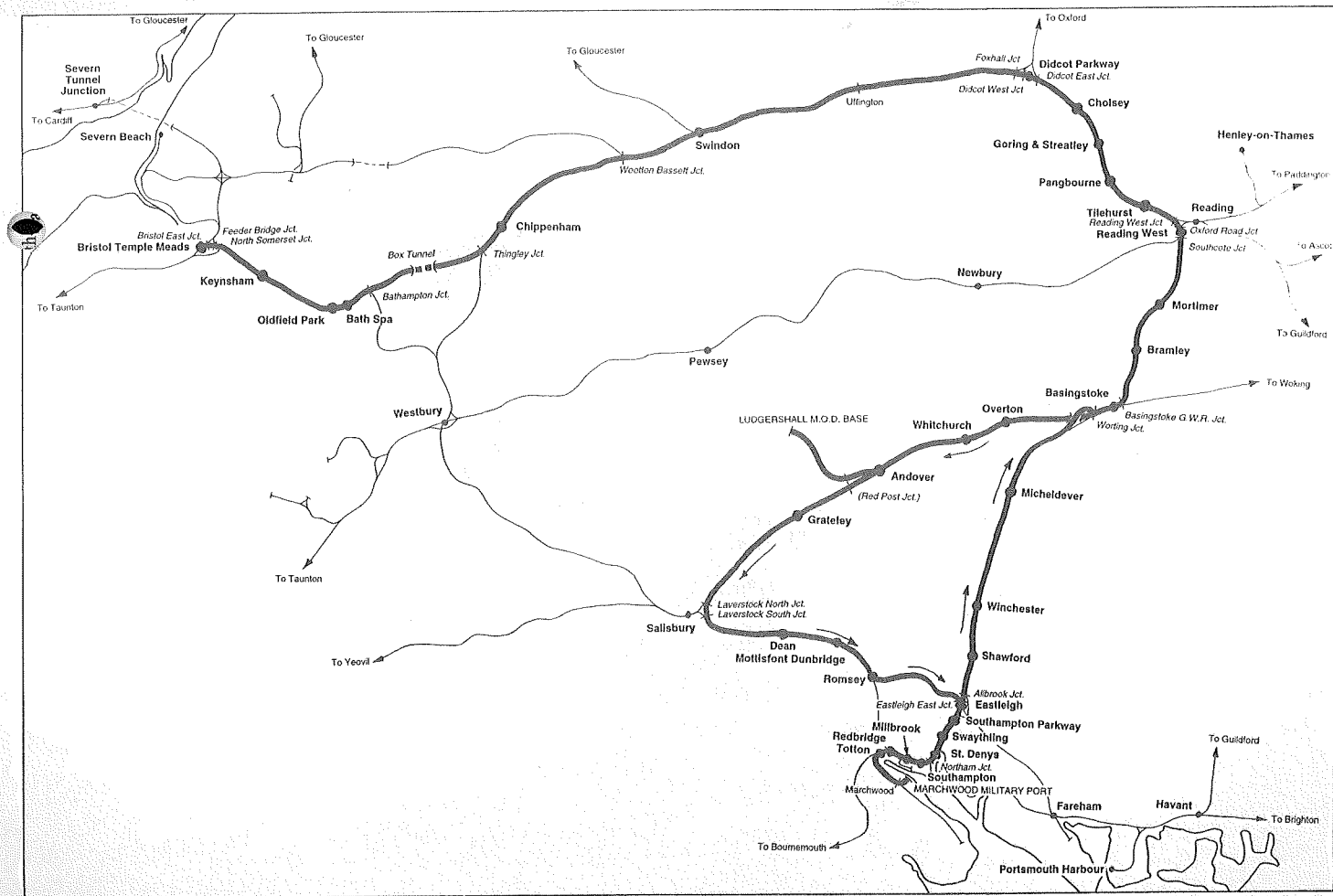


Pathfinder TOURS

24th June, 1995

The Logistician





Dear Railtourer,



Good morning and welcome to the *Logistician*, a tour to parts of the former Southern Region featuring Class 37 power throughout. One of these long-lived machines will head the train from Bristol, with a sister locomotive assisting from Basingstoke as required. Due to restrictions imposed by Railtrack South West Zone governing the operation of trains in top 'n' tail mode over their metals, the working of the locos has been amended. However, this will not effect the route of the tour, but does mean that ALL passengers will be required to alight at Andover before, and after, the visit to the Ludgershall branch whilst the shunting movements are carried out.

For most of today's participants, the highlights include the visits to both the MOD Vehicle Depot at Ludgershall and to the Marchwood Military Port. At the former we should be able to run over the three 'main' lines beyond the Railtrack boundary, whilst at Marchwood a combination of the tour train and internal services should enable us to traverse a good deal of the MOD rail network within the complex.

In order to take advantage of the internal trains running at Marchwood, passengers will be able to alight at Port Gate Halt after our tour has traversed the line to the New Jetty. It is anticipated that we should have around three-quarters of an hour to explore the complex and to travel on the diesel shuttle from Port Gate Halt to the Old Jetty and/or on the steam shuttle from the New Jetty. Port Gate platform is very short so please take care when alighting and once on the platform you are requested to move on immediately. When the train is being repositioned for boarding, please keep clear until all movements have stopped and you are advised that it is safe to rejoin the tour.

ON THE TRAIN

Platelayers Catering will provide a buffet service, offering for sale a selection of hot/cold drinks, sandwiches, sweets, crisps, real ale, etc, from the brake area of coach 'X' and from trolleys passing through the train (please keep the gangways clear to ease the passage of the trolleys).

