

Britain's railway history is littered with a perhaps surprising number of one-offs - the Turbomotive, the Hush-Hush, Fowler's Ghost, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Great Bear. Many of these remained one-offs because they were partially or wholly unsuccessful, because of subsequent changes of direction in locomotive development or because they were only experimental.

However, an unusual example of a one-off that was always intended to be unique from the very outset was the LSWR 4-2-4T known officially as *Mr. Drummond's Car*, but known far better by locomen of the time and by enthusiasts ever since as "The Bug".

Drummond himself has also gone down in locomotive engineer folklore as something of a one-off. Born at Ardrossan in 1840, he had served on the Dumbartonshire and Caledonian Railways, and at the North British Railway, where he worked under S. W. Johnson, before moving to the Highland Railway at Inverness under William Stroudley.

After a spell with Stroudley again at Brighton, he had become locomotive superintendent of the North British Railway in 1875. Seven years later he joined the Caledonian, but then jointly formed the unsuccessful Australasian Locomotive Engine Works at Sydney. He had then returned quickly to Scotland and founded the Glasgow Railway Engineering Company, finally joining the London and South Western on 1st August 1895 at the very considerable salary of £1,500, this being sharply increased to £2,000 the following year.

At the LSWR, he varied between the brilliant and the sadly unsuccessful in his designs and between the severe and compassionate in his dealings with his men and his machines. He embodied the principle of a larger than life Victorian figure.

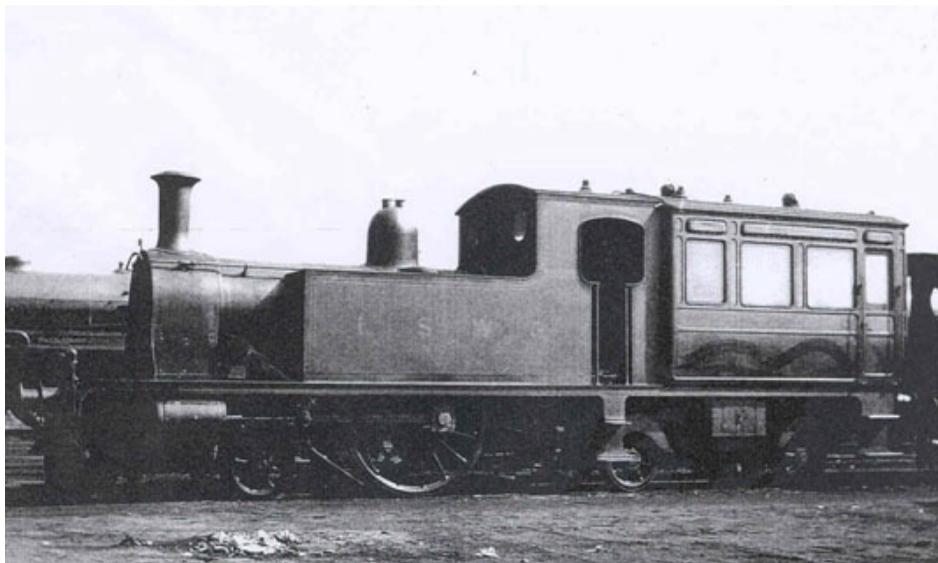
Crucially, he was not only the Locomotive Superintendent - later termed the Chief Mechanical Engineer, the first to hold this title on the South Western, from 1905 - but was also its Running Superintendent. In this latter role he ranged far and wide over the system, taking an extremely close and highly critical personal interest in every aspect of daily locomotive operations.

Drummond is today, perhaps unfairly, infamous for his legendary intolerance and explosive temper. However, this has tended to conceal his other accompanying traits, of being extremely fair to those who kept to the rules, and of being what would a century later be termed a hands-on manager, known to all on the LSWR system.

A favourite Drummond anecdote was that related by the late Hamilton Ellis, when, on the footplate of a suburban locomotive held at signals in dense fog, Drummond just came up the steps out of nowhere, to the complete consternation of the crew. Drummond would make a good role model for some of today's deskbound railway managers to follow.

It was his style to act as a general, but also as a good one. To be seen to be in command, and to have a day-to-day firm grip on all locomotive-related events on “his” railway, he had to be able to move about the system at will. With this objective, he was authorised by the LSWR’s directors to construct his own company car on rails, a steam locomotive that would be fleet of foot but light of haulage.

