



Saturday 14th July, 2001

The AYR-LINER



Dear Traveller,

May we offer you a warm welcome to the *Ayr-Liner*; a full day's railtour to South West Scotland. In the tradition of a classic railtour, this outing features a long distance journey, visits to several sections of through and branch 'freightlines', traversal of routes that rarely see a loco hauled passenger train and, to add a bit of spice, haulage by a variety of locos that normally spend their lives working freight trains.

From the start at Birmingham International, we expect a heavy freight Class 60 to be in charge, a type very rarely seen at such places as Birmingham New Street. At Crewe, electric power takes charge, in the form of a powerful Class 92, built to cater for Channel Tunnel traffic. After a leg stretch break at Carlisle, we head for the Scottish Border at Gretna, there leaving the ex Caledonian main line and taking to the metals of the Glasgow & South Western, on whose tracks we will largely remain until we return to England in the afternoon. The main power from Carlisle through Ayrshire and back to Carlisle will be provided by a pair of heavyweight Class 37's, once the staple power in the area.

After traversal of the *freight* line from Mauchline to Newton-on-Ayr, we reach Falkland Yard, where a Class 66 'Ying-Ying' will be attached to assist on the branchlines. The first of these is the KILLOCH branch, partially a former GSWR through route and part always a colliery access only. Then it's back to Falkland Yard for a reversal and the short trip into AYR (0921 - 1050), nice time for a breakfast break before the visit to WATERSIDE. The return from the branch takes us back to Newton-on-Ayr, where we are booked to run to AYR HARBOUR and a final reversal, followed by the return to Carlisle via Barassie and Kilmarnock. A leg-stretch break at Carlisle will also enable a loco change, with a Class 56 'Grid' being booked to take the train all the way back to Birmingham International.

This booklet will provide a souvenir of your day with Pathfinder. Contents include a description of the route, giving information on features to be seen from the train with some historical notes, a map and point to point timing sheet.

O N T H E T R A I N

Rolling Riot Catering Limited will provide the on-train refreshment service, offering for sale a selection of hot / cold drinks, crisps, sandwiches, confectionery, real ales, etc., from the buffet coach 'F', and from trolleys passing through the train (please keep the gangways clear to ease the passage of the trolleys).

A sales stand, based in brake coach 'G', will have a selection of railway / transport books, badges, postcards, photos, videos, etc., for sale, open from and back to, Wolverhampton. Please give them a visit sometime during the day – Simon and Michael will be most pleased to see you.

There will be an on-train raffle, with tickets sold after Killoch and the results of the draw announced before arrival back at Carlisle. There will be a selection of worthwhile prizes waiting to tempt you, including a £50 cash first prize!

May we ask you to be considerate in your use of the on-board toilet facilities and request that you leave them in a reasonable condition ready for the next person. Also, as we will not be able to re-fill the carriage water tanks, can we ask that you use the water in the toilets economically so that it lasts as long as possible. Utilise station facilities when possible.

Our stewards will pass through the train at frequent intervals to collect anything you wish to dispose of, and it would be helpful if used cups / sandwich packs are stacked inside each other as this substantially reduces total volume. Please note that the bins in the toilets should not be used for the disposal of general rubbish. As always on Pathfinder trains, all seating areas are in NON-SMOKING saloons, irrespective of any window labels 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 for your co-operation.

Two final points; if you have any queries, please feel free to ask any Pathfinder representative, as we are here to help. Also, if you have a problem, likewise please bring this to our attention as soon as possible since 'if we don't know it's broke, we can't fix it', and it is very difficult to resolve matters after completion of the excursion.

F U T U R E T O U R S

Copies of our current tour brochure, covering excursion trains through to September, can be found on the sales stand in brake coach 'G'. If you wish to make a booking on any of these special excursions, please hand it/them to any member of Pathfinder 'Team Orange' when they pass through the train. Likewise, if you would like your name and address added to our mailing list, please ask any of our representatives, who will be most pleased to oblige.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

Thanks are due to Riviera Trains Limited, Railtrack and English, Welsh and Scottish Railway for all their help and assistance in the organisation of today's excursion.

Please enjoy the day ahead,

... from all at PATHFINDER (Team Orange).

Route Description - Compiled by Richard Szejewski

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 stations on the route, whether open or closed, are shown in CAPITALS, followed, if relevant, by the date of closure to passengers, although not all former stations are named. Whilst it is appreciated that many passengers on today's train are not specifically interested in railway history, the naming of the stations that we pass and the recording of junctions with other lines may help in locating the current position of the train, in addition to providing an indication of the relative position of other places. This description of the route will start at :

CARLISLE (formerly CITADEL). Carlisle has been important as a railway centre since the opening of the first line, the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway, completed to Greenhead in 1836 and on to Newcastle in 1838. Five years later it was joined by the Maryport & Carlisle Railway and when the Midland Railway arrived here via the famed Settle & Carlisle line, the station was shared by seven companies. Working the traffic at peak times could be a nightmare as there were (and still are) only three through platforms, although the majority of goods trains avoided the station area by using separate lines as mentioned above. Given the increase in both passenger and freight traffic over the last few years, there have been suggestions that the station avoiding line should be rebuilt and reopened.

After a change of power, we head north and pass the castle (R) before the bridge over the River Caldew, beyond which was Port Carlisle Branch Junction, where the Port Carlisle and Silloth branch diverged (L), the latter closing on 6.9.1964 amid unprecedented scenes of protest. That line had been one of the first in Britain to receive the first generation of DMU's (in 1954) and was busy right to the end. Such was BR's haste to demolish the line that coaches were left stranded and had to be cut up on the spot. The first part of the line was also access to the 'Waverley' line to Edinburgh, this too closing against bitter opposition, on 6.1.1969, leaving only a stump to serve RAF Brunthill. The River Eden is crossed before Etterby Junction where access to the much reduced Kingmoor yard diverges (L). The wasteland (R) marks the site of the large Kingmoor loco depot, closed in December 1967, whilst the later diesel depot, closed on 12.7.1988, but later reopened by DRS, is (L). The southbound access to the yard passes overhead before all lines converge near the site of ROCKCLIFFE (cl 17.7.1950).

The track is level through FLORISTON (cl 17.7.1950) and across the Esk Viaduct, after which there is and MoD depot (R), which has an extensive network of internal lines. Part of what was known as the Gretna complex, the bases and factories occupied some forty square miles and were served by numerous lines of a variety of gauges, one of which passed below the main line. An emergency connection into the extensive munitions plant diverges (R), the main access being at Mossband Junction. During and shortly after World War I, there were two stations between the two junctions, MOSSBAND OFFICE HALT and MOSSBAND PLATFORM, the latter being an interchange for munitions workers. Known as the Gretna complex, the bases and factories occupied some forty square miles and were served by numerous lines of a variety of gauges, one of which passed below the WCML. A side-effect of the existence of the plants was that the breweries and pubs in Carlisle and Annan were nationalised in 1915 to ensure that the government had control of the drinking habits of the munitions workers, a state of affairs only otherwise found in Invergordon, where there was a naval base. No doubt the idea of having inebriated workers in an explosives factory was not one to be countenanced. Perhaps surprisingly, this state ownership lasted until the 1980's, producing prize-winning ales at a very good price. The northern boundary of the plant was the former line to Longtown which diverges (R). There are proposals to rebuild this line to Longtown and then continue over the 'Waverley' line as far as remote Riccarton Junction, a new curve being constructed there to reach the former Border Counties line. The principal purpose would be to reach the vast Kielder Forest to provide transport for forest products, but there would be a potential military use as it would enable them to convey vehicles and equipment to the training grounds nearby.

We now cross the River Sark and enter Scotland. An open area (R) marks the site of the former NBR GRETNA (cl 9.8.1915) whilst nearer are traces of the CR GRETNA (cl 10.9.1951). At Greta Junction, the main line via Beattock continues ahead as we diverge (L) and take the former GSWR route to Glasgow via Kilmarnock. A cutting leads to GRETNA GREEN (cl 6.12.1965, reopened 20.9.1993), famous amongst the romantically inclined as the place where the village blacksmith performed weddings, a practice ended by law in 1940. In 1754 a law had been passed in England requiring that all persons under the age of 21 should have the consent of their parents before marriage, but this writ did not apply in Scotland, where all that was necessary was that the couple should 'plight their troth' before witnesses. There were trailing connections from the Gretna complex before RIGG (cl 1.11.1942) and after EASTRIGGS (was DORNOCK, cl 6.12.1965) and there are still MoD sidings (L) at the latter, giving access to a complex that still comprises of nearly thirty miles of narrow gauge lines.

