



PULLMAN CAR SERVICES-ARCHIVE

The Quality of Service is Remembered Long after the Price is Forgotten

PCS-A - Special Edition No. 33. The Blandford Forum Pullman Charter and Tarrant Rushton Airfield.



1. © G. A. Richardson.

Wednesday October 25th, 1961.

West Country Class Pacific No. 34107 'BLANDFORD FORUM' with four Pullman cars approaching Blandford Forum station with a British Railways & Pullman Car Company Special Train Working from Brighton to Blandford Forum.

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The special train conveying both British Petroleum Company and Garex staff to attend Lady Cobham's funeral at St. Mary, Tarrant Rushton.
Lady Cobham is buried along with Sir Alan J Cobham in a large memorial tomb within the small churchyard.

A plaque on the wall within St. Mary church reads

IN MEMORY OF
GLADYS MARIE COBHAM
BELOVED WIFE OF SIR ALAN J COBHAM
BORN 29 AUG 1897, DIED 19 OCT 1961,
AGED 64 YEARS
A LIFE FULL OF DEVOTION
TO ALL THOSE AROUND HER

St. MARY CHURCH.



6. © British Listed Buildings.

Wednesday, 25th October 1961

55—SPECIAL EMPTY STEAM TRAINS.

Stock	Pullman Cars, Isle of Thanet Orion Cynthia and Niobe	Stock	Pullman Cars, Isle of Thanet Orion Cynthia and Niobe
After working	Berth	After working	6. 2 p.m. Blandford Forum
	a.m.		p.m.
Stewarts Lane	5 45	Brighton	9 25
Brixton	5/58	Hove	9 29RR
Herne Hill	6/ 0		9 49
Tulse Hill	6/ 6	Preston Park	9/54
Streatham	6/ 9½	Keymer Jn.	10/ 8
Streatham Common	6/11	Haywards Heath	10/12
Selhurst	6/18LL	Three Bridges	10/21TL
Windmill Bridge Jn.	6/20LL	Earlswood	10/30QL
East Croydon	6/21	Coulsdon North	10/38LL
Coulsdon North	6/30QL	Windmill Bridge Jn.	10/46LL
Earlswood	6/39TL	Selhurst	10/49LL
Three Bridges	6/48	Streatham Common	11/ 0
Haywards Heath	6/58	Streatham	11/ 2
Keymer Jn.	7/ 3	Tulse Hill	11/10
Preston Park	7/18	Herne Hill	11/15
Hove	7 57	Brixton	11/17
	10 57	Stewarts Lane	11 27
Brighton	11 2		
Form	11.15 a.m. Blandford Forum	Form	Berth

56—LOCO HAULED STOCK WORKING.

Train	Destination	Cars	Previous Service		
			Train	From	Due at
11 15 a.m.	Blandford Forum	PC Isle of Thanet PC Orion PC Cynthia PC Niobe	5†45 a.m.	Stewarts Lane	BRIGHTON. 11† 2 a.m.
9†25 p.m.	Stewarts Lane	PC Isle of Thanet PC Orion PC Cynthia PC Niobe	6 2 p.m.	Blandford Forum	9.15 p.m.

47 —BRIGHTON AND BLANDFORD FORUM.

Brighton	a.m. 11 15	British Petroleum Co. Garex. Stock:—Pullman First Class Brake. 2 Pullman First Class Kitchen. Pullman First Class Brake.	Blandford Forum... ..	p.m. 6 2
Hove	11/19		Brockenhurst	7 5W
Shoreham-by-Sea	11/26		Fareham	7 10
Worthing Ctl.	11/35			7 54W
West Worthing	11/37			7 58
Arundel Jn.	11/49		Farlington Jn.	8/10
Barnham	11/56		Havant	8/15
	p.m. 12/ 6		Chichester	8/27
Chichester	DN		Barnham	8/36
Havant	12/19		Arundel Jn.	8/42
Farlington Jn.	12/23		Worthing Ctl.	8/54
Southampton Ctl.	12 57W 1 2		Shoreham-by-Sea	9/ 3
			Hove	9/11
			Brighton	9 15
Blandford Forum	2 16			

2. Pullman Car Services-Archive.

British Railways & Pullman Car Company Special Train Working Notice.

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3. © Geoff Haskett.