Not only was Drummond able to have a first-hand knowledge of locomotive operations, but he also needed transport to travel from his company house at 2, South Bank, Surbiton (patriotically named *Morven* by Drummond) to London and to Eastleigh, particularly to supervise the complex transfer of the locomotive works from Nine Elms to its new site.



The Locomotive

In designing his personal locomotive, a 4-2-4 wheel arrangement was selected by Drummond to give speed with economy. The forward part of this unusual but very attractive contraption comprised a small boiler, complete with neat Drummond twin safety valves atop the dome, and with the usual and attractive Scottish-style smokebox wingplates, similar to those provided (but later removed by Urie during rebuilding) on the then-new T9 “Greyhounds” and other later 4-4-0s such as the C8 class.

It was notable how low-slung the boiler of The Bug was, pitched at just 6’6” above rail level, making an interesting contrast with the “Potato Can” C14 and larger S14 Drummond 0-4-0 tanks, and this despite the Bug’s much larger driving wheels. The boiler barrel was eight feet long and just 3’4” wide, and contained 117 one-and-three-quarter inch tubes, with a total heating surface of 500 square feet plus a further 50 square feet from the firebox.

Cylinders were outside, eleven and a half inches by eighteen. Boiler pressure was the standard contemporary LSWR level of 175lbs. It was unclassified in the LSWR power rating system, which ran from A to K, ranking alongside the C14 ex-railmotor tanks, the B4 Southampton Dock tanks and (most surprisingly) the G6 0-6-0 shunters.

The driving wheel was 5'7", the same size as an M7, and sanding gear was incorporated. Bogie wheels were 2'6", considerably less than the M7's 3'7", with those of the leading bogie being spaced at five feet between centres and those of the trailing bogie, beneath the saloon, at a more generous eight feet. Despite this latter, hunting was reputed to be violent at high speeds, of which more later. Interestingly, each non-driving wheelset had its own neat bogie-mounted splashers, an unusual fitting, each splasher being painted LSWR green and fully lined out.

There was a just sufficiently-long rearward extension of the frames behind the cab for a small supply of coal to be stored, and behind this, for a tiny personal-saloon body to be mounted. The total wheelbase was just over 27'4", and length over buffers was 35' 9", due to the extended rear frames.

Tank capacity may have been quite generous, for the size of the locomotive, being quoted by one source as being one thousand gallons. However, there is some uncertainty at this figure, as it is also quoted by another source at only 600 gallons. Coal capacity was a rather limiting one ton, stowed beneath the tanks at the cab ends, as the majority of what would have been the normal bunker space was obviously given over to making space for the saloon.

This fascinating equipage was completed at Nine Elms Works in April 1899, the 563rd locomotive to be built there. It was to become the one and only example of Class F9. The cost of "Mr. Drummond's Car" to give it its less well known title was £1,535, about the same as for an M7 0-4-4 tank of the time.

Braking was vacuum, but acting only through one pair of brake blocks and upon the leading edge of the solitary pair of driving wheels. This would have perhaps made accurate stopping something of a delicate business when rails were greasy and the "Old Man" was on board, also of which more later.....

Lamp brackets were carried in the usual six positions. On the LSWR and later SR and BR (SR), these of course indicated the route of travel, not the class of train. However, The Bug carried four white cast-iron discs, edged in red, at the smokebox top and the three bufferbeam positions, this being not entirely inappropriately a permutation of the Royal Train headcode. No doubt this was a code that staff learnt, memorised carefully and watched for keenly.

The Bug was numbered 733 in the LSWR running list. Livery of the locomotive was the standard LSWR light "royal" green with light chocolate lining-out, and

with the letters "LSWR" on the side-tanks. Cylinder covers, wheels and splashers over the leading and trailing bogie wheels were also in green, and all fully lined out. It looked extremely attractive and well-proportioned, and, one suspects, the Directors must have been more than a little envious.