Some two miles west, few traces remain of the Caledonian line from Kirtlebridge which passed overhead on its way to the Solway Viaduct. That line was opened to goods in 1869 and to passengers on 8.8.1870, but the collapse of West Cumbrian mining and industry by the turn of the century meant that traffic quickly fell below economic levels. Closure of the viaduct for repairs on 1.9.1921 became permanent although dismantling only took place in 1933. Even that was not quite the end, for the pier stumps continued to cause problems for fishing boats negotiating the treacherous shifting sands of the Solway Firth until a concerted effort in the 1950's cut and blasted the remains. Passenger services over the viaduct ceased from 20.5.1921, but the CR SHAWHILL station (R) was used by Kirtlebridge trains until 27.4.1931. Infrequent goods trains ran to Kirtlebridge until some time in 1939 and the CR station served as a goods depot until 28.2.1955, trains running via the connection that trailed in (L) at ANNAN. Built in 1848, the sandstone ashlar construction is well complemented by the later Victorian glazed awning. Also of note are the River Annan and Port Street Viaducts, again of ashlar construction. Local employment

includes the remains of the MoD plants, the ICI Nobel works a short distance east (L), and the Chapelcross Nuclear Plant (R). The ICI plant was served by the unadvertised POWFOOT HALT from the mid-1920's to some time after World War II. If the visibility is good, there are extensive views (L) to the northern Lake District, until after CUMMERTREES (cl 19.9.1955) where the line veers to the north-west and the view becomes dominated by Criffell (1868ft) on the Scottish side of the Firth.

Beyond RUTHWELL (cl 6.12.1965), we cross flat and somewhat boggy ground to reach RACKS (cl 6.12.1965), the last station before DUMFRIES. The now closed goods yard was (L) and the MPD (cl 2.5.1966) (R) before the station. Elaborate glazed awnings are attached to the solidly built main structures (L) and cover the bays formerly used by trains over the 'Port Road' to Stranraer and for the Cairn Valley Light Railway to Moniaive. Dumfries was also the junction for the CR branch (R) to Lockerbie, which closed to passengers from 19.5.1952 and completely from 18.4.1966. Sir Walter Scott referred to Dumfries as the 'Queen of the South', which is where the town's football team acquired its name. Shortly beyond the station is Castle Douglas Junction. The rusting track diverging (L) is the sole remains of the Stranraer line, closed to all traffic beyond Maxwelltown from 14.6.1965. Ever since the line closed, there have been pressure groups campaigning to reopen the route, mainly to relieve the environmental damage caused by heavy traffic using the A75. Refitting of the line as far as Maxwelltown for freight traffic is expected soon.

At one time the route from Carlisle to Glasgow was a trunk main line, carrying substantial amounts of Anglo-Scottish passenger traffic. Its genesis, however, was in a series of largely local Scottish lines, starting with the Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock & Ayr Railway, authorised in 1837, although Kilmarnock was not reached until April 1843, and even then simply as a branch from Dalry on the Glasgow to Ayr line. However, by then the GPK&A was already looking at extending towards England, opening its line as far as Auchinleck in August 1848. Three weeks later, the Glasgow, Dumfries & Carlisle started its trains from Dumfries to Greta, from the start worked by the GPK&A, a clear sign of future intentions. And so it was, the gap between the lines being narrowed in October 1849 when Dumfries to Closeburn opened, and still further when Auchinleck to New Cumnock was completed in May 1850. It was, therefore, no surprise when, upon the start of services between Closeburn and New Cumnock on October 28th 1850, the two companies amalgamated, taking the name of the Glasgow & South Western Railway.

It was still rather a roundabout route between Carlisle and Glasgow compared with the Caledonian line route via Beattock, particularly before the completion of the direct route from Kilmarnock to Glasgow via Barrhead in 1873, but managed to take some through traffic. Two years later the fortunes of the company improved further, when it formed an alliance for the carriage of Anglo-Scottish traffic with the Midland Railway, newly arrived at Carlisle via the famed Settle & Carlisle line. For the next century the line led a busy life, never matching the passenger traffic levels on the WCML, but having a good few expresses to complement the heavy freight usage, both from the local coal industry and from trains taking a more easily graded route between England and the Scottish Lowlands than was presented by the fearsome Beattock Bank. Decline had already set in by the 1960's, with the loss of both local and through freight traffic, the advent of diesel power that could cope with far heavier loads over Beattock, and closure of most stations on the route by the mid 1960's, leaving just three open in the ninety miles between Carlisle and Kilmarnock. But it was the completion of the electrification of the former Caledonian route in 1974 that nearly sounded the death knell. Indeed, at that time complete closure between Dumfries and Kilmarnock other than for some local coal traffic seemed a serious proposition, but fortunately it was not to be. Those dark days seem far away, with more passenger trains than for many years, four stations reopened, and coal trains at times fighting for space on the now singled sections, not to mention frequent diversions because of engineering work and other blockages on the WCML.

But back to today. The route to Kilmarnock is sometimes referred to as the Nith Valley line as it follows the River Nith for some thirty five miles, the first crossing being before Cairn Valley Junction. Diverging (L) was the Moniaive line, a light railway opened in 1905 to serve a very sparse population, a factor that led to withdrawal of passenger services from 3.5.1943 and closure from 16.5.1949. A gentle climb takes us to HOLYWOOD (cl 26.9.1949) and across the Nith on Portrack Viaduct, beyond which there are four miles up at 1 in 200 through AULDGIRTH (cl 3.11.1952). A tall viaduct carries the line over Clauchrie Burn, after which easier grades soon give way to a resumption of 1 in 200 through CLOSEBURN (cl 11.9.1961). Cample Water is crossed on a skew viaduct at the start of seven miles mainly at 1 in 150 which takes the line away from the Nith to THORNHILL (cl 6.12.1965). The river is visible again (L) as it emerges from Drumlanrig Gorge, but after CARRONBRIDGE (cl 7.12.1953), we bear away again to cross the Carron Water and reach a summit at the entrance to Drumlanrig Tunnel (1410yds). On emerging from the tunnel there are five miles mainly of descent close to the river (L) in a narrow valley. The bridge over Menock Water marks the start of the last climb, three miles of 1 in 180 leading to SANQUHAR (cl 6.12.1965, reopened 27.6.1994), where the 15th century castle east of the station is now in ruins.

A mile beyond the station, we cross Crawick Water and turn more westward towards KIRKCONNEL, for many years the only open station between Kilmarnock and Dumfries. There are now four, the second to reopen having been NEW CUMNOCK (cl 6.12.1965, reopened 27.5.1991). At Bank Junction a short branch from Knockshinnoch trails in (L). This former GSWR line ran to exchange sidings with a number of colliery lines, the last of which closed in 1969, resulting in closure of the branch on 18.8.1969. A new open-cast site was established in the early 1980's and traffic restarted in mid-August 1985, mainly export coal for Northern Ireland. The Nith is seen for the last time (L) as we bear more northerly to soon reach Polquhah Summit. Some two miles of descent leads across the bed of the Ayr to Muirkirk line shortly before (OLD) CUMNOCK (cl 6.12.1965). Passenger services from Ayr to Edinburgh via Cronberry and Muirkirk ceased from 1.10.1951, although for the last three weeks diverted via Mauchline and Auchinleck. Regular goods traffic from Cronberry via the line below ceased from

4.6.1962, although the line was officially available until 7.3.1964. There was also a curve from the Cronberry line that trailed in (R), closure dates of which are unknown. About a mile west of the station, the 14 arch Templand Viaduct carries the line 145 feet above Lugar Water. A further mile or so leads to AUCHINLECK (cl 6.12.1965, reopened 12.5.1994). Converging (R) is the bed of the line from Cronberry via Lugar, closed to passengers from 3.7.1950 but reopened from 10.9.1951 to 1.10.1951 for diverted Ayr to Edinburgh trains (see above). The line closed to all traffic from 6.12.1976. A short distance leads to Barony Junction. Barony Colliery and Power Station were served by a branch that trailed in (L). In the last few years, much of the coal was wound at Killoch Colliery, the pit heaps of which can be seen about three miles away (L); the branch closed on 25.5.1986.

