:: Chris Tucker and John Sumbler :: The story of Flying Scotsman ::
:: A Day in the Life of the Buffet Crew ::
:: Diesel Gala Review :: WSR Locomotive Restoration Project ::
West Somerset Railway Association
www.wsra.org.uk
The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3BX.

Chairman: Paul Whitehouse, Vice Chairman: Mike Sherwood.
Trustees: Magda Davies, Will Foster, John Glover, Frank Houlding, William Knell,
Nigel Power, Simon Stretton.

Association General Manager: Jacquie Green, 01823 433856, manager@wsra.org.uk
Association Administrator: Keith Sandford, 01823 433856, admin@wsra.org.uk
Retail Sales: Kate Beard, 01823 432125, shop@wsra.org.uk
Engineering Manager: Ray Waldron, 01984 633547, admin@wsrestoration.co.uk

West Somerset Steam Railway Trust
www.wssrt.co.uk
The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3BX.

President: Lady Elizabeth Gass, DCVO.
Chairman: Christopher Austin OBE
Directors: Christopher Bolt CB (Treasurer), Ian Coleby, David Baker, Geoff Evens,
Alan Meade, Pete Treharne, John Jenkins.

West Somerset Railway Plc
www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk
The Railway Station, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 5BG. 01643 704996
Talking Timetable: (24 hours) 01643 707650.

Acting Chairman: Ian Coleby
Company Secretary: Ian Coleby
Directors: Ric Auger, Ken Davidge, Geoff Evens, Ben Grellier, Paul Hancock,
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Head of Mechanical Engineering: David Horton. Head of Infrastructure: Andrew Young.
Head of Operating: Richard Jones
The WSR Journal is published four times a year. It is the journal of the West Somerset Railway Association and covers activities on the whole West Somerset Railway.

Editor: TBA
journal@wsra.org.uk

Editorial Team: Don Bishop, Ian Coleby, Catherine Dance, Nigel Power, Martyn Snell, Allan Stanistreet, Keith Smith, Ian Tabrett

ADVERTISING: please contact Martyn Snell
c/o The Editor

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COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 20 OCTOBER 2017
Well, of all the roles I thought might come my way as General Manager of the WSRA, editing the journal was not even on the radar. However, due to a last minute change of plan, we found ourselves without an editor for this issue and therefore I have stepped in temporarily. However, I am not alone. I have been very ably supported by Ian Tabrett, and Catherine Dance, who between them have achieved most of the actual editing work.

My role has been more of a cross between a managing editor and a production manager, pulling everything together and making it happen. It has also been a very useful insight into just how much time and effort goes into producing each edition of the Journal.

This way of working is likely to be the pattern for the future. Rather than a single editor, with a huge workload, there is likely to be a team of editors sharing out the tasks and discussing content together to ensure a coherent and interesting publication. The team of editors would work to the overall direction and guidance of a Managing Editor. In addition to the editors, we have an excellent typesetter and layout artist in Ian Coleby, a technical photo editor in Nigel Power, a team of proof readers and regular contributors, of both images and articles.

Volunteers and Teamwork are what make the West Somerset Railway great. Up and down the line there are teams of volunteers busy making sure the line is safe, the trains run to time and the passengers are plentiful and happy. Every train has a team comprising guard, travelling ticket inspector, buffet staff, loco driver and fireman. Each has their own role to play and each is dependent on the other for a successful outcome.

Working with others in teams is what makes volunteering here so special. At the end of a day on the railway, volunteers should go home feeling:

- satisfied that they have done a good job and made a difference,
- valued and confident because they're part of a team and
- happy because they've had FUN.

Volunteering is a great way to make new friends and extend your social life. Lifelong friendships have been formed through volunteering on the railway, and even a marriage or two has ensued!

If the Flying Scotsman visit is to be a success (and I’m sure it will) the WSR will need teams of willing volunteers as never before. There have been volunteer teams involved from the very outset, in planning the various aspects of the visit from and it's not too late to join in. We need people on the stations, on the trains, in the cafes and in the offices. Where do you fit in?