The Saloon

The saloon part comprised a single compartment which contained a table, a few easy chairs, a tiny buffet servery of sorts, and an umbrella stand. One imagines that umbrellas were as useful for shaking at miscreant members of staff as for fending off English rain. There was also a small lavatory in the front left-hand corner, with a tiny attendant's compartment in the right-hand corner, with a porthole through to the cab. The saloon was lit by gas, and, most unusually, this also lit a lamp in the locomotive cab.

Externally, there were three small windows to each side of the saloon's bodywork, plus a door to each side with steps to give access to track level. There were also three windows across the rear, and two rooftop ventilators.

Communication between Drummond and the crew was through an all-too-convenient sliding trap, so he could keep events on the footplate in view, though it may have subsequently been removed as there is no trace of this today. There was also an electric bell for communication to the cab, a very unusual fitting for the era, though the trap-door probably made it superfluous. Presumably a battery was carried to power the bell. The crews of the time must have developed a very special philosophy for coping with this intensive level of management surveillance.

Livery of the saloon body was the then-standard salmon pink upper quarters with dark brown lower panels. The number 733 was carried below the window-line on the saloon side.

Duties

As well as provide for Drummond's swanning about the system, The Bug was used to take him to Nine Elms Works from his house at Surbiton each day, and then later on, to Eastleigh when the new Works was being laid out there. Presumably the Surbiton to Eastleigh working was a regular sight from 1910 until Drummond's untimely death in 1912.

Mileages were quite significant for such a small locomotive, and the late D. L. Bradley records that the Car covered 171,304 miles between January 1900 and December 1912. Ignoring any holidays, this still represents an average of over 250 miles per week throughout this entire period. However, Tony Fairclough and Alan Wills, in their *Southern Steam Locomotive Survey - The Drummond Classes*, records that between 1900-1912 The Bug ran no less than 361,000 miles. And O. S. Nock, in his *London and South Western Railway*, noted that after the move of the Works to Eastleigh, the Bug covered

at least 120 miles a day, running in a specially-reserved path in the morning and evening timetables, at near-express speeds.

The late Hamilton Ellis, in his *South Western Railway* (the South Western was a personal favourite of Ellis's), noted that motion in the saloon part was fairly violent at speeds *in excess* of 80mph. Drummond obviously demonstrated his impatience on occasion, and Ellis recounts an anecdote by a regular fireman of The Bug, William Eaton, with Drummond impatiently first shouting that "*we're no' goin' to a funeral*", followed by a later and perhaps slightly more anxious "*I'm no' wantin' tae go tae Hell yet*", this after his crew had called his bluff and abandoned all caution.

Eaton recounted his experiences with his driver, James, in The Bug, in an article published in *Trains Annual* 1949. These certainly confirmed a perhaps surprising Drummond penchant for speed ("*What's the matter, James, D'ye think this is a goods train?*"), sometimes almost bordering on the reckless.

To quote Eaton:

"One day, an official of the old Highland Railway was staying with (Drummond). We took them both to Eastleigh Works, and afterwards to the South Western Hotel at Southampton for lunch. To give us a clear run back, it was arranged that our return journey should be made ahead of a Bournemouth express....."

"Before starting, Drummond came on the footplate, looked at my fire with the remark "That's verra good" and told James darkly that the Highland gentleman was to be given the run of his life! We went like a whirlwind! After racing up to Basingstoke, we ran the twenty-three and a half miles from Basingstoke to Woking in sixteen and a half minutes by stop watch, an average of 85 mph! As both engine and saloon together had but five axles on a short wheelbase, the saloon seemed to skip across the points and crossings like a horse jumping a gate!"

"Anyway, the sensation of passing over the junction at the west end of Weybridge Station was the last straw for the Highland man. Coming to the hatchway, he implored James to moderate the speed. As we were then approaching Surbiton, his wish was gratified, but Mr. Drummond enjoyed the joke hugely."

The potential maximum top speed of The Bug is not recorded, but it was certainly very high indeed, no doubt aided by its relatively large driving wheels and its very small and low-mounted boiler, which barely came up to half the height of the cab.

If 85mph was indeed well within The Bug's capability, and setting-aside the need to stop for more coal or water, it could have Drummond from his Surbiton lineside home to the West Country and back within a working day. Exeter

Queen Street, with a brief stop at Salisbury and a flying dash down the main line, would work out at barely more than two and a half hours. Even Plymouth Friary could have been reached within a morning. No one was safe!

