

# HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE BRIGHTER STEAM NEWS MAGAZINE

ISSUE 245  
August 24 –  
September 20, 2018

## THE END... AGAIN!

How we restaged  
BR's last steam  
of August '68

**CHINNOR**  
NOW LINKED  
TO LONDON!



**TORNADO**  
AIMS FOR  
SEPTEMBER 29  
COMEBACK





# TYSELEY

## THE STEAM SHED THAT REFUSED TO DIE!

Less than seven weeks after the 'Fifteen Guinea Special' marked the end of BR main line steam, the public were admitted to a former depot where the roots of railway preservation had firmly taken hold. Tyseley Locomotive Works' September 29-30 open day will mark 50 years since it held its first, writes **Robin Jones**.

As a young child, the workaday Birmingham suburb of Tyseley was hallowed ground. My elder brother Stewart took me trainspotting at Widney Manor station on the Birmingham Snow Hill to Leamington line from an early age, and our dad worked as head of printing at the Midland Electrical Manufacturers factory in Reddings Lane, Tyseley. Occasionally on Saturday mornings we would be taken into the works, and to get the bus back often we walked down to Warwick Road. There, on a back siding from Tyseley steam shed, would often stand in all its glory a GWR-design 4-6-0 for us to gaze and marvel at.

Little did we think in our wildest dreams



**Car park ticket for the first Tyseley open day in 1968.**

that Tyseley shed would, within the ensuing decade, become a hub of the emerging and still-embryonic railway preservation movement, and keep our precious steam alive.

Tyseley shed was opened in July 1908, superseding a smaller depot at Bordesley to the north.

It was a Churchward standard brick-built Great Western Railway two-turntable shed,

similar in design but not in size to other GWR depots like Old Oak Common.

The east roundhouse catered for passenger engines, while the west one catered for freight. Originally, 72 engines were allocated to it, rising to around 100 by the Fifties. It served the growing GWR network to the south west of the city, including the cross-country route to Stratford-upon-Avon and Cheltenham for Bristol and the south west. The North Warwickshire Line, the northern-most section of that route, also opened in 1908.

However, Tyseley was always secondary to Wolverhampton Stafford Road, which handled the expresses from the West Midlands. The freight roundhouse was closed

LMS maroon is the colour: Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 5960 *Leander* approaches as sister No. 5593 *Kolhapur* looks on at the 1985 event. *Kolhapur* was, of course, present at that first open day in 1968. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION







**Tyseley flagship WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* enthral the crowds at the 1969 open day.** MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION

in 1963 and Tyseley shed finally closed in November 1966, when it housed smaller locomotives like tank engines for suburban services, although steam officially lasted at Tyseley until 1967, with many LMS and BR locomotive types then appearing there. The depot became known as Tyseley Traction Maintenance Depot, but steam locomotives still continued to visit the site for wheel turning in the new factory until the demise of main line steam in summer 1968. Both roundhouses had gone by the end of that year.

When the Talylyn Railway was saved in 1951, its preservation society's secretary, Pat Whitehouse, and its treasurer, Birmingham accountant Pat Garland, struck up a lifelong friendship with steam at its heart.

In 1958, Pat Whitehouse began work on the BBC's much-loved Railway Roundabout series of 25min children's hour programmes.

## Early days

In the early Sixties, with Western Region steam disappearing on a daily basis, the two Pats decided to buy a tank engine of their own and then find a railway on which to run it.

Eventually, they ran the rule over the closed GWR Ashburton branch. The Dart Valley Light Railway Company Limited was accordingly set up to buy the line and acquire suitable locomotives.

Pat Whitehouse was undertaking a building job on a bridge when a chance conversation with the stationmaster at Walsall led to him and Pat Garland buying their first engine, GWR 2-6-2T No. 4555, for £700. The deal included a spare boiler, an overhaul at Swindon Works and a load of spare parts.

The two Pats then bought GWR pannier tanks No. 6435 (with enthusiast John Wilkins) and No 1638, plus Collett auto tank No. 1420 for the Dart Valley. At the time, the new heritage line was not ready to accept the locomotives, which had to be stored, so Pat Whitehouse negotiated the use of the steam depot at Tyseley in Birmingham for the purpose.

While it was based at Tyseley, as payment for its accommodation, No. 4555 returned to British Railway service, even though it was privately owned and had been repainted from



**Above: A3 No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* arrives at Tyseley for the 1960 inaugural open day.** MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION

**Right: Enthusiasts clamouring to 'cab' LMS 'Black Five' No. 5428 *Eric Treacy* at the 1968 open day.** MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION



**Below: Collett 0-6-0 No. 3205 at the open day in 1969. On May 23 the following year, it hauled the first public train on the Severn Valley Railway, from Bridgnorth to Hampton Loade.** MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION



**In the days when heritage railways were very much in their nascent stage, Tyseley depot was like a beacon shining through a dark night, and the annual open day generated queues stretching down Warwick Road. Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46443 is pictured at the 1969 open day. It was one of the locomotives used on the Severn Valley Railway opening weekend in May 1970.** MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION





The 1971 open day featured no less than preservation icon LMS Princess Royal 4-6-2 No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* heading the 'Royal Scot' within the depot limits. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION



Left: LNER greats V2 2-6-2 No. 4771 *Green Arrow* and A4 Pacific No. 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley* were the star guests at the 1973 event. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION

Below: The National Collection's LSWR T9 4-4-0 No. 120 and Lancashire & Yorkshire 2-4-2T No. 1008 on display at the 1973 open day. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION



LNER A2 Pacific No. 532 *Blue Peter* in passenger service during the 1974 open day. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION



Visiting B1 4-6-0 No. 306 *Mayflower* in action at the 1984 event. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION

BR livery to GWR green with appropriate lettering on the side! As if thumbing a nose at the Modernisation Plan, Tyseley's shedmaster Tommy Field occasionally rostered the prairie tank for the 5.25pm commuter train from Birmingham Snow Hill to Knowle & Dorridge. That allowed Pat Garland to catch 'his' train home, but not as a conventional passenger. An amateur driver, he could jump on the footplate of his engine and take control of the regulator!