There will also be a sales stand, ably run by 'Rail Photoprints' and again situated in coach 'X', offering a selection of books, badges, postcards, photos, videos, etc, for sale (open from, and back to, Didcot).

The on-train preservation raffle today will be organised on behalf of the Marchwood Commandant's Charity Fund. Tickets will be sold after departure from Andover to Marchwood and the results of the draw will be announced when we leave the latter on the return journey.

Please do not drop any rubbish on the floor ; stewards will regularly pass through the train with refuse bags to collect it from you. Would you also not remove the Pathfinder carriage labels; identical ones can be obtained from the book sales stand at the modest charge of 10p each.

As we will not be able to re-water the carriages during the day can we ask that you use the supply in the toilets as economically as possible.

All seating areas are allocated as NON-SMOKING, irrespective of any window label designations shown, and we ask that this is respected.

One last request - **PLEASE** carry your tour ticket(s) with you **AT ALL TIMES** as this makes any checks much easier for you and for ourselves. Thank you.

FUTURE TOURS

Seats are still available for all Pathfinder trains running between July and September, except for the '**Cumbrian Mountain Express**' (8th July) which is now full, and bookings can be handed into your coach steward during the course of the day. Spare copies of the brochures will also be available on board should you require them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Waterman Railways, Rail Express Systems, Railtrack, Mainline and especially the Ministry of Defence for all their help and assistance in the running of today's railtour.

Please enjoy the day ahead,

Peter Watts,
Managing Director.

Chris Brooks,
Operations Manager.

.....and all at **PATHFINDER.**

"THE LOGISTICIAN"

Saturday 24th June, 1995

MILES & CHAINS	LOCATION	TIMINGS		
		Schedule	actual	
0.00	BRISTOL TEMPLE MEADS	PU	0856	0856
0.56	North Somerset Jct.		0858	
11.35	BATH SPA	PU	0910	0912
13.51	Bathampton Jct.		0915	
22.16	Thingley Jct.		0922	
24.30	CHIPPENHAM	PU	0924	0926
35.19	Wootton Bassett Jct.		0936	
41.03	SWINDON	PU	0942	0944
51.67	Uffington		0955	
64.51	Foxhall Jct.		1005	
65.16	DIDCOT PARKWAY	*/PU	1007	1015
65.48	Didcot East Jct.		1016	
81.30	Reading West Jct.		1032	
83.16	Southcote Jct.		1036	
96.73	BASINGSTOKE	AAE/PU	1053	1108
99.33	Worting Jct.		1112	
115.31	Andover	SM	1130	1200
123.02+	LUDGERSHALL M.O.D.BASE	Rev	1220	
0.00	LUDGERSHALL M.O.D.BASE			1320
7.51	ANDOVER	SM/Rev	1340	
0.00	ANDOVER			1425
15.66	Laverstock North Jct.		1441	
16.20	Laverstock South Jct.		1443	
23.67	Dean		1453	
31.30	Romsey		1500	
38.37	Eastleigh East Jct.		1514	
38.42	Eastleigh		1515	
42.17	St.Denys		1520	
43.22	Northam Jct.		1522	
44.26	Southampton Central		1525	
46.77	Redbridge		1529	
47.50	Totton		1531	
51.15	Marchwood	OP	1543	1545
51.15+	MARCHWOOD MIL.PORT	Break/Rev	1556	
0.00	MARCHWOOD MILITARY PORT			1736
0.00	Marchwood	OP	1745	1747
3.45	Totton		1759	
4.18	Redbridge		1801	
6.69	Southampton Central		1805	
7.23	Northam Jct.		1808	
8.78	St.Denys		1810	
12.53	Eastleigh	DAE	1816	1826
19.49	Winchester		1837	
35.67	Worting Jct.		1853	
38.27	BASINGSTOKE	SD	1857	1859
52.04	Southcote Jct.		1918	
53.70	Reading West Jct.		1928	
70.04	DIDCOT PARKWAY	SD	1940	1942
70.49	Foxhall Jct.		1944	
83.33	Uffington		1954	
94.17	SWINDON	SD	2007	2009
100.01	Wootton Bassett Jct.		2015	
110.70	CHIPPENHAM	SD	2025	2027
113.04	Thingley Jct.		2029	
121.49	Bathampton Jct.		2036	
123.65	BATH SPA	SD	2039	2041
134.40	North Somerset Jct.		2052	
135.20	BRISTOL TEMPLE MEADS	SD	2054	

+ = mileages are shown to the Railtrack limit of ownership

PU Passenger Pick Up Station SM Shunt Manoeuvre (PLEASE DETRAIN)
 * Pathing Requirement Stop OP Stop for Operational Purposes ONLY
 AAE Attach Cl.37 Assist Loco DAE Detach Cl.37 Assist Loco
 Rev Train Reversal Point SD Passenger Set Down Station

TRAIN REPORTING CODE: 1 Z 3 7

Distances are measured in miles and chains. There are eighty chains in one mile and one chain is the distance between the wickets on a cricket pitch, or twenty two yards.

Every reasonable effort, within the control of the Organisers, will be made to operate this tour in accordance with timings and other details given. However, many factors can affect the running of this train and we cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any early or late running, changes imposed at short notice or curtailment of the tour as a result of circumstances outside of our direct control. The receipt of your tickets is taken as constituting acceptance of these conditions.



ROUTE ITINERARY

Compiled by Richard Szwejkowski

The notes below give details of features of railway interest principally, but some points of general interest are included. The terms (L) and (R) refer to the left and right of the train when facing the direction of travel. The names of all stations on the route, whether open or closed, are shown in upper case, followed, if relevant, by the date of closure to passengers, although the station may have remained open for goods or parcels traffic to a later date. Details of all intersections with other lines are also given, with closure dates to both passengers and goods if appropriate. To save repetition of the full names of the more commonly used abbreviations, such as the initials of railway companies, a glossary of these is given at the end of this itinerary.