Trailing in (R) at Brackenhill Junction is the bed of the Catrine branch, closed to passengers on 3.5.1943 and completely from 6.7.1964. Just over a mile further, we cross the River Ayr on Ballochmyle Viaduct. This spectacular bridge has a central arch with a span of 181ft and carries the line 163ft above the river. Unfortunately, the full scale of the structure can only be appreciated from below, and even then only in winter due to the thickly wooded valley. Beyond MAUCHLINE (cl 6.12.1965) is Mauchline Junction, where the Ayr line diverges (L). Local passenger services were withdrawn from 4.1.1943 and the line became goods only, but passenger trains ran again from 10.9.1951 to 1.10.1951 when Ayr to Muirkirk trains were diverted this way (see above). Passenger traffic again returned to the line from 14.6.1965 when closure of the 'Port Road' left this as the shortest route from Carlisle to Stranraer. These trains were later sent by an even longer route and diverted via Kilmarnock, but the principal train of the day, the 'Northern Irishman' is now but a memory. Declining coal traffic resulted in closure of the line as far as Annbank Junction from 1.4.1985, but increasing loads from Knockshinnoch led to reopening from 17.3.1988 and other freight trains have also returned to the route.

We leave the main line and take the Annbank line, opened in 1870. From a height of nearly 400ft at Mauchline, the line descends to near sea level at Ayr and there are long stretches downhill at around 1 in 70, interspersed with level and even uphill sections. A two mile descent ends as we cross the Water of Fail at Failford, where the wooded valley of the River Ayr is close by (L). After a stiff climb to a summit near the site of TARBOLTON (cl 4.1.1943), we turn downhill to Annbank Junction. Trailing in (L) is the Killoch branch, formerly part of the Ayr to Muirkirk line. As noted above, passenger services to Muirkirk were diverted via Mauchline between 10.9.1951 and 1.10.1951, after which date they ceased. ANNBANK (cl 10.9.1951) was at the junction, a favoured photographic location of the late Derek Cross. A prominent feature of his pictures were the spoil heaps in the angle between the lines, but they have now been landscaped.

Less than a mile on was Mossblown Junction, where few traces remain of the line to Monkton, near Prestwick on the Ayr to Glasgow line. No regular passenger service appears to have run and the line was cut as a through route in 1949, but a colliery at this end was served at least until the 1960's. AUCHINCRUIVE (cl 10.9.1951) was near the closed oil terminal (L) which served Prestwick Airport (R). At Blackhouse Junction, the spur (L) towards Ayr became redundant when trains from Carlisle to Ayr and Stranraer were diverted via Kilmarnock from 5.5.1975. Ayr MPD is enclosed in a triangle formed by the bed of the spur, the Annbank line and the Ayr to Glasgow line (L) into which we trail at Newton Junction. On the other side of the bridge, we diverge (L) behind the 'up' platform at NEWTON-ON-AYR and enter Falkland Yard.

Our train should be re-engined here before reversing direction and heading back onto the Mauchline line which we will follow to Annbank Junction, where the Mauchline line continues ahead as we diverge (R) and take the Killoch branch. This steeply graded route remains open for coal traffic from Knockshinnoch and Chalmerton to the washery at Killoch. No coal has been wound at Killoch since closure of Barony Colliery (Auchinleck) in 1989, to which it was connected underground. About a mile out, the River Ayr is crossed at Knockshoggle and we start a steep climb towards TRABBOCH (cl 10.9.1951). Climbing continues, at one point close to the Water of Coyle (R), to DRONGAN (cl 10.9.1951) and Drongan Junction. Continuing ahead is the bed of the line to Belston Junction, Cumnock and Muirkirk, last used for coal trains from Littlemill Colliery (Rankinston) which ceased from 1.1.1975. These trains reversed at Belston Junction, the section beyond there having lost regular traffic from 26.7.1965 with the closure of Whitehill Colliery (Skares). From here on, we are on a purely mineral line which exists to serve Killoch, where only a washery survives at the former colliery site. In rather open country, the line curves and climbs continuously before a cutting at the entrance to the mine sidings. We will stop at the Railtrack boundary, from where the remaining lines extend for about half a mile within the washery.

After reversal here, we will head back to Falkland Yard, where we will reverse again and travel via our earlier route, but only for the short distance to Newton Junction. Ayr MPD/TMD is (L) before Hawkhill Junction, where much of the closed curve from the Mauchline line survives as part of the depot area. The River Ayr is crossed before AYR. Two bay platforms (R) serve electric services to Glasgow and there are two through lines used by trains for Girvan and Stranraer. At the far end, and clear of the overall roof are the closed terminal platforms (L) which were used by Dalmellington trains. A short distance south, and on the opposite side of the line are the carriage sidings used to stable EMU's, this being the limit of electrification.

The line south of here was opened on March 18th, 1854, mainly to serve the large ironworks at Dalmellington. Opening of the current main line to Stranraer was in stages, to Maybole in 1856, Girvan in 1860 and finally throughout in 1870, although at that time the objective was Portpatrick as the harbour at Stranraer had not yet been built. The first mile out of Ayr to Belmont level crossing is up at 1 in 170, steepening then to 1 in 88 to the site of Alloway Junction. Diverging (R) is the bed of the Maidens & Dunure Light Railway which ran round the coast to Girvan. Opened on 3.1.1905, traffic levels at the intermediate small villages never gave much return on investment and passenger services as far as Turnberry ceased from 1.12.1930, resumed from July 1932 and finally ended in June 1933. The section from Girvan to Turnberry retained its trains until 2.3.1942, largely on account of the hotel and golf course established by the GSWR. Services were restarted on the northern section from 17.5.1947

to serve the new Butlin's Holiday Camp at Heads of Ayr, and these trains ran until 16.9.1968. This was the last part of the line to remain open, as all goods traffic had ceased from 28.2.1955, resulting in complete closure from Heads of Ayr to Girvan. An ambitious plan floated around ten years ago considered reconstruction of all or part of the line, a project expected to take twenty years, although little has been heard of this idea recently.

The grade on the main line steepens to 1 in 70, past the site of Glengall Junction, from where a short branch (L) served Ailsa (or Glengall) Hospital, a mental institution. At one time a passenger service ran on visiting days, but in later years, the local trip working, still known today as 'The Squib', ran once or twice a week with boiler-house coal until conversion to oil in 1965. Further climbing at 1 in 70 leads to Dalrymple Junction. The Girvan line continues ahead as we diverge (L) onto the former Dalmellington line, generally referred to as the Waterside branch, but officially known as the Waterside (Benbane) branch. All passenger services ceased from 6.4.1964 and the section beyond Waterside closed completely on 6.7.1964, but coal from a number of mines in the Waterside area provided traffic until late in 1986. No track lifting took place as British Coal had plans for opening an opencast site near Waterside. Development of the site progressed such that a new track layout had been provided by March 1988 with the first train running on 14.9.1988, although regular traffic did not start for some six months.