For future editions of the WSR Journal please send your contributions to journal@wsra.org.uk or to Jacquie Green, WSRA General Manager, Bishops Lydeard Station, TA4 3BX.
Special Events Planning Team

As from Thursday 22 June 2017 John Cronin stood down as Chairman of SEPT and as the DEPG member on the team. In total John has served 8 years as chairman and 16 years as the DEPG representative on SEPT. As he approached his 75th birthday in August, John felt it was time for him to stand aside and let a younger person with fresh ideas take SEPT forward.

Don Bishop has accepted the invitation to take over as chairman of SEPT and represent the DEPG. Don is a long time member of the group.

John was thanked for all his contributions both as a member and subsequently chairman and Don presented John with a framed photograph of two heritage diesel locomotives in service on the WSR, which is now proudly on display at Williton.

WSR PLC Board changes

The PLC board chairman, John Irven and Director Steve Williams have both resigned for personal reasons. Acting Chairman Ian Coleby thanked both for their contribution and said of John Irven: “The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank John for the contribution he has made to the railway, since joining in 2012 and becoming chairman in 2014. He has achieved a great deal of success in helping to deliver a more sustainable and professionally run activity for the 21st century with a sharper commercial and safety focus. In particular, John was closely involved in securing the future of the railway freehold and resolving the differences with the West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA). It is through his personal involvement that we now have good working relations with the WSRA and our other support groups.”

Of Steve Williams’ tenure on the board, Ian Coleby said “He has introduced a robust planning process that is better than we have had in the past and given us a strategic outlook. He has spent many hours liaising with outside bodies which has paid dividends and overseen strategic projects such as Southern Gateway, Williton and Bishops Lydeard to Taunton link. These are pieces of work that few people ever see, yet consume a great deal of effort. Steve has been instrumental in introducing new commercial agreements with our support bodies which have replaced the time-expired arrangements that previously existed. Latterly, it was Steve who got the momentum behind the PDG and has turned that into an effective and respected body.”

The PLC board thanks both for their contribution and wishes them well in the future.

Head of Commercial Services

It is with much regret that the railway bids bon voyage to Head of Commercial Services, Colin Howard. Colin has been a key figure in driving the Commercial Activities of the railway since 2007 when he started as Minehead Retail Manager. He will be sadly missed and we wish him well in his retirement. A replacement is being sought and in the interim period, Marketing Officer Samantha White will be acting Head of Commercial Services.
September sees our next AGM. Only one member, Rodney Greenway, has been nominated as a Trustee, so he and Mike Sherwood will be elected unopposed. Your Board still needs a Treasurer and someone with fundraising experience and if people come forward with the right skills it will consider co-opting them. We recognise that we still need to re-establish confidence in the Association. We are now working very well with the plc. I have a regular monthly lunch with its Chair and am now the Chair of the Partnership Development Group. This demonstrates very clearly to the other members of the group and the world at large that your Association is now a committed team player for the whole railway.

At the AGM we shall reinstate the practice of an informal discussion after the formal business has been concluded when members can raise any question they wish about the Association.

Membership subscriptions have remained unchanged for over three years. Your Board will use this opportunity to obtain your views on how to raise more money to support the railway through a system of tiered membership. The principle of one member one vote will be retained.

The Charity Commission approved our application to change our objects, so that the Association will be clearly focussed on supporting the railway from Taunton to Minehead if you approve this change.

There’s been some misunderstanding in the past about how we can support the plc. Your Association is a charity, and its objects allow it to restore, preserve and display railway locomotives, carriages, wagons and other items, including buildings. We can’t directly subsidise the plc, but we can assist them wherever a heritage item is in need of preservation. Your Board is determined to interpret this in the best way possible to support the railway. That’s why their Large Prairie locomotive (4110) is included in our Locomotive Restoration Fund.

Your Association owns two locomotives and 11 coaches which are in regular use by the plc. We also own several other vehicles for which neither we nor the plc has any use. That is why we are seeking your approval to sell these vehicles for the benefit of the Locomotive Restoration Fund. We have to be focussed on our principal task, of supporting our railway in the most effective way possible.

I’ll conclude with two pleas. One is to consider how you might be able to help us as a volunteer. You don’t need any special knowledge, just a willingness to help regularly towards our fundraising activities. Do please be in touch with the office if you think you might be able to do something.