BRISTOL TEMPLE MEADS: - A station was first opened here on August 31st, 1840 to the design of Brunel, but all tracks in the original train shed have now been removed. For the first four years after the opening of the line to the south, trains heading that way had to reverse in and out, until completion of independent platforms at near right angles to the Brunel terminus. A connection between the London and Exeter routes was provided by tracks roughly following the curve of the present platforms. Further changes and expansion culminated in completion of the impressive overall roof in 1878 covering five platforms. Traffic continued to grow, particularly after the First World War, and substantial work was undertaken after 1929 to create the present layout, opened fully in December 1935. These changes were accompanied by the installation of colour light signals, in their turn superseded by the scheme of 1970. After the 1878 changes, the original Brunel terminus was used almost exclusively by MR trains to Bath and Gloucester and, somewhat ironically, considering that it was the western terminus of the original GWR line, these terminal lines were known as the 'Midland Platforms'. Part of the old train shed and station is used for exhibitions and part for 'The Exploratory', a hands-on scientific exhibition, with the newer MR built extension shed employed as a car park. On departure the train heads north to :

Bristol East Junction: - MR trains used the left hand tracks and diverged (L) to pass behind Barton Hill R.e.s. rolling stock maintenance depot. Almost at the same point, the main line splits, with the route to Bristol Parkway and South Wales bearing away (L) whilst we take the right hand tracks, meeting the sharp curve from the South Wales line (L) at :

Feeder Bridge Junction: - The curve from the South Wales line was opened in 1886 to allow through running from the London and Bath direction to the newly opened Severn Tunnel, a function it still serves when the 1906 Badminton line is closed for engineering work. A few yards west is :

North Somerset Junction: - Diverging (R) is the Bristol Relief Line, providing a route avoiding the station and principally giving access to St. Philip's Marsh maintenance depot. Until closure from 15.7.68 following a landslip at Pensford, this was also the northern end of the former Bristol & North Somerset line to Frome over which passenger services ceased from 2.11.59. A triangular junction was completed by the spur which until 20.7.70 trailed in (R) at :

St. Anne's Park Junction: - Extensive sidings on either side formed Bristol East Depot but only those in railway engineer's use (R) survive. St. Anne's Park No. 1 Tunnel was opened out in 1899, but No.'s 2 and 3 Tunnels (154yds and 1017yds) remain, after the site of ST. ANNE'S PARK (cl 5.1.70). For a short distance the line runs on a shelf above the River Avon (L), a cutting then being followed by a long embankment to KEYNSHAM. Until about 1965, the Fry's (now Cadbury's) factory (L) was served by a short branch passing through the gap in the high wall (L) and crossing the road before trailing in (L).

After another embankment, Saltford Tunnel (176yds) leads to the site of SALTFOORD (cl 5.1.70) where there is a busy marina on the Avon (L). As the river bears away it is crossed by a bridge formerly used by the MR line to Bath Green Park. That line closed completely from 31.5.71, but passenger services, withdrawn from 7.3.66, may return as an extension from the preserved Avon Valley Railway. Twerton Long Tunnel (264yds) is noteworthy for its castellated portals, a feature not shared by Twerton Short Tunnel (45yds). Almost immediately after the tunnels is Twerton Viaduct (638yds), close to the Avon (L). On this viaduct is the site of TWERTON-ON-AVON (cl 2.4.17). Soon afterwards, part of the abutments of the former SDJR bridge can be seen where it passed overhead. Rounddown of services over that line started in earnest in 1962 when all through traffic was diverted away, but a service of sorts lingered on until withdrawal from 7.3.66, this date marking complete closure as the little freight traffic remaining was diverted over the North Somerset line via a new connection at Radstock. SDJR trains ran to their own terminus at BATH GREEN PARK, whose roof is just visible (L). A refuse disposal terminal occupies the site of Bath goods depot (R), immediately to the east of OLDFIELD PARK. St. James' Viaduct (600yds) leads across the Avon to :

BATH SPA (was GENERAL): - The station and the viaducts at either end complement the many fine buildings of this Georgian city. Bath Abbey is prominent (L) as we cross Dolemeads Viaduct (255yds) and pass through Sydney Gardens West (99yds) and East (77yds) Tunnels. Above (R) is the embankment carrying the Kennet &

Avon Canal. HAMPTON ROW HALT (cl 29.4.17) was before the point where the Bathampton bypass, now under construction, comes alongside (L). Although there is no doubting the benefit to the local area of taking through traffic away from the villages, it is fairly clear that this is part of a project to provide a major route from the M4 to Southampton for heavy lorries. The Department of Transport boasts of the £75 million spent on this three mile link road, but many would argue that improvements to the rail network would have greater overall benefit. Funny how the Government says that they 'invest in new roads' but 'subsidise' railways! Some two miles out of Bath was BATHAMPTON (cl 3.10.66) and :

Bathampton Junction:- The Westbury line diverges (R) to follow the River Avon as we continue ahead to cross the river and reach BATHFORD (cl 4.1.65). Very attractive scenery leads the line up the valley of By Brook to BOX (cl 4.1.65). After crossing the stream, the line pierces Middle Hill and crosses the stream again at the site of BOX (MILL LANE) (cl 4.1.65). The highly impressive west portal of Box Tunnel (1 mile 1452 yds) is ahead. It has often been said that on one day in the year the sun shines directly through the tunnel and can be seen from the west. The general claim is that this occurs on April 9, that being Brunel's birthday, either a remarkable coincidence or brilliant engineering. The cutting beyond the tunnel leads to CORSHAM (cl 4.1.65), where the village can be seen (L). After a break, the cutting resumes as far as :