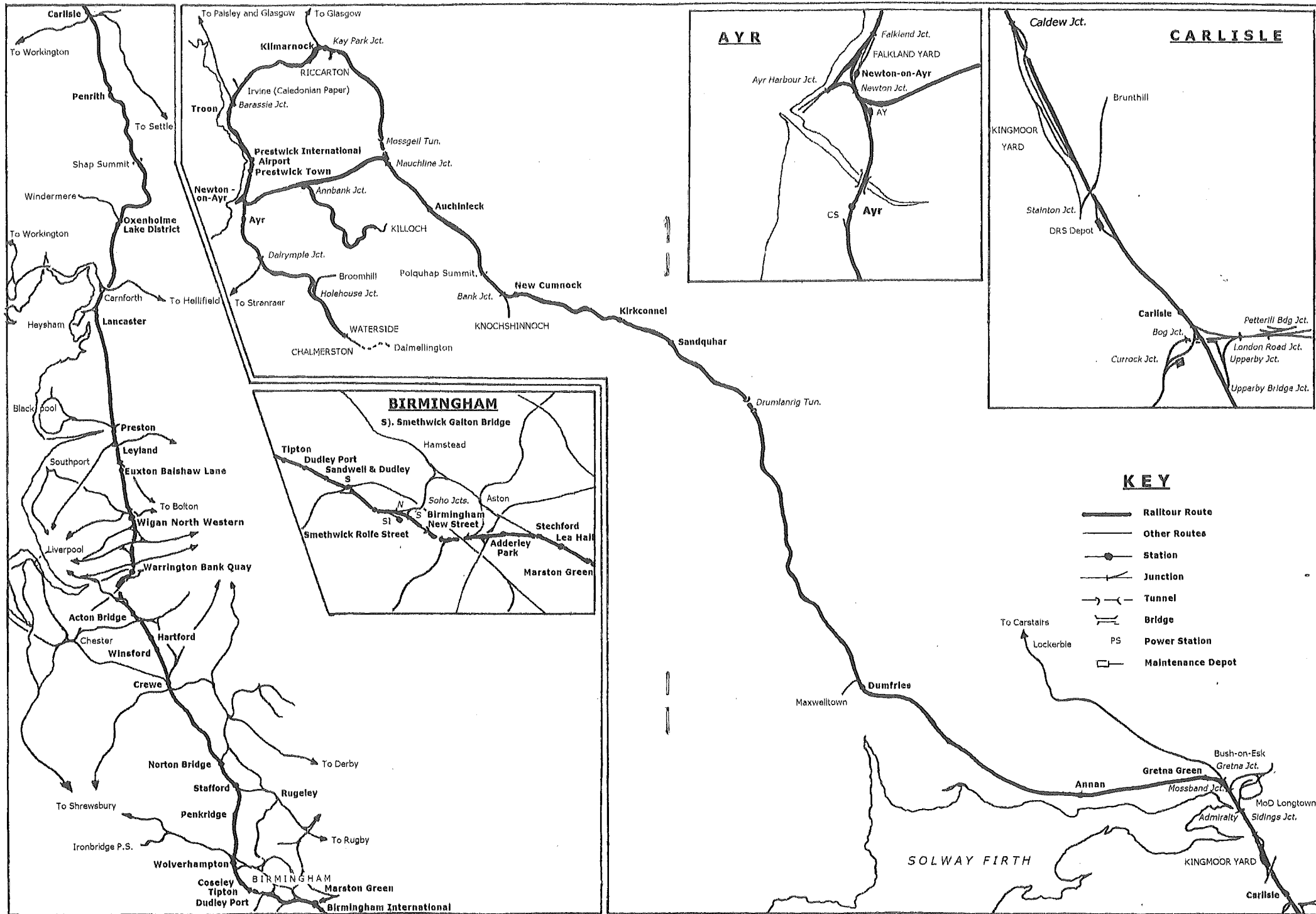
Further ascent at 1 in 70 leads to a short drop through Pleasantfield Cutting and an easier climb to the viaduct at Burnton. A short level section is followed by 1 in 73 up to the site of Potterston Junction. Trailing in (L) was a four mile long mineral line serving collieries as far as Coyton, not far from Drongan. Climbing is unbroken at 1 in 73/75 until a mile beyond HOLLYBUSH (cl 6.4.1964), where a short drop is followed by 1 in 100 to the site of HOLEHOUSE JUNCTION (cl 6.4.1950). Converging (L) was the line from Belston Junction on the Muirkirk line, closed to all traffic with the end of passenger services on 3.4.1950, although the first part of the line was used for wagon storage for about ten years and the line beyond Rankinston survived to serve Littlemill Colliery until 1.1.1975 (see above under Drongan Junction). The station was for interchange only and there was no public access. About a mile of the line was reopened to serve an opencast site known as Broomhill and this remains available, although is not expected to last much longer.

Ascent at 1 in 116/106 leads the line close by the River Doon (R) to Smithston Junction. Traces remain of a colliery line which diverged (L). Our line continues to climb, to a summit shortly before PATNA (cl 6.4.1964). An easy descent gives way to level track as far as WATERSIDE (cl 6.4.1964). The Railtrack limit is half a mile beyond the station site, at about the point where the former NCB system was linked to the Dalmellington line, at a location known as Dunaskin. The BR section from here to Dalmellington was abandoned on 4.7.1964, with exchange sidings for the NCB system which continued to thrive. An NCB line ran almost parallel to the branch at a higher level from before Patna, other collieries being served by the private line which diverged (L) to Minnivey, Pennyvenie and Benbain. Part of that line has been taken over by the Ayrshire Railway Preservation Group who run industrial steam and diesel locos around the heritage site based along the line.

The Railtrack boundary is around two miles from the ARPG site, but the aim of the ARPG is to restore services to Waterside over Scottish Coal owned tracks, allowing a connection with the *Dunaskin Experience*, to the left of the line. The *Dunaskin Experience* is on the site of the former Dalmellington Ironworks, the best preserved Victorian ironworks in Europe. These works were established here in 1845 and at their zenith employed 1400 people, although the number was reducing steadily for some years before the last furnace was blown out in 1921. After that the company was involved in coal mining and brick production, these activities passing to the NCB in 1947. The brick kilns were finally shut down in 1976 and deep coal mining finished in 1978 with the closure of Pennyvenie in July that year and the NCB system was abandoned, coal from opencast sites from then on being loaded at Dunaskin, with the section south of here lifted in 1980. The Waterside system of the NCB was renowned among industrial steam enthusiasts for its collection of locos, which were always kept in fine external condition, right up to the end in 1978. Opencast workings continued until December 1986, after which the whole branch became disused, until the opening of the new opencast site at Chalmerston, as detailed above.

After reversal we will return down the branch to Dalrymple Junction and continue thence through AYR back to Newton Junction, where we diverge (L), not into Falkland Yards this time but onto the through line to the harbour. A short distance down this line we cross on the level the bed of the line to Ayr Goods, believed to have closed in December 1973. At Ayr Harbour Junction we meet (R) the access from the north, almost directly beneath the bridge carrying a road access to the north side of the harbour. Beyond the bridge the tracks fan out into a group of sidings, four through Loops 1 - 4 and various dead ends, although only that to the scrapyard (L) remains in use. The four Loops converge into a single track at the EWSR boundary, crossing an internal road then before splitting three ways, with the one more or less straight ahead running through a coal stockpile.

After reversal we will return the short distance to Ayr Harbour Junction, there taking the left-hand fork, through the West Sidings of Falkland Yards and thence back to the main line (R) at Falkland Junction. A golf course extends (L) as far as PRESTWICK TOWN, which is soon followed by the site of Prestwick Junction, where little trace remains of the former line from Mossblown Junction, cut as a through route on 15.11.1949, leaving a short section to serve an oil depot, also now closed. Prestwick Airport can be seen (R), served by PRESTWICK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. The oil depot mentioned above was replaced by a new terminal (L). Not far on was MONKTON (cl 28.10.1940), followed by Lochgreen Junction, where the Troon avoiding line continued straight ahead until closure on 15.11.1982, as we curve to the left and then to the right to reach Troon Junction, from where there was access (L) to the docks until 27.6.1966, and then TROON. Beyond the station was Barassie South Junction, where the other line from the docks trailed in (L) until 3.12.1973. Within the dockland area was a scrapyard where many steam locos met their fate. Reverse curves lead to Barassie Middle Junction, where we join the short remaining section of the Troon avoiding line (R), also previously used to serve Barassie carriage works.