My second is do please consider using easyfundraising.org.uk. Thank you to everybody who has helped us raise over £100 so far this year. You can sign up at https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/cause/s/westsomersetrailwayassociation/

I look forward to meeting many of you at the AGM.
Bishops Lydeard

Following a recent referendum, the building formerly known as 'Brunel House 2' or 'White House 1' on the station farm site, has now been officially named 'Blackmore House' – hopefully this will stop any confusion for our local postie!

Things have moved on quite well in terms of the internal sort out in the new building, following the hasty exit from Brunel House. RAMS are now just about back to normal, although there is a major painting exercise currently underway to smarten up the Blackmore House suburb known as 'Portacabin City'. This complex comprises several buildings such as Association Manager's office, Book-keeping office (subject to internet connection) Infrastructure office, S & T office, Meeting/Training room, Mess room, and eventually (subject to services being connected), additional toilets.

Internal walls inside Blackmore House are now completed, forming the S & T workroom, RAMS workshop, Station work/store rooms (partly ready for the imminent loss of the portacabin that has resided on the cattle dock siding for many years), plus comprehensive shelving throughout.

*Flying Scotsman*’s visit in May has proved an absolutely mammoth effort from many areas. As a background for the visit, Steam Dreams charter trains, was also used as an opportunity to 'test' what would be required over several days for the
September visit and running days. At the same time, with *Flying Scotsman* not yet able to run through to Minehead as originally planned, we probably saw many more people from the morning charter start their journey at BL.

Much of the lower car park was taken up with a large reception marquee, with other various additional facilities on site e.g. extra toilets, generator etc. Whilst it was a lot of hard work in setting up (co-ordinated by Alan Nicholson), the day itself (whilst a bit manic) was successful and most satisfying for those involved. We are still looking for more help in September!

One of the most noticeable aspects of the run up to and over the *Flying Scotsman* day was how dry and hot the weather was. It was the direct opposite of the previous week when we were welcoming many visitors in the pouring rain to journey to Minehead for the *Antiques Road Show*. We have never seen the DMU so full – but then again it was free.

Back at the beginning of this period we had a successful Spring Steam Gala, although needless to say the anticipated completion date for the A358 roundabout roadworks slipped and wasn’t completed on time. There was more fun with low loaders bringing locos in and out, but at long last the new roundabout became operational during May. It took a little while for us to get used to these long green vehicles known as 'buses' visiting our station yard for the first time in many months.

Shortly after the Spring Gala we were back to full season operation. We are now running seven days a week building up to the peak holiday season. Even before we get to peak season, many trains have already seemed very full on leaving BL.

We have had a few other events to disturb our peaceful existence at BL, such the vintage bus running day, vintage car rally, Gruffalo and Paw Patrol travellers, and most recently the Diesel Gala, where once again we struck lucky with the weather, if not the numbers of visitors.

No doubt there have been many other things happening around the station - the garden and shop teams have all been hard at work as ever, so apologies to anyone if you haven’t had a mention.

There is little time now to draw breath as we head ever closer to *'Flying Scotsman' – the sequel'* where there beckons an 'interesting' time with the 'Late Summer Weekend' preceding the loco arriving on the Monday. All preparations must have been completed prior to this, as the excursions start on the Tuesday – oh well – never a dull moment – such is life at Lydeard.

**Norman Barker**

**Crowcombe Heathfield**

Well, it's success all round on the recruitment front at Crowcombe. Whether it's due to the recruitment banner, the increased efforts of all the existing staff, or whether we've just been lucky, Crowcombe Heathfield's numbers have risen by seven new volunteers since the start of the season. All have undergone Platform Awareness and PTS training as well as an internal training programme, and are now fully-fledged members of staff. Three of the new volunteers are about to spend time training in the booking offices at Minehead and Bishops Lydeard before taking up ticket sales at Crowcombe. This will mean that we will be able to open the ticket office nearly every day in future.

Unfortunately, we've had to say goodbye to
Roger Thompson who has left the area. Roger was a key driving force in seeing the new Goods Lock-up completed, he was a member of the FoCHS committee, a PIC (and keen ticket seller) on Wednesdays, and recently served on the interim management team of the WSRA. He will be greatly missed.