Thingley Junction:- Trailing in (R) is the Trowbridge line, the passenger service being sparse. At one time the junction was triangular, and the bed of the closed third side can be seen (R). Evidence suggests that the earthworks for the spur were constructed in the 1850's, but no rails were laid until World War II, and even then were possibly never used. An embankment extends to :

CHIPPENHAM:- Best known in railway circles for the Westinghouse factory (L). The Calne branch diverged (R) until closure to passengers and to goods from 20.9.65. A long embankment takes the line across the River Avon before CHRISTIAN MALFORD HALT (cl 4.1.65) and on towards :

DAUNTSEY (cl 4.1.65): - At the station, the Malmesbury branch trailed in (L), closure coming on 17.7.33 when a spur was opened to allow Malmesbury trains into Little Somerford on the Badminton line. The remains of the Wilts & Berks Canal are just discernible (R), although gradually disappearing into the surrounding countryside. RAF Lyneham is hidden by the high ground (R). The South Wales line can be seen (L) before it converges (L) at :

Wootton Bassett Junction: - WOOTTON BASSETT (cl 4.1.65) was just beyond the junction. There is a stone terminal (R). Open ground which until recently spread either side is quickly disappearing under the expanding town of Swindon. The MSWJR route from Cheltenham to Southampton passed overhead, passenger services on the line ending from 11.9.61, although goods traffic served Cirencester Watermoor until 31.3.64. Coal trains to Moredon Power Station was the last traffic and the line closed on 25.8.76, access since 1961 having only been via the spur trailing in (R) at :

Swindon Exchange Junction: - Extending for almost a mile are the remains of Swindon Works, now largely demolished. For almost 150 years these were the principal GWR locomotive and carriage works.

SWINDON (was JUNCTION): - All passenger services use the long island platform or the bay at the west end, whilst the former 'down' platform on the far side of the through lines is used for parcels traffic. Swindon PSB is also to be found on this side of the lines. The town of Swindon was almost entirely the product of the railway, for the directors of the GWR chose a green field site for their locomotive works, to the north of the existing village. More recently, the railway presence has declined dramatically and it is, perhaps, ironic that Swindon is now well represented amongst the "big players" in the motor industry.

Highworth Junction: - Diverging (L) is the former branch to Highworth, now truncated in the factory area (L). Regular passenger services over the branch ceased from 2.3.53, but workmen's trains ran until withdrawal of goods traffic from 6.8.62. On a long embankment, we cross the A420, the River Cole and the disused Wilts & Berks canal before SHRIVENHAM (cl 7.12.64).

UFFINGTON (cl 7.12.64): - The Faringdon branch trailed in (L) until complete closure from 1.7.63, passenger services having ended on 31.12.51. In flat open country we pass CHALLOW (cl 7.12.64).

WANTAGE ROAD (cl 7.12.64): - The Wantage Tramway diverged (R) behind the station. This was a standard gauge roadside tramway of a type common in Ireland, but rare in Britain. The line opened in 1875 and closed to passengers in 1925, but goods traffic continued until 1945. One of the engines in use at the end was restored and placed on a plinth at Wantage Road. Although named 'Jane' whilst at work on the line, the original name 'Shannon' was replaced for a time at its current home at the Didcot Railway Centre. The main line continues through STEVENTON (cl 7.12.64), after which Didcot Power Station can be seen left before :

Foxhall Junction: - Tracks from the power station trail in (L), and a spur to the Oxford line diverges (L).

DIDCOT PARKWAY: - Just before the station, the connection used by Oxford line services stopping at Didcot

trails in (L). Didcot Railway Centre (L) occupies the former Didcot MPD, closed in April 1965.

Didcot East Junction: - An embankment climbing away (R) carried the DNSR line to Southampton. Passenger traffic ceased from 10.9.62 and goods from 10.8.64 although the line had previously been closed from 4.8.42 to 8.3.43 for extensive rebuilding to allow passage of heavy wartime traffic for Southampton. We will meet that line three times again on the tour. The Didcot avoiding line from Oxford trails in (L) before the site of the once busy Moreton Cutting Sidings (L).

CHOLSEY & MOULSFORD: - The Wallingford branch, which converges (L), closed to passengers from 15.6.59 and was later disconnected, but a preservation society is in the process of reinstating services and the track has returned to the bay platform (L). The Thames is crossed shortly and we follow the river to beyond Reading. GORING & STREATLEY is followed by another crossing of the Thames, and then by PANGBOURNE and by TILEHURST. At Scours Lane Junction, sidings fan out (L) and extend to :

Reading West Junction: - The main line into Reading and on to Paddington continues ahead as we diverge (R) onto the Reading Avoiding line, much used by freight and formerly by seasonal trains avoiding reversal at Reading. The site of the MPD (cl 4.1.65) (L) was redeveloped as a diesel depot and remains in use(R), together with extensive DMU sidings beyond. At the end of the curve is :

Oxford Road Junction: - The curve from the Reading comes in (L) as we cross Oxford Road to reach READING WEST, a station well used by commuters. A deep and well-wooded cutting spanned by a high bridge leads to :