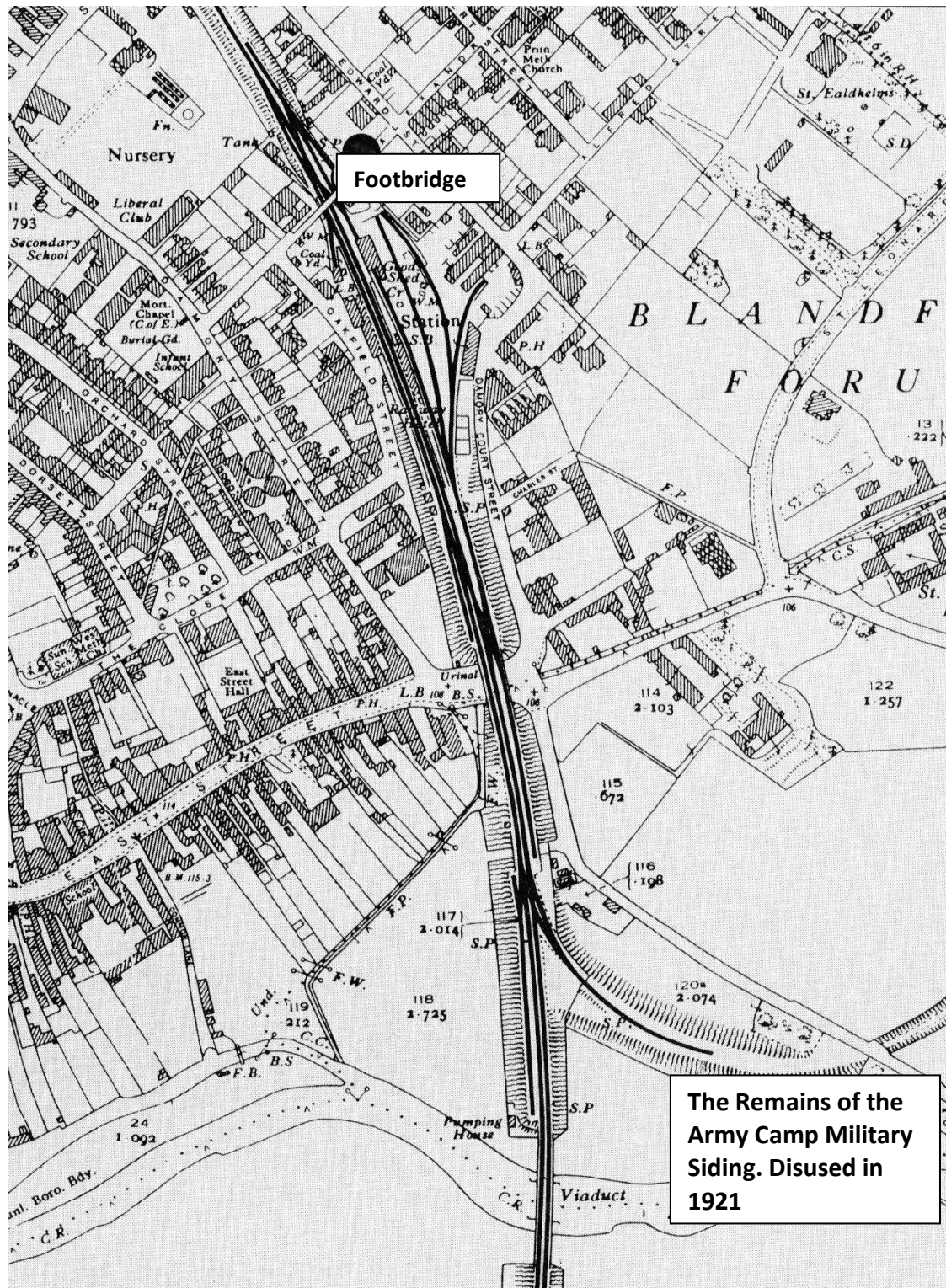
The four Pullman cars layover within the Goods Yard sidings.

Locomotive No. 34107 'BLANDFORD FORUM' shunted the four Pullman cars into the goods yard sidings located on the downside of the Somerset & Dorset Main Line from Bath to Bournemouth. This is the first recorded working of Pullman cars at Blandford Forum.

The Special Train Working Notice on page 2 identifies the allocated four Pullman cars as ISLE OF THANET, ORION, CYNTHIA & NIOBE.

The image above identifies that car NIOBE had been replaced by car IBIS.

4. Blandford Forum Station Track Plan.



4. © The Somerset & Dorset Then and Now.

