Steam Update April 2013



Tony Bartlett

Steam excursions covered in this update:

Thu 29-Nov	**THE CATHEDRALS EXPRESS** *[Times]* *(18/11)* London Victoria-Bath *[dbs]* ***60163:*** *Victoria-Redhill-Guuildford-Reading-Bristol and return*	STDR
Sat 09-Mar	**THE CATHEDRALS EXPRESS** *[Times]* *(25/02)* London Paddington-Plymouth *[dbs]* ***60163:*** *Paddington-Newbury-Taunton and return* *5029/34046+* ***60163:*** *Taunton-Plymouth-Taunton* *[Now 60163 alone throughout]*	STDR
Wed 13-Mar	**VSOE EXCURSION** *[p-Times]* *(27/02)* London Victoria-Bath *(VSOE)* *[dbs]* ***35028:*** *Victoria-Newbury-Bath-Bristol and return*	VSOE
Thu 21-Mar	**THE CATHEDRALS EXPRESS** *[Times]* Peterborough-Bristol *[dbs]* *60019/71000* ***60163:*** *~~Peterborough~~ Acton-Swindon-Bath-Bristol and return*	STDR
Sat 23-Mar	**THE MAYFLOWER** *[Times]* London-Plymouth *[wcrc]* **34067**: Euston-Newbury-Taunton, Exeter-Bristol (tbc) 44932 **45407+34067**: Taunton-Plymouth-Exeter (tbc) [45407 replaces 44932 which is unavailable]	RYTC
Tue 26-Mar	**THE CATHEDRALS EXPRESS** - *(22/02)* Newbury-Canterbury *[dbs]* *70000* ***60163:*** *Newbury-Staines-Clapham Jc- Canterbury and return*	STDR



Not just another shot in the dip by Denford Bridge on Hungerford Common - new build A1 class no. 60163 Tornado has just days ago been relaunched into public service in its new Express Passenger Blue livery, one of the four colour schemes the class sported in steam days. This location is ideal for the purposes of a working portrait of the loco, with the low afternoon sun making the most of the recently applied paintwork. This Cathedrals Express for Bath and Bristol is able to avoid the floods in the South West which have interrupted the West Country expresses - the long distance mainstay of this line. Thu 29Nov 14:16 f4 1/800 iso360 57mm



It's well into March before the first steam-hauled special of the year travels through this area, and the weather has not behaved well for the occasion. Have opted for a side-on view of Tornado taking its Cathedrals Express for Plymouth over the Parsonage Lane bridge in Hungerford - a 'before' shot ready for when this old bridge gets replaced, like its neighbour in Croft Road. Got to like trains if you buy the white cottage!

Sat 09Mar 10:12 D90 f5.6 1/1000 iso1250 48mm



It's been under consideration for several weeks (as part of a longer-term plan) and now the first shot with the new 'full frame' Nikon D800 camera body, teamed up with the existing Pro-series FX zoom lens. After three years with the D90, it's easy to adapt to the new controls. The sun has come out to celebrate, although the steam could have lifted higher and has largely missed the taming effect of the neutral grad filter. Clan Line with the VSOE British Pullman crossing Hungerford Common with a luxury excursion to Bristol. Wed 13Mar 11:32 D800 f6.3 1/1000 iso360 50mm



The D90 is pressed back into service for a cycle ride over to the Vale of White Horse to see 60163 Tornado in charge of a Cathex from Peterborough to Bristol, not being sure whether the vibration is bad for the new camera. The location is the familiar and dependable road bridge by Shrivenham Station (as was).
In dull and windy conditions with rain threatening, the D90 has defiantly come up with an excellent rendition of the drab scene (with recent snow yet to clear the field completely) - all the more to accentuate the immaculately presented and colourful locomotive. Thu 21Mar 13:05 D90 f5.6 1/1000 iso1250 75mm



Getting to be a tiresome habit - much of the country is again suffering from disruption caused by late-season snow, and we have our own share of it falling steadily as the Mayflower excursion to Plymouth speeds rapidly past the site of the goods yard for Hungerford Station behind Battle of Britain Pacific no. 34067 Tangmere. In the dull, flat light the image could at best be called atmospheric' - another example of having to make the best of what the day brings. Very happy with the D800's ability to handle these conditions.