Southcote Junction: - Curving sharply away (L) was the short line to Reading Goods, known as the Coley branch; closure was on 5.12.83. This is also the junction between the Berks & Hants line to Newbury and Westbury, bearing away (R), and the Basingstoke line. We take the latter, heading almost due south and soon crossing the River Kennet, at this point also forming part of the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Although the countryside is pleasant, there are few features of note as the line heads through MORTIMER to BRAMLEY. Immediately south of the station, there was a fair sized marshalling yard (L), used for the interchange of traffic with the Bramley Military Railway, the connection to which diverged (L) through gates. Construction of a central ammunition depot commenced here in 1916 and the parts east of the main line were completed the following year. Exactly when work started on the depot west of the line is not clear, but it certainly was not finished until after the end of the war in 1918. A complex of railways served the whole site, consisting of about 33 track miles, 90% of this remaining in use up the closure of the depot in February 1987. Densely planted trees have obscured most of the site, probably since the time it was built, but the trackbeds are still just visible where they pass below. South of the site the countryside is again fairly open, until the line enters the expanding town of Basingstoke. Reverse curves lead through a cutting to where we join the main line from Waterloo (L) at :

BASINGSTOKE: - A busy and important station, the only non-stop trains being the hourly Waterloo to Weymouth expresses. The bay platform (R) used by some Reading local trains is the surviving part of the former GWR terminus, closed otherwise on 1.1.32 when trains were diverted to the ex LSWR station. At the east end of the old station site was the small GWR MPD, closed in November 1950. On the same side at the west end of the station was the ex LSWR MPD, closed officially in March 1963, but used for stabling and servicing purposes up to the end of Southern steam in July 1967.

On the opposite side of the main line was the goods yard, and a few hundred yards of track still remains at the start of the former line to Alton. That line was a late arrival on the scene, having been opened under a Light Railway Order on 1.6.1901, lasting only up to 1.1.17. Local pressure on the Southern Railway led to re-opening on 18.8.24, but this time services were even shorter lived, passenger trains being withdrawn from 12.9.32 and closure following on 1.6.36. Before demolition, the abandoned rural branch was to attract the attention of film makers and was used for the making of the well-known comedy 'Oh Mr. Porter'.

A four track section leads into open country. About two miles out there is a terrace of cottages (R), the last of these being noteworthy for the collection of station nameboards in the garden. Beyond the overbridge is :

Worting Junction: - A high speed junction where the four track section splits into two double track routes, the 'up' Southampton line being carried over the Salisbury line on the well-known Battledown Flyover. Nearly two miles of level track leads through OAKLEY (cl 17.6.63) to a short stretch uphill and the summit of the long climb from Byfleet. In the next twelve miles there is just over a mile of climbing, but none of the grades in either direction are of any note. Two miles on is OVERTON, situated alongside a paper mill (R) where paper for bank notes has been produced for over two hundred years. Further on is WHITCHURCH (was _ NORTH), suffixed to distinguish it from the station on the DNSR line passing below to the west. Passenger services over that line ceased from 7.3.60,

complete closure being from 10.8.64. At the bottom of a dip was HURSTBOURNE (at 4.64) and the site of :

Hurstbourne Junction: - Diverging (L) was the short line to Fullerton on the Andover to Romsey line, closed completely when passenger services ceased on 6.7.31. Just over a mile of climbing is followed by a long descent, the lower part being alongside an ever expanding industrial estate on the outskirts of :

ANDOVER (was _ JUNCTION): - Trailing in (L) just before the station was the Andover Town and Romsey line, although beyond the first few yards there is no trace of the once substantial bridges and embankments. Withdrawal of passenger services on 7.9.64 saw the line truncated at Andover Town, this remaining section lasting for goods until 18.9.67. The fertiliser depot (R) and the few sidings occupy the sites of two MPD's, Andover (nearer the main line) and Andover Junction, closed in 1958 and 1962 respectively. A double reversing move is required in order to allow us access to the Ludgershall branch. On restarting, we will use the single track of the ex MSWJR line to Cheltenham, running parallel to the main line as far as the former :

Red Post Junction: - All that remains of the MSWJR line is the short section to Ludgershall, surviving thus far for military traffic after the closure of the rest of the line via Swindon Town when passenger services ceased on 11.9.61. Traffic levels, other than military personnel and equipment, through the sparsely populated countryside were never heavy, but by the late 1950's the service had become so infrequent and inconvenient, with poor or non-existent connections, that there were few passengers left to object when closure was eventually proposed. This was a far cry indeed from the halcyon days of the 1890's when, under the energetic leadership of Sam Fay, the LSWR and MSWJR between them provided London to Cheltenham times better than those of the GWR. At various times there has been a connection between the main line and the branch here, most notably for use in wartime emergency.

Now, of course, the branch merely diverges here, the connection having been taken out soon after 1945. A downhill section leads across the A303 to the site of the only intermediate station, WEYHILL (cl 11.9.61). Beyond here, a bungalow garden (L), the product of forty years dedicated work, is well worth a look. Largely open and fairly flat country leads to the site of LUDGERSHALL (cl 11.9.61), the station having been where the present loop is at the end of BR maintenance. Although part of the platform edge (L) is still visible, it is difficult to envisage the extra wide former platform, designed to enable large numbers of men and equipment to be assembled after arrival or awaiting entraining. It is intended that the train will pass under the road bridge in order to reach the 'Horse Dock', where it is still possible to alight. To the left of the line are several sidings, used both for MOD traffic and for the storage of numerous BR coaches, plus a pair of preserved Class 33's and a couple of TC sets.