The Goods Lock-up was officially handed over to the PLC by the Friends of Crowcombe Heathfield during the Spring Gala. It was one of the last tasks undertaken before FoCHS was wound up following a vote at an EGM. There were several reasons why this was deemed necessary, one being the difficulty in finding volunteers to make up a management committee, despite an appeal to the membership. The assets of FoCHS are being audited as I write, before being absorbed by the PLC to settle loans arising from the new building. As of the end of April, Crowcombe Heathfield station has reverted to “self-funding” under the Station Master’s stewardship.

There have been many compliments from visitors on the look of the station. This is due to Penny Gardiner and her team, who do a fantastic job. The gardens are a picture. Many of you will know that the ashes of the late John Pearce, a founder member of the WSRA, now rests within them.

All eyes are now turning to Flying Scotsman in September. At the time of writing our Roster Clerk, Keith Bird, has completed a “first pass” Flying Scotsman roster. We are anticipating (and planning for) large numbers of visitors all wanting to catch a glimpse of the locomotive, but there will be strict limits of visitor numbers on the platforms. We have organised a large car-parking facility close to the station in conjunction with local farmer Ashley Baker, and we have booked a “mobile catering facility” (Burger Van!) to cater for the expected increase in visitors. Extra toilets are being provided, and the adjacent lane is being closed to traffic during the day except for the residents of Bakers Orchard, other addresses along the lane, utilities, station staff, and vehicles displaying a blue badge. We are looking forward to Scotsman with some trepidation, but safe in the knowledge that detailed planning is being exercised with input from all Crowcombe’s staff. By the time you read this report, we’ll all know the outcome of the Flying Scotsman visit, including our efforts!

We mustn’t ignore our day-to-day work to ensure that our visitors enjoy a great experience. We haven’t taken our foot off the pedal on the recruitment front. There are plans to spruce-up the outside of the main building in conjunction with RAMS during July, and we fully intend to re-vamp the Booking Office to enhance the “heritage feel”. Lots to do.

Geoff Cross
Stogumber

With the season now underway and the full summer schedule almost upon us, we at Stogumber have been playing our part.

The Steam Rail Ale weekend was a huge success for Stogumber, and we hope the railway in general. Certainly, with the Diesel Gala going on at the same time, we were getting a lot of passengers arriving and departing for the Ale Festival. We hosted seven different independent brewers, and despite indifferent weather sales were good, both for the brewers and for our food catering. I understand requests have been made for a repeat performance next year.

Those of you passing the station recently will have noticed we now have our full set of poster boards in place and there have been some changes to our information boards, courtesy of Robin White.

The model railway that was offered to us duly arrived and was somewhat longer (and heavier) than we expected. After considerable effort from two of our staff (Bob and Ralph), and with help from the donor and his family we finally slotted the model through the door and into place. At present, it remains under cover whilst RAMS make a bespoke cabinet to prevent wayward poking fingers, or worse. By the time you read this it will be on display, so do drop in and admire. We think it is an amazing reproduction of Stogumber, with a little bit of CH thrown in for good measure.

Our new website is now up and running, (see www.stogumberstation.com) although we are still under tuition as to how to add items etc.

Sadly, due to my deteriorating health, I have had to stand down as Station Master. We welcome Bob Preston into the position. He will do a superb job I am sure, with the full support of all our volunteers. However, Stogumber isn't getting rid of me completely as I have been asked to carry on doing the administration for as long as I can, and I will be about at SR when I have permission from Musgrove Park Hospital.

We also have some changes in the Friends with Peter Cox stepping down as Chairman, and Colin White taking over.

Finally, with the May visit of 60103 done and dusted, we are polishing our plans for the somewhat busier visit, we hope, in September.

Do drop in and see us and have a cream tea in the garden... my idea of Heaven.

Alan Bines.

Williton

Since the last Journal deadline, we have been able to finish the exterior painting of the sides and rear of the waiting room on Platform Two, following which, a new section of wicket fence was constructed alongside. A further section is ready for fitting within the next week or so. Alex Newman has been busy extending the three-bar fence alongside the 'restricted area' by our mess and work sheds, and manufactured a new gate so that this area can be kept safe from visitors. We can then return the steel barrier to the Restorations, which has been 'on loan' from them for the past four years or so!

During June over two or three evenings, we were able to repaint the white lines on the platform edges—a long job!