No. 4555 was also used for short freight workings, carriage shunting and for hand-hauling 'last' specials over the Bromyard, Brecon, Wombourne and Severn Valley lines.

## Flagship locomotive

Soon, Tyseley steam depot had evolved a preservation identity of its own over and above temporary storage for the Dart Valley. Much of it was down to what became its flagship locomotive, Swindon 1950-built WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle*, whose shining moment came on May 9, 1964, on the Plymouth to Bristol leg of an Ian Allan special to mark the unofficial 100mph record set 60 years earlier by GWR 4-4-0 No. 3440 *City of Truro*. It also hauled the last official steam train out of Paddington (to Banbury) on June 11, 1965 and was officially withdrawn in December that year.

Patrick Whitehouse bought it for its scrap value of £2400 on January 1, 1966, and its ownership was then passed to No. 7029 *Clun Castle* Ltd.

In 1967, in Brunswick green livery, it hauled trains to mark the closure of the GWR route to Birkenhead.

In October 1968, No. 7029 *Clun Castle* Ltd bought LMS Jubilee class 4-6-0 No. 5593 *Kolhapur* and its supporters established the Standard Gauge Steam Trust as an educational charity to preserve and demonstrate steam locomotives.

The trust acquired a long-term lease on a large part of the Tyseley site and established the Tyseley Collection. The coaling stage building was leased to No. 7029 *Clun Castle* Ltd and it was adapted to form a new home for both *Clun* and *Kolhapur*. A tool room was formed within this building, now known as 'Top Shed' and so the tradition of stabling, maintaining and servicing steam engines at Tyseley depot continued.

The site became the Birmingham Railway Museum and is now known as Tyseley Locomotive Works. Today, Tyseley is one of Britain's foremost depots for maintaining and overhauling steam locomotives for use on the main line.

Its operating arm, Vintage Trains, runs many special trains during the year, including the twice-daily summer Sunday 'Shakespeare Express' trips to Stratford.

Mainly using GWR locomotives, it might now be viewed as having taken over the role of Swindon Works itself, and is a monument to the achievements of Pat Whitehouse in those early days.

Now Vintage Trains is establishing itself as a Train Operating Company, able to run trains over the national network in its own right.

On September 29, 1968, nearly seven weeks after the end of British Rail steam haulage, Tyseley held its first, and very successful, public open day with a fantastic display of steam locomotives and traction engines, tapping into the desire of a public who did





Celebrating the centenary of Tyseley shed at the 2008 open day around the turntable are GWR 4-6-0 No. 4965 *Road Ashton Hall* and panniers Nos. 9600, 9466, 7760 and 7752. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION

“...over the weekend of September 29-30, Tyseley aims to recreate the atmosphere of the original event and celebrate half a century of open days at the depot.”



*Clun Castle* surrounded by crowds as it celebrates its 25th birthday at the open day in 1975. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION



Former Fairbourne Railway stalwart *Count Louis* will attend the 2018 open day. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE

not know just what they had lost until it was well and truly gone and they wanted it back again.

### September event to remember

Exactly 50 years later, over the weekend of September 29-30, Tyseley aims to recreate the atmosphere of the original event and to celebrate half a century of open days at the depot.

In 1968 the first steam locomotive preserved at Tyseley, *Clun Castle*, was in operation, and it will again be a star attraction at the anniversary event.

There will be a host of additional attractions, including some historic miniature railway locomotives that have rarely been seen in public.

A 10¼in gauge miniature railway will feature locomotives *John Terence* built at Broome Hall by engineer Grimshaw in 1908 and *Tali*, a two-third scale replica of the Beyer Peacock works locomotive that was built in 1887. *Tali* was completed in 2017 and resides at a private railway. As reported in issue 244, the open weekend will be its inaugural appearance in public.

One-time Fairbourne Railway flagship, the 15in gauge Bassett Lowke Class 30 Atlantic *Count Louis*, will also attend.

Furthermore, drivers and passengers with pre-September 29, 1968 vehicles can register in advance to park at the event depot and receive discounted admission.

Vintage fairground rides will include a steam-powered carousel built in 1893. The

carousel has 34 horses and two cockerels that gallop to the historic sounds of the Gavioli organ music.

There will be a children's carousel dating back to 1910 with a fantastic selection of restored cars, steamroller, horses and other period toys. There will also be side shows and a traditional candy floss stall.

Visitors are encouraged to dress in 1960s fashion to enter into the spirit of the event.

The event is open from 10am to 5pm both days.

Advance tickets are available from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/vintagetrains](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/vintagetrains)

Admission prices are (advance): Adults £15, aged 5-16 (£4), family £30 and drivers/passengers of pre-68 vehicles £10: (on the day): adults £17, 5-16s £5, family £35. **HR**