The MOD base at Ludgershall is a vehicle depot, maintaining and storing all manner of personnel carriers, armoured cars, tanks and all such equipment as is necessary to keep an army on the move. Much of the surrounding area is occupied by military lands, with barracks forming the core of several towns and large tracts of open country used for the training of tank crews. Beyond the current end of the line closure came with the withdrawal of passenger services to Cheltenham and Swindon on 11.9.61, but a further line diverges (L) here, the truncated remains of the former Tidworth branch, only a short stretch of which survives to give access to the main part of the base. That line was built by the War Office for the MSWJR, opening for freight in July 1901 and for passengers in the October of the following year. Although for most of its life the busiest station on the MSWJR route, passenger trains were withdrawn on 19.9.55 and the War Department took over on 25.11.55, and they operated the whole line until closure 31.7.63. Hopefully we will be able to traverse the remaining section of the Tidworth branch, and also the section as far as the gate into the main security area. It is intended that we will have a photo-stop at the 'Horse Dock', before we return along the branch to :

ANDOVER: - After manoeuvres and loco movements, we will head west again to :

Red Post Junction: - A short dip is followed by the long climb to a summit shortly after GRATELEY. Beyond here there was another independent track, that of the Amesbury and Bulford Camp branch (R), over which passenger services ceased from 30.6.52, goods trains then continuing up to 4.3.63. The branch was a late-comer, having opened in stages between 1901/6, access also being afforded by the line passing below before joining (L) at :

Allington Junction: - A long chalk cutting is interrupted by a viaduct near the site of IDMISTON HALT (cl 9.9.68). Areas under military control are a feature, particularly (L) before PORTON (cl 9.9.68). From 1916 to 1950 there was a narrow gauge military line starting in the station yard (R) and running to Porton and Winterbourne Camps. A steepening descent leads through rolling downland scenery to :

Laverstock North Junction - Curving gently to the right is the main line into Salisbury, but we diverge (L) onto the Laverstock Loop, originally part of the main line from Basingstoke to the Salisbury terminus at Milford. After the line was extended through the tunnel to the present station in 1859, the loop became little used, although a siding connected at the other end lasted until about 1937. Relaying took place in 1981, mainly to provide a non-reversing route for Bournemouth line trains diverted because of the long term work being undertaken in Southampton Tunnel. In practice many other diversions occurred, although these have been somewhat reduced since the Portsmouth to Southampton and Eastleigh lines have been electrified, thus allowing electric trains to run through via the Portsmouth Direct line. The Salisbury to Romsey line is joined (R) at :

Laverstock South Junction: - A tree lined cutting leads to the site of :

Milford Junction: - New commercial premises occupy the site (R) of Salisbury's first station, known as MILFORD, closed to passengers when the present station was opened on 2.5.1859, but serving as a goods depot up to 21.8.67. A long embankment takes the line up at 1 in 150 to a summit shortly before the former :

Alderbury Junction: - Little or no trace remains of the West Moors line (R), the upgraded A36 and new housing having almost covered the first stretch of trackbed. An unadvertised interchange platform existed here for a period in the 1870's, but from then until closure with the end of passenger services on 4.5.64, a change of trains involved a trip into Salisbury. From here the line descends at easy grades to DEAN and on through pleasant water meadows to DUNBRIDGE (formerly MOTTISFONT) and to :

Kimbridge Junction: - Trailing in (L) was the Andover line, closed completely when passenger trains ceased on 7.9.64, although the track at this end survived long enough to stable the royal train in July 1966. At one time trains ran through from Southampton to Cheltenham via the MSWJR, but services north of Andover ceased on 11.9.61 after a period of rundown when the service was reduced to near uselessness (see above). Two miles of gentle downgrade leads alongside the River Test (L) until the river is crossed just north of :

ROMSEY: - Strong's Brewery (R) (or at least the ales it produced) was well known to travellers on the main line from Waterloo to Southampton because of the large hoardings set in fields alongside the line proclaiming 'You are now approaching/entering the Strong Country'. The brewery was subsequently taken over by Brickwoods and then by Whitbread's, who closed it. Also prominent (R) is Romsey Abbey Church, the only surviving part of the great 12th century abbey, whilst on the south side of the town is Broadlands House, best remembered as the home of Lord Mountbatten of Burma. The line to Redbridge via Southampton diverges (R) as we take the normally goods only Eastleigh line. Regular passenger services over this route ceased from 3.5.69, but some seasonal trains have run over the years and diversions are frequent. The only station was CHANDLERS FORD (cl 3.5.69) but if the line is reopened as proposed, there will probably be additional stops, accompanied by electrification. Well wooded country leads the line to where it curves to the right to join the main line from Basingstoke and London (L) just to the north of :

EASTLEIGH: - This station started life as BISHOPSTOKE in 1839, became BISHOPSTOKE JUNCTION in 1852, EASTLEIGH & BISHOPSTOKE in 1889 and assumed its current name on 9.7.23. Important as a junction after the opening of the Fareham line in 1841, Eastleigh's main claim to fame dates from 1909 when the LSWR transferred its locomotive works from Nine Elms. South of the station, the Fareham line curves away (L), whilst in the fork of the two lines is Eastleigh Works and the TMD, the latter occupying the site of the large MPD, closed at the end of Southern steam on 9.7.67.

Soon after the south end of the depot is passed, Southampton (Eastleigh) Airport can be seen (L), served by SOUTHAMPTON PARKWAY, opened in April 1965 as SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORT and now the first stop for an hourly service from Waterloo. Beyond here the surroundings soon become urban in character as the line passes through SWAYTHLING to reach :

ST DENYS (was PORTSWOOD): - The main station building is similar in style to others in the area, particularly to Woolston on the Portsmouth line (L) and is by the same architect, closely following the style of Sir William Tite, this one being Listed Grade II. Fareham and Portsmouth trains use platforms independent of those on the main line from Waterloo, the two lines converging immediately south of the station. Over the next mile or so there are a number of extant freight locations, some occupying part of the formerly extensive Bevois Park yard (R).