KEY

- Railtour Route
- Other Routes
- Station
- Junction
- Tunnel
- Bridge
- Power Station
- Maintenance Depot

THE AYR LINER
1243 BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET TO AYR
1244 AYR TO BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET

Saturday 14th July, 2001

Miles & Chains		TIMING LOCATION	SCHEDULED TIMINGS			
Out	Return		Outward	Actual	Return	Actual
0.00	60.70	BIRMINGHAM INT'NAL	PU	2230		SD 2040
4.33	56.37	Stechford		2239		2032
8.18	52.52	BIRMINGHAM NEW ST.	PU	2245 2253		SD 2018 2022
10.19	50.51	Soho South Junction		2258		2014
12.01	48.73	Galton Junction		2300		2011
15.42	45.28	Dudley Port		2303		2008
21.02	39.68	WOLVERHAMPTON	PU	2310 2313		SD 1958 2000
22.56	38.14	Bushbury Junction		2317		1954
36.33	24.37	STAFFORD	PU	2335 2337		SD 1937 1940
41.62	19.08	Norton Bridge		2345		1925
52.64	8.06	Madeley		2354		1916
60.70	0.00	CREWE	LC	0010		SD 1902 1905
0.00	141.08	"	PU	0040		---
8.66	132.22	Winsford S.B.		0057		1851
17.20	124.66	Weaver Junction		0103		1843
22.24	118.64	Acton Grange Junction		0107		1836
24.11	116.77	Warrington Bank Quay		0109		1834
27.47	113.41	Winwick Junction		0112		1830
34.42	106.46	Springs Branch Junction		0118		1823
35.71	105.17	WIGAN NORTH WESTERN	PU	0120 0123		SD 1818 1821
43.42	97.46	Balshaw Lane		0133		1805
45.44	95.43	Euxton Junction		0135		1803
51.01	90.07	PRESTON	PU	0150 0201		SD 1750 1753
71.79	69.09	Lancaster		0220		1729
73.71	67.17	Morecambe South Junction		0222		1726
78.07	63.01	Carnforth North Junction		0225		1720
91.07	50.01	Oxenholme		0235		1704
103.56	36.68	Tebay		0247		1654
123.19	17.69	Penrith		0307		1635
141.08	0.00	CARLISLE	OP	0327		OP 1612

Miles & Chains	TIMING LOCATION		TIMINGS	
			Scheduled	Actual
0.00	CARLISLE	PU	0412	
8.57	Gretna Junction		0422	
17.58	Annan		0431	
33.07	Dumfries		0447	
47.12	Thornhill		0502	
62.39	Kirkconnel		0518	
69.75	New Cumnock		0526	
81.68	Mauchline	*/T	0546	0603
88.45	Annbank		0615	
93.04	Newton Junction	T	0622	0624
93.20	FALKLAND YARD	RR	AAE 0629	
0.00	" "	Rev	0709	
0.20	Newton Junction		0713	
0.40	Sig PA335	T	0715	0717

Miles & Chains	TIMING LOCATION		TIMINGS	
			Scheduled	Actual
4.31	Annbank	OP	0725	0733
12.35	KILLOCH RT Limit	Rev	0806	
0.00	" "			0811
8.04	Annbank	OP	0844	0852
12.15	Newton Junction	T	0900	0915
12.35	FALKLAND YARD	Rev	0908	
0.00	" "			0913
0.20	Newton Junction			0916
1.27	AYR	Break	0921	1050
4.31	Dalrymple Junction			1055
13.48	WATER SIDE RT Limit	Rev	1123	
0.00	" "			1128
9.17	Dalrymple Junction			1155
13.21	Ayr			1158
14.28	Newton Junction			1200
14.68	AYR HARBOUR EWS Limit	Rev	1205	
0.00	" "			1210
0.40	Falkland Yard	DAE	1216	1235
2.08	Prestwick			1241
6.51	Barassie Junction			1247
14.43	Kilmarnock			1302
23.66	Mauchline			1313
35.59	New Cumnock			1334
43.15	Kirkconnel			1341
58.42	Thornhill			1353
72.47	Dumfries			1408
87.77	Annan	*	1423	1445
96.78	Gretna Junction			1458
105.54	CARLISLE	SD	1510	

CODES USED :

PU	Passenger Pick Up Station	SD	Passenger Set Down Station
LC	Loco Change	Rev	Train Reverses
AAE	Attach Assistant Engine	DAE	Detach Assistant Engine
RR	Loco Run Round	*	Pathing Stop
OP	Operational Stop	T	Pick-up or Set-down Token

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. All mileages are taken from "Mile by Mile" by David Maxey, published by Peter Watts Publishing. Any recovery time built into the schedule is not shown.

Every reasonable effort, within the control of the Organisers, will be made to operate the tour in accordance with timings and other details given. However, many factors can affect the running of tours and we cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of late running, changes imposed at short notice or curtailment of the tour as a result of circumstances outside of our direct control. Please note that although departure times at the pick-up stations will not be before the times stated, all other times are given for guidance only. In the event of late running, the duration of intermediate station stops may be curtailed, and at all points on the return journey we may leave earlier than the times stated.

We now enter BARASSIE, where the Kilmarnock diverges (R) through its own platforms. Local passenger services were withdrawn from 3.3.1969 and only goods traffic used the line until diversion of Carlisle to Ayr and Stranraer trains this way from 5.5.1975. The history of the line goes back to July 6th, 1812 with the opening of the Kilmarnock and Troon plateau, and is thus one of the oldest lines in Scotland. Diverging (L) at Meadowhead Junction is the line opened in January 1989 to serve the Irvine plant of Caledonian Paper. Timber is brought in from the Scottish Highlands via trip workings from Falkland Yard, and china clay arrives from Cornwall twice weekly, the Burngallow trains being the longest through freight workings in Britain. Further along the Kilmarnock line, there is a CE tip (L) and quarry (R). As far as DRYBRIDGE (cl 3.3.1969), the line is almost straight and level, but beyond here we enter the valley of the River Irvine, along which we wind to GATEHEAD (cl 3.3.1969). At Fairlie Junction, a line diverged (R), known as the Fairlie branch, and closed in April 1951. A short distance on was Moorfield Junction. Diverging (R) was an alternative route into Kilmarnock, via Riccarton & Craigie, which also gave access to the Darvel line; closure is thought to have been in 1939. After a straight stretch past the site of St. Marnock's Goods Depot, the line curves first left, and then sharply (R) to trail into the Glasgow line (L) at Kilmarnock Central Junction. In the fork of the two lines is the bed of the Dalry line, the first proper railway access to Kilmarnock when opened in 1845, and used by some through passenger trains up to abandonment on 1.10.1973. Hunslet Barclay's works are (R) before KILMARNOCK.

As elsewhere, the station serves a fraction of its former traffic, but two through and two terminal platforms remain in use, in addition to the reversible through road. Departure eastwards leads across Fenwick Water and past the Burns Monument (L) to Kay Park Junction, where the short branch to Riccarton, the remaining part of the former loop to Moorfield Junction (see above), goes out (R). In the fork is the site of Hurlford MPD, demolished soon after closure on 3.10.1966. Heading east we start to climb, past HURLFORD (cl 7.3.1955) and across the River Irvine before Galston Junction. Sidings in the Johnny Walker distillery (L) are on the bed of the former line to Galston, Darvel and Strathaven. Passenger services were cut back to Darvel from 25.9.1939 and ceased from 6.4.1964, goods traffic ceasing from 6.7.1964 apart from the section to Mayfield which lasted until 20.9.1965. There was also a connection from the Darvel line which passed below en route to Riccarton & Craigie, closure date unknown but probably in 1939. There is a five mile climb from Hurlford, mainly at 1 in 100/99, past the abandoned MOD plant at Bowhouse (R) and across the Cessnock Water. The grade eases near the site of Garrochburn Goods (cl May 65), where a colliery branch diverged (L) until the late 1960's. Passage of the 680yd Mossiegl Tunnel is followed by a gentle descent to Mauchline Junction. Converging (R) is the line from Ayr via Annbank Junction, our route into Ayr this morning. From here we retrace our earlier course via DUMFRIES to CARLISLE.

With only three through platforms, this station was a nightmare to operate at busy times, especially in the days when traffic was far heavier than today. In the last century, this station was the meeting place of seven separate companies and, with through coaches from as far away as Penzance, displayed more train liveries than even today's railways can muster. A degree of order was only managed because almost all goods traffic ran via the lines of the Joint Goods Committee, although most of these closed in 1986 after damage caused by a serious derailment. The strategic position of Carlisle led to importance from Roman times and it has been subject to invasion at intervals throughout most of its history. Between 1136 and 1157 it was held by the Scots and it is possible that the castle was raised during this period, but it is more likely to have been started during the twenty years following recapture by Henry II. There had been an earlier castle here, since 1092 when William (Rufus) II erected a wooden palisade on a bluff overlooking the River Eden but no structural trace remains.