The crew of The Bug also had to be resourceful. Eaton also recalls a trip to the Far West:

"I remember one occasion when we had been down the North Cornwall line. We were on our way back to London and were held up by a goods train at Ashbury, near Okehampton. It was seven o'clock in the evening, and as it was so late, Mr. Drummond decided that he would stay the night at Exeter. A message was to be sent forward to book him a room at an hotel."

"This was before the days of telephones, and Ashbury Station had a single-needle telegraph instrument, which the only porter on duty was quite incapable of manipulating. Enquiries for the Stationmaster or the booking clerk revealed that they had gone that evening to a Farmer's Hunt Supper! "

"The 'Old Man' started to read the Riot Act, whereupon I suggested that, having had experience of telegraph instruments when a lad in the Traffic Department, I might be able to save the situation. His comment to me was "You're not such a fool as you look"! Anyway, he got his room at the hotel that night, and James and I lodged in the enginemens' dormitory."

In his book on the Drummond T9 Greyhound 4-4-0s, the late D. L. Bradley also relates an anecdote about a trip to the West in The Bug. Drummond was heading westwards near Sutton Bingham when he spotted T9 708 heading east and running 13 minutes late. He was reported to have been horrified to see the smokebox door swinging open as it approached, and at once had The Bug brought to a halt at Sutton Bingham signalbox, crossed over and sent backwards at speed to Yeovil Junction in pursuit of the express. Arriving at Yeovil, he found the T9 being taken off the train.

He immediately ordered it to be re-coupled and drove it himself to Waterloo with The Bug's fireman doing the firing, presumably leaving James to drive the saloon back single-handed. The hapless driver of 708 was reduced to shunting duties, and both he and his fireman were fined.

Driving and firing The Bug must have therefore called for unique blend of qualities, of diplomacy, skill and discipline. However, at least one mishap did occur. William Eaton recounts again:

"Once when running down into Ilfracombe we nearly came to grief. James had stopped at Morthoe to examine his sand gear, to make sure we would be able to keep the saloon safely under control down the 1 in 36 gradient into Ilfracombe. But after we started away a shower came on, and we just could not avoid hitting the buffer-stops a hearty smack."

“Drum”, who had risen from his seat to alight, was bumped down again by the impact, and we expected a storm. However, when he saw no damage had been done, and remembered that James had stopped as a precaution at Morthoe, he said little. But on the next trip to Ilfracombe, he ordered a vacuum-braked coach to be attached in rear on the journey, for additional brake power, although on the climb to Morthoe this nearly stalled the little single-wheeler, which was not used to being harnessed to other vehicles”.

Hamilton Ellis also records that Drummond’s hours were notoriously irregular, no doubt aided by The Bug’s near-continual availability. Its availability also enabled him to attend any accidents promptly. Ellis recounts one such event, in relation to a minor mishap with a steam railmotor car, the latter vehicles being something of a Drummond speciality:

“The cars’ days at Southsea were attended by many anxieties. They had inside bearings to all wheels, and hot boxes were among their ailments, even on the short Southsea run. The sick car would be jacked up in Fratton loco yard for treatment. One day one of the jacks went down too quickly. Amid shouts of dismay the car lay down on one side. “

“The Old Man had to be immediately informed. He came down on The Bug and looked at the casualty. He said not a word. The car was righted, its scratched cheeks and broken spectacles attended to. Nobody heard any more. The Old Man was incalculable”.

Bradley also recounts a slightly comical accident, at Salisbury, where the arrival of The Bug and its occupant was itself the part-cause of the mishap. Another T9, 113, was being moved from the coaling stage towards the turntable by a passed fireman named Nicholls.

As he commenced his manoeuvre, horror of horrors, The Bug arrived as if from nowhere and came to rest in the shed yard, and Drummond clambered down. The unfortunate Nicholls was so overawed that he completely forgot to note the turntable’s position. To quote Bradley, *“noticing this, Drummond at once roared a warning and waved his arms, but all to no avail, for Nicholls became petrified with fear and No. 113 slowly and surely trundled into the turntable pit”*

The poor Nicholls was demoted once more to fireman.

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Photo National Railway Museum*

Part 2 in the next Wirral Steam.