Northam (North) Junction: - When opened in 1840 by the London & Southampton Railway, the line continued straight ahead to a station appropriately named Southampton Terminus in the then heart of the town. Regular passenger services to that station ceased on 5.9.66 but until very recently boat trains continued past the station site to the Eastern Docks, also known as the Old Docks. When the line was extended to the west, a very tight right hand curve was required and this still entails a severe speed restriction to where a spur from the Southampton Terminus line trailed in (L) at :

Southampton Tunnel Junction: - Passenger services used this curve up to 5.9.66 and it closed on 5.2.73 leaving little trace. Southampton Tunnel (528yds) has given trouble many times over the years since opening in 1847 and major work was undertaken during the 1980's to counter the ground pressures causing distortions in the bed of the tunnel. Soon after emerging into the open, the tracks expand to four before entering :

SOUTHAMPTON CENTRAL: - Originally opened as BLECHYNDEN in 1847 by the Southampton & Dorchester Railway, the station was then on the edge of open country. Renamed as SOUTHAMPTON WEST END in 1858, it became SOUTHAMPTON WEST in 1892 on a slightly different site and SOUTHAMPTON CENTRAL in 1935. This last suffix was dropped during rebuilding in 1967/8, but remained in unofficial use to distinguish it from Southampton Parkway, and was recently restored. On the opposite side from the main buildings (R) there was a short private branch to a power station, notable for its overhead electric operation; closure was in the early 1960's.

West of the station the layout was enlarged during the early 1930's to cater not only for increasing traffic on the Bournemouth and Salisbury lines but also for the passenger and goods workings running to and from the Southern Railway owned Western (or New) Docks which were completed in 1934. These alterations included a complete rebuilding of MILLBROOK with a new island platform between the 'slow' lines. There are Freightliner terminals on either side just beyond the point where the line into the Western Docks goes out (L).

When the line to the west was opened in 1847 it ran for some distance no more than 100yds or so from the edge of mudflats and all the land currently existing to the south is the result of the reclamation scheme of 1927-33. Empty wagons are now stored on the surviving lines around the former Redbridge Sleeper Depot (L) where the allocated loco was housed in its own shed. The sidings that have extended almost all the way from Southampton finally end just before the platforms at :

REDBRIDGE: - Diverging (R) to run up the Test Valley is the line to Romsey and Salisbury. We keep to the main line and cross the upper tidal reaches of the Test, curving leftwards to reach :

TOTTON: - West of the station, the disused Eling Wharf line curves in from the left and we diverge (L) onto the Fawley branch, at first forming an extended goods loop off the main line. This branch was authorised in 1903 under a Light Railway Order, but construction was not completed until 1925, with formal opening on July 20th that year. For most of its life traffic was light, even after the opening of the Esso refinery at Fawley, passenger trains only running in the morning and evening and calling at this station. Passenger services were withdrawn from 14.2.66, but by then the amount of freight traffic was growing substantially. However, such has been the scale of housing development along the route and the increase in road congestion that the idea of reopening to passengers has been proposed, but to date little action has resulted. A noteworthy feature of the branch is the many level crossings over the single track line, the first crossing being at Jacobs Gutter Lane. There are further crossings at Trotts Lane and Tavells Lane before one of the two intermediate stations on the branch, at :

MARCHWOOD (cl 14.2.66): - Although closed for nearly thirty years, the station is nearly intact, with the platform, main buildings (L) and even a nameboard surviving. In addition there is a signal box controlling the level crossing north of the station and the fine semaphore signals. Just south of the station, the line to Hythe and Fawley continues ahead as we diverge (L) onto the short link to the Marchwood Military Railway, serving an extensive base. Just out of sight of the main line, we pass through the gates into :

Marchwood Military Port: - Almost immediately inside the gate and by the left hand line is MULBERRY HALT, serving the married quarters (L). This base was established as a secure port for the shipping of military equipment, part of the activity known as logistics. The site was chosen as it was in open country on Southampton Water, a deep water harbour with a unique four tides a day and consequent very small difference between high and low water levels. On entry to the base there are the four tracks of the exchange sidings, where BR locos hand over incoming trains to one of the four MOD locomotives working here. At the far end of the exchange sidings, a track branches off to the right to serve Roberts Camp (security) compound, whilst crossovers by the loco depot and the

railway control centre (R) now access to the routes to the two jetties. Unusually the BR locomotives are booked to work through on this train, using one of the more southerly lines to reach as far as possible towards the Old or South Jetty. We will probably not be able to run far down the jetty as there will be public access to a naval vessel moored alongside. After reversal we expect to take a newly laid route between the regulating sidings (R) and the south sidings (L) to run back past the port gate, the only means of (legally!) entering the base other than by rail. Another reversal will allow us to reach PORT GATE HALT where we expect to be able to alight.

The main train will now be recessed, hopefully for about an hour or so, in order to allow participants to visit the attractions on site, which include rides in a special train running from PORT GATE HALT via the site of MODEL ROOM HALT to the Old or North Jetty, and a second train traversing one of the south sidings onto the New Jetty. The former train will be formed of an army loco at either end of two ex Class 501 EMU coaches, whilst the latter will be an 'Austerity' type steam loco and brake vans.

From the jetties there is a good view across the River Test to Southampton and its maritime installations. Unusually for a large port there are no fully enclosed docks, the deep water and four tides a day mentioned above rendering it unnecessary. In a clockwise direction along the head of the water, the view encompasses the Prince Charles Container Dock, the Western Dock Passenger Terminal and the new fruit and vegetable import terminal. All these areas were reclaimed in the period 1927-33 by the Southern Railway to provide a modern and efficient means of transferring passenger and freight cargoes to and from shipping trading with all parts of the world.