The station floral displays are now in full bloom and we are continually grateful to Phil and Avril Chapman for their valued contribution. The least the rest of the staff
can do is to make sure the daily watering regime is followed!

We are sad to report on the passing of Bob Tanner, following a relatively short illness. Bob had been a volunteer at Williton for the past six or seven years – first as platform staff and then, following a hip replacement, in the booking office. Along with his wife Diana, they moved away to live in Wisbech, Norfolk last October. He had planned to be back working with us over the Spring Gala, but sadly this was not to be so. Two members of the staff went across to the funeral.

Mac McLeud has finally hung up his secateurs and retired from duties. Mac had looked after the hedge alongside platform two for many years, and boy have we missed him. This really is a full-time job and already the top must have grown three feet up! Any volunteers out there?

However, during the last couple of months we have welcomed a new member of staff, Julie Le Sueur. Recently having moved to Williton from Jersey, Julie has just completed her first shifts in the Booking Office.

Another new recruit Peter Davies, who lives in the Bristol area, has done his first shift and another volunteer couple have started the process of induction etc and hopefully with be with us shortly. As mentioned in the last issue, Dave Scott should be moving back to Williton this very weekend (29/6).

We are however, still looking for additional help in the shop/tea room!

As to the car park tarmac - well, this is still on track for November 2017.

*John Parsons*

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**Doniford Halt**

Passengers and walkers are making good use of the new footpath – some riding to Doniford then walking down the path, down to the beach and across the coast path to Watchet. A nice little outing. My main problem is that the thistles, grass, oil seed rape, nettles and other rampant weeds are so healthy that the path is growing in, making its passage most difficult – virtually impossible for small people and pushchairs. Although I have started cutting back, it's too much for me and I need help – appealing to all readers! I'm on 07701 00 4646.

We have tried hard to make the site attractive to passengers, keeping the grass mown, flower troughs in bloom and watered, paint bright and tidy - but others seem still to combat our endeavours. For example, new pot plants have been stolen plus a rhododendron, which we have nurtured for years and which Geoff planted in very difficult ground this spring. It was about to leap into full flower when somebody broke off the flower stem completely and took it away, never to be seen again.

*Photo: Chris Hooper*
Swallows have been nesting now for three years in the roof of the pagoda. This month a second nest has been built so, one presumes, two families are in residence. Unfortunately their lavatory is very public and makes the floor and seats most distasteful. Mop duties form one of my most common tasks. No passenger has yet been hit, to my knowledge.

Lack of staff and facilities (gates, booking office, lavatories, drinks, snacks...) at Doniford Halt makes preparation for any big event extra tricky. A crystal ball would be a great help too!

*Chris Hooper*

**Watchet**

Watchet station is looking absolutely splendid this summer, as daily feedback from travellers and residents testify. A great deal of effort by a small, hard working and dedicated group of volunteers has gone into making the gardens, flower boxes and flower beds a tapestry of colour. They have worked outside in all weathers since January; weeding, cutting back, pruning and sowing, ready for the sunshine. Hanging baskets once again cascade colour and fragrance from the main station building, adding to the ambience and welcoming appearance of both station and town.

Inside the main station building, the bookshop and displays of good quality railway magazines, are kept stocked and in order by one of our volunteers. Their sale is a vital source of income for maintaining the station and investing in its upkeep.

The station gift shop and cafe are well stocked and ready for the busy summer season ahead and anticipating the bustle and joy of the *Flying Scotsman*. A new drinks fridge and ice cream freezer have been purchased from the funds raised though the selling of cakes, drinks and souvenirs. The shop and cafe remain open every day of the season, staffed and managed by a willing and good humoured team of volunteers.

During the diesel gala weekend a model rail sale was held in the pagoda. This twice a year event is planned by a single volunteer who advertises the event, obtains the stock through donations, tests and prices the items. People of all ages visit and leave with a smile, carrying in their hand some rolling stock, building, rail books, vehicles or track. This year, one of the first customers was a local boy aged about 10 who arrived at the station around 09.15 on his bicycle; the model rail sale helps stimulate this sort of local interest in the WSR. The funds raised are directed at the station's daily upkeep.

‘Hymek’ D7017 arrives at Watchet with the 1247 Minehead to Bishops Lydeard service on 10 June, 2017. *Photo: Glen Batten*
and annual winter maintenance programme.