Sat 23Mar 09:33 D800 f6.3 1/1250 iso720 75mm



Up very early for a sight of today's Cathex to Canterbury departing Newbury at 07:37. The timing sheet for the run indicates that the empty stock will be taken out to Woodborough loops, with 60163 Tornado on the rear of the train, and after a short wait would return along the B&H line to Newbury ready for a timely departure. Waiting for the return gives me slightly more early morning light, but this is not a classic working shot since the train is on time but running easily behind a local service with the diesel 67016 providing what little drive is needed to make the booked time at Newbury. Tue 26Mar 07:18 D800 f5 1/1000 iso1800 66mm

Steam excursions covered in this update:

Sun 07-Apr	**THE ATLANTIC COAST EXPRESS** *[o-Times]* London Waterloo-Exeter *[wcrc]* ***34067**: Waterloo-Surbiton-Honiton-Exeter* ***34067**: Laverstock S Jn-Surbiton-Waterloo*	RYTC
Sat 13-Apr	**THE MOONRAKER** *[Times]* Solihull-Salisbury *(TY01) [wcrc]* ***5043**: Solihull-Reading West-Salisbury and return*	VNTL
Sat 20-Apr	**THE GREAT BRITAIN VI** (Day 1 of 9) *[Times]* London Victoria-Par *(WCRC) [wcrc]* ***34067**: Victoria-Salisbury-Exeter* ***44871+45407**: Exeter-Par*	RYTC
Sat 04-May	**THE WELSH BORDERS** *[Times]* Bristol-Worcester *[wcrc]* *34046* ***34067**: Bristol-Gloucester-Oxford-Evesham-Worcester-Hereford - Abergavenny-Chepstow-Goucester-Bristol*	RYTC
Thu 09-May	**THE CATHEDRALS EXPLORER** (Day 1 of 8) *[Times]* Bromley-London-Exeter*[dbs]* ***Diesel**: Bromley-Faversham-Margate-Redhill -Victoria (Train 1)* ***35028**: Victoria-Salisbury-Honiton-Exeter*	STDR
Sat 11-May	**THE CHELTENHAM FLYER** *[Times]* *(07/05)* Tyseley Warwick Rd-London Paddington *(TY01) [wcrc]* ***5043**: Gloucester-Swindon-Paddington-Swindon-Gloucester* *[Steam legs non-stop between Gloucester and Paddington]*	VNTL



After a busy period of steam train activity on the Berks & Hants line, attention has switched to the Southern route to the West Country (the old L&SW Rly main line) from Waterloo through Basingstoke and Salisbury to Exeter. Today's steam special is hauled by Bulleid Pacific 34067 Tangmere on its former home ground, seen running through Andover Jct. The sudden escape of steam from Tangmere's safety valve has caught me by surprise, with no chance of adjusting the set up shot. The loco was clearly idling - to prevent the problems with lineside fires experienced with another train yesterday? Sun 07Apr 11:33 D90 f6.3 1/1000 iso500 120mm



Just a week after FGW HSTs were powering down the Southern main line to the South West, and I'm back for another Western invasion - in this case in the form of GWR Castle Class no. 5043 Earl of Mount Edgcumbe with the Vintage Trains 'Moonraker' excursion from Solihull to Salisbury. The special is crossing the Bourne Valley in dire weather approaching Andover, on a viaduct which looks very much the product of steam days and the smartly presented train fits in well with the rural scene. A barn owl hunts over the water meadow below while the rain falls steadily on this very drab day. Sat 13Apr 11:40 D90 f6.3 1/1000 iso900 72mm



It's back to the L&SW main line for a third weekend in a row to see the prestigious Great Britain train in its sixth year, on the first leg of a nine day steam-hauled tour of GB. And what a contrast to the dreary day a week ago, with hard bright light mandating a 'right side' view to avoid harsh shadows along the side of the train. GB VI is reported to be a minute behind schedule at Fleet, but it's 2 mins ahead by the time it speeds through Andover, whistling its approach in manner very reminiscent of a Peter Handford sound recording from the '60s. A nice shot spoilt by a typically ugly and neglected foreground. Sat 20Apr 10:11 D90 f7.1 1/1000 iso450 52mm



After invasions of the Southern by Western HSTs and steam engines recently, the situation is reversed for today's "The Welsh Borders" special. In charge is Southern Bulleid Pacific, Battle of Britain class Tangmere, seen here racing across the Vale of White Horse near Bourton on Brunel's 'billiard table' Great Western Railway. The RTC's excursion started from Gloucester and travelled over Sapperton to Swindon. It will follow a circular route to Oxford, the Cotswold line to Worcester, then Hereford, the Welsh marches and back via Chepstow. A great day out in fine weather after a wet start to the day! Sat 04May 10:52 D90 f6.3 1/1000 iso200 75mm



The market for steam-hauled railway tours seems to be buoyant - after six years of the RTC's Great Britain lavish holiday train, Steam Dreams have entered the fray with an 8-day version of their popular Cathedrals Express brand. Here the "Explorer" is captured at speed passing through Andover Jct with Merchant Navy pacific 35028 Clan Line doing the business in style. The train is on the first leg of the tour which started at London Victoria and heads for Exeter St. Davids on the first day. Thereafter it travels up through Wales and across country to North Yorks before returning to London. Thu 09May 13:37 D800 f6.3 1/1250 iso720 78mm


CHELTENHAM FLYER
GWR
WORLD'S FASTEST TRAIN
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