On departure we head south on the WCML, with the Settle & Carlisle and Newcastle lines dropping away (L) and the Maryport line going out (R). There are connections from the Maryport line to the other two routes, and another curving round to join the link from London Road Junction (see above). Visible (L) is the closed Upperby loco and carriage depot (L). Steam was banished from here on 12.12.1966, remaining locos being transferred to Kingmoor, north of Carlisle, until that too closed a year later. At the north end of the depot, all lines join at the start of the long climb to Shap Summit. We follow the River Petteril, a tributary of the Eden, but, after the winding section past WREAY (cl 16.8.1943), the line is devoid of any major feature. The Pennines can be seen in the distance (L) on the climb past SOUTHWAITE and CALTHWAITE (both cl 7.4.1952) on a long, almost straight section. Shortly after PLUMSTON (cl 31.5.1948), the Petteril passes below, before the reverse curves preceding PENRITH. The castle (L), raised in the fourteenth century, was largely demolished in 1648 and the station is in fact built in part of the grounds. Penrith at one time served two other routes, to Darlington via Stainmore, and to Workington via Keswick. The former line lost its passenger services from 22.1.1962 (as noted under Appleby). Services on the Workington line were cut back to Keswick from 18.4.1966 before total closure to passengers from 6.3.1972, leaving a short section to Blencow quarry to last until 19.6.1972. The bed of the Keswick line can be seen climbing away (R) as we cross the M6. Up to 1936 there was also a spur (the Redhills Curve), used by coke trains from County Durham to Workington, which trailed in (R) before the Eamont Viaduct. Until local government reorganisation in 1974, this marked the boundary between Cumberland and Westmorland.

About a mile further on, Lowther Viaduct crosses the river of that name, shortly before Eden Valley Junction. The bed of the Appleby and Darlington line diverges (L), closed on 22.1.1962 other than a short section to Clifton Moor which remained for goods traffic until 6.7.1964. Just north of the junction was CLIFTON & LOWTHER (cl 4.7.1938), built mainly for the benefit of the Earls of Lowther who lived at Lowther Castle, whose shell still stands about a mile away (R). A rather attractive stretch leads through Strickland Woods, from which the line emerges into more open ground past Thrimby Grange. The M6 and the A6 pass overhead before Harrison's Shap Quarry (R). For such a small village, the fame of SHAP (cl 1.7.1968) is widespread. Even before the coming of the railway, the village was on the only practicable alternative to a sea passage round the Cumbrian coast. Rail served quarries are on both sides as the line climbs the final two miles to Shap Summit (918ft). On emerging from

the rock cutting, the hotel at Shap Wells can be seen in a hollow (R). Nearly six miles of descent leads past the site of the lonely Scout Green signal box, the grade easing as the line passes under the M6 on the approach to TEBAY (cl 1.7.1968). The bed of the NER line from Kirkby Stephen converges (L), closed to all traffic with the rest of the Stainmore lines on 22.1.1962. The MPD (cl 1.1.1968) was (R), home for generations of banking engines for the climb to Shap. The last opportunity for the depot to provide an engine to bank a passenger train to the summit was lost on Boxing Day 1967 when a football special returning from Blackpool to Carlisle, in the charge of Britannia Pacific no. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*, stopped for assistance. No banker was available, leaving the crew of 70013 to restart the packed thirteen coach train without help, which they did in superb style, steadily accelerating to 30mph at the summit, a fitting climax to nearly 120 years of steam passenger trains on Shap.

We now enter the Lune Gorge and pass the site of Dillicar troughs. The Howgills, beyond the Lune (L), are little known to tourists, sandwiched as they are between the Pennines away to the east, and the Lake District (R). At LOW GILL (cl 1.2.1954) the bed of the Ingleton line diverges (L), closed to passengers from 1.2.1954, and completely from 19.6.1966. The curved viaduct (L) featured in the opening sequence of the BBC TV series 'The Train Now Departing'. We curve (R) to pass under the M6 and reach the site of GRAYRIGG (cl 1.2.1954). Beyond the station commences twenty miles of almost unbroken descent. Dockray Viaduct takes us to Lambrigg Crossing, after which Hay Fell is (L), and the River Mint can be seen in the valley below (R). Kendal can be seen spread out below (R) on the approach to OXENHOLME, suffixed 'The Lake District' for the benefit of the tourist industry. The Windermere branch trails in (R), now single track. Waste ground (R) south of the station marks the site of the MPD, closed in 1962. Descent continues to the site of Hincaster Junction, where the former Furness Railway line to Arnside diverged (R), closed to regular passenger services from 1.3.1953, but used by specials almost up to abandonment on 9.9.1963. Just north of the junction, a tunnel under the railway carries the overgrown Lancaster Canal, derelict after a useful life of only thirty years, a victim of the railway. The gradients are easier past MILNTHORPE (cl 1.7.1968), terminus of a horse drawn narrow gauge railway that brought gunpowder from Gatebeck Mills until the 1940's. The River Beela is crossed before BURTON & HOLME (cl 27.3.1950), some distance from both the villages it claimed to serve. The ex MR loco depot, closed in 1936 and now in industrial use, can be seen (L) alongside the line from Hellifield which passes overhead at CARNFORTH.

Platforms no longer exist on the main line, the station being served only by Leeds and Barrow line trains. The station buildings are now little used, but the buffet featured in the well known film 'Brief Encounter'. The former MPD is now part of the Steamtown complex (R), which also occupies the once extensive yards (R). This was one of the last three BR depots in Britain to service steam locos and closed on August 4th 1968, the last weekend of standard gauge BR steam working. At weekends a number of diesel locos are usually stabled in the sidings. After passing through a long cutting, the line reaches BOLTON-LE-SANDS (cl 3.2.1969), from which point the wide expanse of Morecambe Bay can be seen (R), as far as HEST BANK (cl 3.2.1969). Although this route between Glasgow and London has from the start been known as the West Coast Main Line, this is the only real glimpse of sea to be seen from the line. Until completion of the line from Carnforth to Ulverston in September 1857, this was the starting point for the cross-bay coach service to Kents Bank, near Grange-over-Sands, on the Furness coast visible (hopefully) across the bay. Beyond here a spur diverges (R) towards Morecambe, at BARE LANE (visible R) joining the other side of the triangle trailing in (R) at Morecambe South Junction.

A short cutting leads to the Lune Bridge, the present structure dating from 1963. The road which is crossed before the river, was partly built on the bed of the MR Morecambe and Heysham line, closed to all traffic from 5.6.1967. Passenger services were withdrawn from 3.1.66, thus ending a fascinating chapter in railway history. The line from Lancaster Castle to Green Ayre, and thence to Morecambe and Heysham, was electrified by the MR, commencing on 1.7.1908 using an overhead supply at 6,600 volts ac. The original units were life expired by 1940, but the war prevented any action and they soldiered on until 11.2.51, being then replaced by a steam push-pull service. This train service lasted until 17.8.1953 when a rebuilt electric service was introduced with trains previously used on the Willesden Junction to Earls Court service by the LNWR. The difference now was that the supply was at the standard national grid frequency of 50Hz, in place of the former 25Hz, and was thus the forerunner of all subsequent ac electrification in Britain.

On the hill (L) is the Ashton Memorial, Lancaster's equivalent to the Taj Mahal. Lord Ashton made his fortune in linoleum and, on the death of his wife in 1906, erected this mausoleum in her memory at the then fantastic cost of over £80,000, the equivalent sum today being in the millions. LANCASTER (was _ CASTLE) is dominated by the castle (L), most of the structure on view now being of work authorised by Henry IV in 1399, although a castle had existed nearly three centuries earlier and, indeed, the site had previously been used for a Roman fort. The MR branch from Green Ayre, Morecambe and Wenington Junction trailed in (L), closed to passengers from 3.1.1966 and finally from 17.3.1976. The Glasson Dock line trailed in (R), closed to passengers from 7.7.1930 and to goods from 5.10.1964. A climb leads across the Lancaster Canal to where a short branch trailing in (L) led to the original terminus of the Preston & Lancaster Railway, closed to passengers upon opening of Castle station in 1846, but remaining open for goods until 14.8.1967.