Along the platform the once desolate goods office is now refurbished and its door kept open to delight and intrigue visitors. A look inside takes us back in time to a working life of bustling trade. Whilst it may not be totally historically accurate, it captures well the atmosphere of a busy branch line station that once served the port of Watchet. The successful refurbishment is the achievement of a couple of our maintenance experts. An old 'Arkwright's shop' style bicycle, complete with front carrier, was recently donated by a local person who asked for it to remain at the station. When received, the cycle was painted red, white and blue. It has now been repainted and restored by one of the two volunteers; it sits inside the goods office and is resplendent in black paint with its newly acquired front basket ready for 'Granville' to get pedalling up the hills from the station as he makes his deliveries.

The historical ambience of the entire station has been enhanced by the addition of three authentic GWR style benches along the platform length. Two more are on order, and once received, will be correctly painted and complete the set. A small team of skilled maintenance volunteers have overseen this work, repairing and re-painting all existing benches over the winter. The station has a couple of non-GWR picnic tables. These are popular with travelling groups and with families, and so they too have been repainted in GWR hues to complement the benches, giving greater harmony in their more uniform appearance.

Watchet is a popular destination for families. The seasonal and popular Butlin's Express specials arrive on Wednesday and Sunday mornings from Minehead, and many young family groups disembark with little children, buggies and rucksacks. One of our station volunteers has produced a treasure hunt around the town for these visitors. It is called the 'Watchet Station Dragon's Trail'. A mother dragon lives at the station and its children have left the nest to live in Watchet. Children follow a trail around town and have to locate and correctly name the family of different coloured baby dragons who have their nests in small caravans and beach huts placed in the windows of local premises. Once complete the children return to the station to receive a badge declaring they are a successful 'Watchet Station Dragon Seeker'.

Trying to find words to describe the anticipation around the September arrival of the Flying Scotsman is not easy; one wit described it as akin to Manchester United arriving to play Watchet Town. Planning for the visit has been going on for several months, and at Watchet our volunteers have willingly stepped forward and offered more of their time and expertise to make this special event a success for residents, visitors and all stakeholders.

Throughout this report one of the words I have used most frequently is that of 'volunteer'. I close by expressing my gratitude to, and applauding the skills, expertise and enthusiasm of the team of volunteers we are so fortunate to have at Watchet. The travelling public receive the smiles and welcoming voices every day through the season. Watchet has a very enthusiastic and good humoured team of volunteers who make the station a warm and friendly place for those who work there and those who visit.

Kevin Smith
Washford

Washford station is the home of the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust. See their report under the WSR Groups section.

Blue Anchor

We start these notes with a report of an unusual operational occurrence which happened at the station on 24th June, when we had a UP departure from the Down platform. The QB was turned back at BA instead of continuing as booked to Minehead, due to its late start from Bishops Lydeard. The 'Travelling Signalman' (Ms Robin White) reported that, “A number of folks remarked that it was a nicer place for thirty minutes lay-over than MD on a Saturday evening!”

We had a successful Spring Steam Gala (if quite tiring for the dedicated regular volunteers) coming on top of a lot of effort to spruce up the station.

We would like to officially welcome Mrs Lynne Vickerstaff who has been a regular gala face in the past, along with her husband Eric, who has been supervising Lineside Passes for the PLC, and also keeping an eye on the (non WSR-staff) orange vests in the vicinity of the station.

On May Spring Bank Holiday weekend, we celebrated a 100th birthday party – **Elsie**, not a person, but the camping coach belonging to Malcolm and Natalie Short, brought into service during November 1917 as GWR 3980, later 9881. **Elsie** was the name carried by the coach while it was stabled at Dawlish Warren, prior to its move to Blue Anchor. The party was accompanied by a gathering of MG vehicles as Mr & Mrs Short are also members of the MG owners club as well as WSR supporters. Of the three located at Blue Anchor, the coach is the nearest to the fields, and furthest from the station. Further details about the coach and its neighbours are contained in the WSR Stock Book, which is available from all the usual WSR outlets, including Blue Anchor Station.