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Whilst researching this Special Train Working, I identified that the train guests were linked to Flight Refuelling and the famous aviator and pioneer Sir Alan Cobham who relocated Flight Refuelling from Sussex to Tarrant Rushton airfield in 1947.

My research found ⁵. “The Friends of Tarrant Rushton Airfield Memorial web site”. The history below has been sourced from the website.

5. The History of Tarrant Rushton Airfield.

1943.

The airfield was constructed in just nine months, opening in May 1943 as Royal Air Force Tarrant Rushton. It was home to C squadron of the British Army's Glider Pilot Regiment, formed in February 1942, who flew Horsa and Hamilcar gliders from here to both Normandy and Arnhem. This included the famous Operation Coup de Main that captured Pegasus Bridge in the early hours of D-Day. Tarrant Rushton was also the starting point for Top Secret supply missions to resistance groups across occupied Europe.

From May 1943 until its first closure in 1946 the airfield became the home to two squadrons of large Halifax bombers used for towing gliders and transport.

298 squadron formed here in September 1943, while 644 squadron formed in early 1944 as the base prepared for the operations to recapture Europe.

1946.

The Royal Airforce left Tarrant Rushton and the airfield was mothballed.

1947.

Flight Refuelling an aviation research company and founded by the famous aviator and pioneer Sir Alan Cobham. Relocating the company from Sussex to Tarrant Rushton airfield.

Flight Refuelling undertook aviation research, production and servicing for the Government's Air Ministry, employing more than a thousand employees.

1948.

Commencing in July Flight Refuelling played a vital role in the Berlin Airlift, the fuel tanker aircraft being maintained at Tarrant Rushton 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1949.

The airfield set a world record for flying a Meteor jet for more than 12 hours thanks to the 'probe and drogue' in-flight refuelling system invented by Flight Refuelling.

1952.

The Royal Air Force returned to the airfield when a jet pilot training school was set up with Flight Refuelling carrying out the servicing work which was a national first.

1964.

The last active RAF service at the airfield saw Valiant jets use the base on dispersal training.

1970 to 1980.

Flight Refuelling continued its aviation research and development work, including equipment so that former Fleet Air Arm Royal Navy Sea Vixen jets could be flown remotely, as well as supplying target-towing services to the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy.

1980.

The last jet flew out of the airfield in September when Flight Refuelling relocated its aircraft to Bournemouth's Hurn airport.

The demolition of the 300-acre airport took several years, with 300 buildings, 40 concrete aircraft hard standings, one aircraft hangar, the control tower and three huge runways.

1982.

In June, located at the former main gate and hanger No. 1, a stone memorial was unveiled during the airfield's demolition.



7. © Andrew PM Wright.

Saturday June 1st, 1982 Air Chief Marshal Sir Roger Palin lays an RAFA wreath.

1984.

The last of the airfields concrete was crushed and removed.

During the demolition the crushed concrete was recycled by use in the construction of the bypass roads around Wimborne Minster and Blandford Forum.

Information Sources.

I take this opportunity to personally thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance in the production of this document by providing information in the form of images, history and private collections.

Individuals.

G. A. Richardson, Geoff Haskett, Steve Haskett, Robert Seymour, Andrew PM Wright.

Images.

1. G. A. Richardson.
3. Geoff Haskett.
6. British Listed Buildings.
7. Andrew PM Wright.

Organizations, Publications & Internet.

2. Pullman Car Services-Archive.

4. Blandford Forum Track Plan.

Chapter 9 - Page 173 - The Somerset & Dorset Then and Now.

Author Mac Hawkins - 1986 - Guild Publishing London - No ISBN.

5.  **Friends of Tarrant Rushton Airfield Memorial.**
<https://www.raftarranrushton.org/home1>

6. British Listed Buildings.

<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101118488-church-of-st-mary-tarrant-rushton>

Additional Information.

The Glider Pilot Regiment Association.

www.gliderpilotregiment.org.uk

Facebook Groups.

Memories Of Blandford Forum & surrounding areas.

Friends of Tarrant Rushton Airfield Memorial.

Issue Number.

Issue 1 - DRAFT September 14th, 2026.

Issue 2 - DRAFT September 15th, 2026.

Text amended within The History of Tarrant Rushton Airfield - 1943.

Issue 3 - September 17th, 2026.

Additional text detailing Lady Cobham's funeral at St. Mary, Tarrant Rushton.

Additional image of St. Mary Church.

Accreditation of image on page 8 to Andrew PM Wright.

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