Shortly beyond here, the white topped buildings of Lancaster University are (L) before the loops at Oubeck. For some time now there have been proposals to reopen GALGATE (cl 1.5.1939), mainly for the use of students and staff at the University. BAY HORSE (cl 13.6.1960) was the rather unlikely terminus of a shuttle service from Lancaster, there being little habitation here other than the inn (R) from which the station gained its name. SCORTON (cl 1.5.1939) is pleasantly situated overlooking a wide bend on the River Wyre, with a popular caravan and camping site established at least forty years ago. The M6 comes alongside (L) as the line approaches the former junction for the Knott End branch (R). That line closed to passengers from 31.3.1930, goods traffic being cut back

in stages before closure on 19.7.1965. After GARSTANG & CATTERALL (cl 3.2.1969) were BROCK and BARTON & BROUGHTON (both cl 1.5.1939), the latter followed by OXHEYS (cl 28.2.1925).

Fylde Junction is where the Blackpool line trails in (R) alongside the DMU sidings (R) occupying the site of Preston MPD. In the fork between the two lines is St. Walburge's church, said to have the second highest spire of any British church, with a base constructed in the 1850's from sleeper blocks recovered from the Lancaster line. The loco depot burned down in June 1960 but did not close until the following year. Given the propensity of steam locomotives to emit sparks and drop red-hot cinders, it is perhaps surprising that this fate did not befall many other depots. The line trailing in (L) is the erstwhile Longridge line, truncated at Deepdale since 16.10.1967, over which passenger services were withdrawn from 2.6.30. There are loco holding sidings (R) as we enter PRESTON.

All trains now use the former North Union side of the station, the East Lancashire side (L) having closed on completion of resignalling in the area in 1972, the whole area having been redeveloped as a car park. Until the mid-eighteenth century, Preston was a fashionable resort for the well-to-do, but with the expansion of the cotton industry quickly burgeoned into a major industrial centre. Railway development was rapid after arrival of the North Union Railway in 1838 but by the early 1840's there were five separate stations resulting in poor interchange facilities. After 1844 all trains except those from Longridge used the NU station but the inadequate size caused long delays to services, especially as all long distance trains stopped for twenty minutes to allow passengers to partake of a full meal if desired. Things improved after completion of the maximum layout in 1879, but even then chaos could still result at peak times, particularly during the infrequent Preston Guild weeks when more than half a million visitors might arrive, half of them on the Saturday alone. Nowadays the Guilds are much more low-key affairs and the overwhelming proportion of people will anyway arrive by car. In 1992 no extra trains were run, a contrast to 1922 when 504 additional services were provided. Preston Guilds are normally held every twenty years, hence the expression common in the north, 'once in a Preston Guild' to describe a rare event or occurrence. At the south end of the station, the Docks line rises steeply from a cutting (R), with further loco sidings beyond. There are six tracks as the line crosses the River Ribble and heads south. The bed of the Southport line, closed to all traffic from 7.9.1964, passes below to join the embankment of the former ELR lines into Preston (L), these in turn having closed on 1.5.1972.

The Blackburn and Ormskirk lines diverge (R) at Farington Curve Junction, the former passing overhead before the site of FARINGTON (cl 7.3.1960). Just to the south, a connection from the Blackburn line comes in (L) at Farington Junction. A climb leads through LEYLAND and on under the M6 to Euxton Junction, where the line to Bolton via Chorley curves away (L). Just beyond the junction is EUXTON BALSHAW LANE, opened on the site of BALSHAW LANE & EUXTON (cl 6.10.1969), where the platforms are only on the 'slow' lines (R), which follow a separate alignment for two miles, ending before COPPULL (cl 6.10.1969), although at one time the four track section continued to STANDISH (cl 23.5.1949) and Standish Junction. Here the slow lines dropped away (R) before passing below at the northern end of the Whelley Loop. That route provided a Wigan avoiding line for goods traffic and diversions until its role ended after electrification of the main line in 1974. There were links to almost all of the other lines in the Wigan area and at least one train from Preston to Manchester used the route until 1964. Exactly when the last train ran over the line is not known, but may have been at the end of 1972, although the tracks were not lifted until 1976. Only two tracks have existed through the cutting to BOARS HEAD (cl 31.1.1949), where well established trees grow in the bed of the trailing Chorley line (L), closed to regular passenger trains from 4.1.1960, but used by diverted traffic up to complete closure in December 1971.

On the descent to Wigan, traces remain (R) where lengthy colliery branches trailed in from mines at Sevington Moor and Croke. A short distance on, the lines from Southport and Kirby (Liverpool) join each other (R) immediately before passing below to reach WIGAN WALLGATE (L). The platforms of that station are just visible from the north end of WIGAN NORTH WESTERN. Rebuilding was completed here in 1972, not long before electric working to Preston was inaugurated. At the south end there are connections in both directions to and from the ex LYR line from Wallgate to Bolton which climbs from the station before bearing away (L). A curve leads the main line into a cutting where the LYR Pemberton (or Westwood Park) Loop passed overhead until 14.7.1969, there being one booked passenger service up to closure, although in practice this seems to have frequently been routed via Wallgate. At the end of the cutting is Springs Branch Junction. Curving sharply in (L) was the New Springs Branch, once serving a plethora of industrial sites but now only used for the storage of wagons and withdrawn locos. Springs Branch TMD (L) is built on the site of the former MPD, closed to steam in December 1967 and now used for component recovery from withdrawn locos. At the south end of the depot, lines diverge on either side, to St. Helens and Liverpool (R) and to Bickershaw (L). The disused first part of the latter line is all that remains of the former route to Manchester via Tyldesley which lost its local passenger service from 2.11.1964 but retained a through working until 1.1.1968, closing as a through route when Liverpool to Manchester via Leigh trains were withdrawn from 6.1.1969. Passing overhead at the junction was a direct link from the St. Helens line which provided connections with the Tyldesley line and the Whelley Loop until disuse from 19.5.1969.

Descending (L) are the goods lines, which join the bed of the Whelley Loop before passing below and converging with a connection from the St. Helens line (R) at Bamfurlong Sidings Junction. The goods lines rise towards the level of the main lines, all tracks then converging at Bamfurlong Junction. Converging (L) is the bed of the former connection from the Whelley Loop to the fast lines, cut at this end from 2.10.1972. After that date the glassworks (L) were served via a backshunt from the Whelley line until traffic ceased in 1986. South of the junction, the WCML crosses the Leigh branch of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal before BAMFURLONG (cl 27.11.1950), sited on the south side of the road bridge. Just under a mile further, there were two colliery branches (R) in quick succession. The first of these was short and closed in 1960, the second being a link to an extensive system including a line passing below some distance on. Although the connection closed in 1943, other parts of the

system, linked to the GCR and LNWR routes to St. Helens, lasted to 1957. One of the collieries served was Edge Green whose site was used for the Kelbit bitumen works (R), now the only provider of traffic on any part of the former GCR St. Helens branch, reached by diverging (R) at Haydock Junction. This curve was opened on 22.4.1968 to allow closure of the remainder of the route to Glazebrook. Passenger services ceased from 3.3.1952 except for Haydock Park race trains which ran to Ashton-in-Makerfield, at least for a period in the 1970's. An oil depot at Haydock was served until early 1983 and industrial premises at Ashton until 1987, the stop blocks now being a train's length from the backshunt for the Kelbit branch. Industrial redevelopment has obliterated all trace of the Glazebrook line where it passed overhead a few hundred yards south.

A short distance on was GOLBORNE (cl 6.2.1961), followed a mile or so later by Golborne Junction. Prior to opening of the direct line to the south in 1864, all WCML trains used the line diverging (L) to run via a section of the Liverpool to Manchester line through Newton-le-Willows, this earlier link still providing access to the L&M line in either direction. We keep to the 1864 line, passing under the L&M line in a cutting and onto a long curve leading past Vulcan Foundry (R) to Winwick Junction. Converging (R) is the link from Earlestown, part of the 1831 line from Newton-le-Willows to Warrington, used by all WCML trains before 1864. WINWICK (cl 28.11.1840) was somewhere near here, probably just beyond the point at which a branch to Winwick Hospital diverged (L) until 1963. Close by (R) was the St. Helens (or Sankey) Canal with the Sankey Brook beyond. The canal opened in 1757 to provide the growing industries around St. Helens with an alternative route to Liverpool other than the rather poor turnpike roads. Despite becoming railway owned in 1854, traffic flourished up to the turn of the century, after which the northern section became progressively disused. The last traffic on the lower part was from the Sankey sugar factory and this was carried up to 1959, closure of the canal following in 1963.