Further to the right are the Royal Quay and the old Town Quay (where passenger services ran until 1.10.1914), now redeveloped to provide a marina and waterside housing. Behind the Town Quay area is the old walled town of Southampton, the site of a Roman fortress and recognised for its importance through the next two millennia. Continuing clockwise the view encompasses the Old or Eastern Docks, quite possibly with a cruise liner moored alongside. These docks extend past the site of Southampton Ocean Terminal, opened in 1950, once busy with liner services to many far-flung destinations, but subsequently overlarge for requirements and later demolished. In these days of fast and frequent flights to all parts of the globe, it is difficult to realise how recent was the age of the liners, for even in the 1960's it was sometimes necessary for the use of half a dozen complete boat trains to run to or from London in a single day. It was only a few years earlier that a record was probably set when twelve full trains ran from Southampton Docks to London between midnight and 8am on September 13th 1957, although on other occasions all that was required was for a few coaches to be tripped round to Central station to be added to the back of a scheduled service. Nowadays the few cruise liners that serve Southampton use the Queen Elizabeth Passenger Terminal, a little further to the south, or the Western Docks.

After our visit here, we will return to the Fawley branch at MARCHWOOD, and then head back through SOUTHAMPTON to :

EASTLEIGH: - Departure will be northbound on the main line to London, facing seventeen miles of unbroken climbing, mainly at 1 in 252. Fairly quickly the suburbs of Eastleigh are left behind as the line crosses the disused River Itchen Navigation and the line enters pleasant rolling country, but with few outstanding features. Both the Navigation and the River Itchen proper run close by as far as SHAWFORD, where the line passes through the 62 yds Shawford Tunnel before the bridge over the A33 leading to the site of :

Shawford Junction: - Diverging (R) was the DNSR line to Newbury and Didcot, as the title of the line suggests. This straggling cross-country line led a quiet existence for most of its life, having taken twelve years from authorisation in 1873 to completion southwards as far as Winchester Cheeseshill (later Chesil) and a further six before a link was made here. Even then services were under the control of the LSWR and it was not until 1910 that the GWR (who worked the DNSR) were able to run their own trains through to Southampton. Despite this, the DNSR remained independent (at least nominally) until absorbed by the GWR at the Grouping in 1923. The heyday for the line was during the latter part of the Second World War after a period of closure from 4.8.42 to 8.3.43 whilst extensive rebuilding took place. From the date of reopening until 1945 the line was busy for twenty-four hours a day, carrying military traffic well away from major conurbations. After the end of the war, the line soon resumed its bucolic life, passenger services south of Newbury coming to an end on 7.3.60. Freight traffic north of Winchester ceased on 10.8.64 and over the remainder on 4.4.66.

On the far side of the Itchen Valley is Twyford Down, a well known beauty spot and recently the site of a long-drawn out confrontation between environmentalists and the Department of Roads, sorry Department of Transport, who want to drive the M3 straight through the area.

Not far beyond the junction site, the line approaches :

WINCHESTER: - Probably founded before the Romans came, under their rule it became an important town, but

reaching its zenith as the Anglo-Saxon capital of the kingdom of Wessex and later the capital of England, at least until after the Norman invasion in 1066. The most famous, and indeed, impressive, building is the cathedral (R), built during the 11th and 12th centuries to replace an earlier structure commissioned by King Alfred. Most of the older buildings in the town have either ecclesiastic connections or are related to Winchester College, founded in the 14th century by the then bishop, William of Wykeham. Of the two castles here, Winchester Castle (L) is notable for its Great Hall, in almost continuous use since construction in 1222-1235 by Henry II, whilst Wolvesey Castle (R) near the river is more nearly complete.

North of the city, the line keeps almost straight, moving away from the Itchen and heading for the site of:

Winchester Junction: - Diverging (R) was the Alton line, closed to all traffic when passenger services ceased on 5.2.73, although east of Alresford the line later reopened as the Mid Hants Railway or Watercress line. On the opposite side of the main line was a wartime connection to the DNSR route, opened in March 1943 and out of use by 1951, but not lifted until 1957. In retrospect it seems surprising that the DNSR was not abandoned south of here and all traffic routed onto the main line.

Long embankments and cuttings through the chalk downs are characteristic of the line on the continuous climb to MICHELDEVER, opened in 1840 to the design of Sir William Tite and serving the cluster of houses around the station rather than the village of the same name nearly three miles south. The cutting here is very wide and there is an oil depot (R). At the end of the wide cutting the line enters Popham No. 2 Tunnel (199yds) and almost immediately Popham No. 1 Tunnel (265yds). The summit of the climb from Eastleigh is marked by Litchfield Tunnel (198yds) as the line turns to the east and descends gradually to Battledown Flyover which carries the 'up' line over the Salisbury line before all tracks join at:

Worting Junction: - And with that we regain our outward route, following it back to Bristol.

GLOSSARY

FLT	Freightliner Terminal
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MPD	Motive Power Depot
TMD	Traction Maintenance Depot
DNSR	Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway
GWR	Great Western Railway
LSWR	London & South Western Railway
MR	Midland Railway
MSWJR	Midland & South Western Junction Railway
SDJR	Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway
SR	Southern Railway

Front Cover Photo: Our last trip down the Fawley branch, which also provides access to the Marchwood Military Port, was on November 6th 1993 when the *Itchen-Piddle* tour visited various unusual lines between Southampton and Weymouth. That tour also featured Class 37 power, as shown here with 'Dutch' liveried 37.377 leaving Marchwood on its way back to the main line. At the far end of the train is the main tour engine for the day, 37.405, whilst just beyond the rear of the train a single track branches off to the left and enters MOD Marchwood.

(Dennis Wilkins)