From here a four track section leads past industrial and commercial premises, and expanding housing estates to the new Royal Mail station, just to the north of Dallam Branch Junction. Continuing more or less straight ahead was the 1831 branch to the terminus of the line from Newton-le-Willows, redundant when a link was made with the new GJR line from Crewe in 1838. An extension to Foundry Street was later constructed for freight traffic and this lasted until 9.8.1965. On the opposite side of the main line (R), the main building of Dallam MPD, closed in October 1967, survives inside the cladding of the industrial premises (R). South of here, bridge abutments mark the course of the CLC Warrington Avoiding Line (the Padgate Loop), by which the CLC provided the same 40 minute timing from Liverpool to Manchester as did the LNWR and the LYR, somewhat faster than is possible by any route now. Regular trains were diverted via the station some five years before closure on 22.7.1968. Half a mile south, the CLC line via Warrington Central passes overhead before WARRINGTON BANK QUAY. This station opened in 1868 to replace an earlier site a few hundred yards north. There were low level platforms here, used by Liverpool (Ditton Junction) to Manchester via Lymm trains up to their withdrawal on 10.9.1962, and served for another year by a solitary overnight service that lasted until 4.1.1965. The line below remains in use for coal trains to Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, although the line east of Latchford closed on 8.7.1985.

South of the station there are extensive freight yards (L), somewhat less well used than prior to the abandonment of the Speedlink service in July 1991. An interesting structure visible in the former Crossfields' works (R) is a transporter bridge across the River Mersey and dating from 1916. This was used to carry railway wagons between parts of the works on both sides of the river, but passed out of use in 1964; it is scheduled as an Industrial Monument. Fiddlers Ferry Power Station is prominent in the distance (R) as we climb across the River Mersey to the bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal at Acton Grange Junction, where the Chester line bears away (L) as we continue on the WCML. A few hundred yards on an abandoned cutting converges (L), having carried the main line until a new route was required in preparation for the completion of the Ship Canal in 1894.

After the site of MOORE (cl 1.2.1943) the Chester line passes overhead on its way to Daresbury Tunnel (R), where an old water tower on the hill is in marked contrast to the modern structure at Daresbury nuclear research establishment (L). Almost parallel (L) is the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal which joins the Trent & Mersey Canal after the latter passes overhead near the M56 bridge. PRESTON BROOK (cl 1.3.1940) was by the A56 bridge, after which the WCML enters a cutting leading to Preston Brook Tunnel (78yds) and the bridge carrying the 'up' Liverpool line flyover at Weaver Junction. High speed turnouts were provided during electrification in 1961, although the flyover long predates this. The junction is sometimes referred to as 'whisky and soda' junction following a collision on 6.8.1975 between a caustic soda train and a freightliner carrying whisky. Dutton Viaduct carries the line over the River Weaver before a straight stretch to ACTON BRIDGE.

South of here there are four tracks extending to Hartford LNW Junction. Wallerscot sidings (L), closed in 1985, served the ICI works at Winnington via a private line whose course is just visible in the fields (L). Diverging (L) is a connection to the ex CLC line from Manchester to Chester which shortly passes overhead. After HARTFORD, situated in a deep cutting, we cross the River Weaver on Vale Royal Viaduct heading for Winsford Junction. Diverging sharply (R) was the former LNWR branch to Over & Wharton, closed to passengers from 16.6.1947. Public goods services ceased in 1968 but traffic ran to an ICI works until 1982 and a long siding remained until March 1991. From south of WINSFORD there are four tracks all the way to Crewe. About half way along this section was MINSHULL VERNON (cl 2.3.1942). As we enter an urban area again we come to Crewe Coal Yard. Diverging on either side and descending into cuttings are the Independent Lines, opened in the early years of the century to provide goods and non-stopping trains with a route avoiding the busy platforms at CREWE. North of the station, the Manchester line trails in (L) and the Chester line (R), the latter between the Heritage Centre and the site of Crewe North MPD. The loco depot closed in May 1965 and the site is partly derelict, partly occupied by a car park and the new Crewe signal box (R). This rather unusually designed box dates from 1985 when the station closed for six weeks to enable extensive remodelling work to take place.

Crewe is totally the product of the railway, the nearest habitation in 1838 being the hamlet of Monks Coppenhall, the name of the town being taken from that of Lord Crewe on whose land the town was built. Although somewhat reduced in scale, the railway, workshops, locomotive depot, marshalling yards and the station, still provide a considerable level of employment in the town. At the far end of the station, lines diverge to Stoke-on-Trent (L) and Shrewsbury (R) and alongside the latter is Crewe TMD. A group of carriage sidings (R) occupy the site of Crewe South MPD which closed in November 1967. A curve from the Shrewsbury line can be seen joining the Independent Lines at the north end of Basford Hall sidings, these goods only lines rejoining the main lines at Basford Hall Junction. Quadruple track continues past the site of BETLEY ROAD (cl 1.10.1945), marked by the diminutive LNWR signal box (L), a remarkable survivor considering that it controls no points and is on a main line that has been electrified for well over thirty years. At MADELEY (cl 4.2.1952) the site is indicated by the area of the former goods yard (R) by a road bridge as well as the signal box at Madeley Junction. Diverging (R) is the Madeley Chord line, climbing to join the former NSR Stoke-on-Trent to Market Drayton line. The embankment dates from 1870 when the NSR line opened but no rails were laid until 1962. Passenger services from Stoke to Market Drayton were cut back to Silverdale from 7.5.1956 and ceased from 2.3.1964, the line west of here being closed from 9.1.1967, little, if any, traffic having passed since early the previous year. All traffic over the line ceased at the end of 1998 with the closure of Silverdale Colliery.

Still climbing, the main line passes under the remaining section of the NSR line, which serves Silverdale colliery, and continues south through pleasant countryside to a summit near WHITMORE (cl 4.2.1952). An easier descent leads to STANDON BRIDGE (cl 4.2.1952) and past the site of BADNALL WHARF, an unadvertised station used in the 1940's for munitions workers. Most workers were catered for at Cold Meece, but all freight traffic entered and left the works via extensive sidings (L), all long since lifted. Not far south of the depot, the Stoke line comes in (L) at NORTON BRIDGE. This station and the signal box were completely rebuilt in the early 1960's in preparation for electrification. Descending at easy grades, the line passes the site of GREAT BRIDEGFORD (cl 8.8.1949), not long before the bridge carrying the M6 overhead. Stafford Castle is visible in the middle distance (L) as we slow for STAFFORD, where rebuilding of the station was completed prior to electrification. The main building of Stafford MPD (cl 19.7.1965) still stands (R) in industrial use, although the exterior is somewhat changed. North of the station lines trailed in on either side, a siding remaining on the route of the Wellington line (R) which came in past the former Bagnall locomotive works. Passenger services ceased on 7.9.1964 but through running was possible until the line was closed as far as Newport on 1.8.1966. On the other side (L) was the most westerly outpost of the GNR, running from a junction with the Stoke to Derby line near Uttoxeter. Withdrawal of passenger trains was from 4.12.1939 and there was then little traffic except during the war years, mostly serving the RAF base at Stafford Common. It is quite possible that the last through train was a railtour in 1957, the line being lifted in 1959, apart from the section to Stafford Common which survived up to 1.12.1975. This route will finish here, the train returning to Birmingham International by the main line.

GLOSSARY

MPD	Motive Power Depot (steam locomotive depot)
TMD	Traction Maintenance Depot (diesel/electric locomotive depot)
PSB	Power Signal Box
WCML	West Coast Main Line
CLC	Cheshire Lines Committee
CR	Caledonian Railway
GB&K	Glasgow, Barrhead & Kilmarnock
GPK&A	Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock & Ayr
GSWR	Glasgow & South Western Railway
GNR	Great Northern Railway
LMSR	London, Midland & Scottish Railway
NER	London & North Eastern Railway
LNWR	London & North Western Railway
LYR	Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway
MR	Midland Railway
NBR	North British Railway

Front Cover Photo: Type 5 power on passenger trains in Ayrshire has always been a rarity, only likely on railtours. One such occasion was the *Skirl Revisited* of June 12/13th 1990, when 56123 did the honours between Glasgow and Stranraer. With a rake of 'Pilkington' liveried carriages in tow, the *Grid* was caught by the camera near Pinnmore on the climb out of Girvan.

(Jay Hartley)