Over the last few months since the last journal report, our maintenance man (Ivor Baulch) and his able (but small) band of willing helpers have been busy. The waiting room and Ladies WC have both seen the windows prepared and painted inside and

Unusual UP departure of QB from DOWN platform at Blue Anchor. 24 June 2017. Photo: Robin White
out, with some filling and repairing needed too – thank you to Brian Stainton for his efforts on this job. Our renovated “Donations” sign looks much better, and now has a Perspex cover to protect it from the elements. The “Refreshments” board has been updated too, and we have a small fixture on the Waiting Room door which will, in the future contain notices advising the public, if for instance we have to shut the waiting room due to staff shortages.

We are hopeful that our new GWR platform benches will be delivered and sited by the time that this journal reaches you. They should really complement the station and bring a sense of continuity to the heritage look and feel of Blue Anchor.

Sadly, some hoped-for projects have fallen by the wayside due to lack of volunteer resource: including the restoration of the remaining Blue Anchor ground signal which Chris Osment was prepared to loan to us, and which we hoped to display near the museum. A separate internal telephone line for the Booking Office, is also apparently “too difficult” due to lack of line capacity. We really hope that this year we can find the time and the labour to paint the platform white lines again, as these are sorely in need of attention now... any volunteers?

We have *Flying Scotsman* to look forward to, and there will be further staff training sessions on Platform Awareness, as well as Fire Precautions and Evacuation. So plenty more work over the next few months, and as ever, the more the merrier: we look forward to welcoming many new faces!

*Derek Tarr; Gill Baulch*

*Minehead*

As I write, the summer is upon us at Minehead and the station is looking a picture and is very busy with passengers. As far as the Friends of Minehead Station are concerned our time centres around flowers, routine maintenance and the very important running of Readers Halt. This main source of income, provides the finance
for much of the work on the upkeep of our station buildings. This is therefore a good opportunity to thank all those involved with its running and the never-ending supply of books and magazines for us to sell on.

The main event since the last Journal has been the visit to the station of the BBC's programme, the Antiques Roadshow. A great deal of preparation went into getting the platform ready, creating enough space for all that was required. Our bay platform looked marvellous with carriages provided by the Steam Trust and the Association, both of which I am sure will feature prominently in both of the likely programmes to be televised.

Having got everything prepared, the one thing we could not control, really put a spanner in the works – the weather; it rained and rained until about 3 o'clock. I hate to think how many people would have turned up if the weather had been good, as we still had a queue to come in, right around the station's not small car park. Some of the examinations of items brought to the station had to be transferred to the Beach Hotel nearby, but all the “filming” was done on the platform or in the carriages. Trains came and went, not interfering with the production too much. We await with interest to see what the result will be, featuring many well known BBC faces, as well as local folk from the West Somerset area. It is hoped that the BBC will let us know in good time when the programmes are to be broadcast. Amazingly, within 24 hours of their departure, the station was back to normal, as if nothing had happened. Everyone here did a magnificent job, but it was very nice to go home, have a shower and then dry out and warm up after the BBC departed.

And so, to the planning and expectation of more large crowds during the visit of the Flying Scotsman. I do not think any of us really know what will happen. We just hope that it does not rain for the whole week!

Martyn Snell

Richard Price examining a pocket watch - with the Steam Trust’s sleeping car no 9038 in the background - during the Antiques Roadshow at Minehead station on 17 May 2017. Photo: Chris Austin
SPRING STEAM GALA :: 5199 ON GOODS AND PASSENGER

British Railways liveried visiting prairie tank 5199 was a popular visitor at the Spring Steam Gala.

Above the engine is seen piloting 53809 near Nornvis Bridge on a short mixed freight. Below, at the head of carmine and cream coaching stock at Nethercott, 28 April 2017. *Both photos: Cliff Woodhead*
SPRING STEAM GALA :: THE PINES EXPRESS

Two views of the Pines Express. Above 43924 piloting 53809 recreates the famous climb up over the Mendips at Nethercott on 28 April 2017.

Below, the following day, the same combination is seen at Watchet. Both Photos: Cliff Woodhead.
Another busy and interesting few months for our various departments

Operations

IT has been "all change" recently at the top of the Operations Department. Paul Hancock’s appointment as Operations Director on the Company Board was reported in the last WSR Journal. Subsequently, and again as reported in the last issue, I have been appointed to the newly-created senior management role of Head of Operations, starting work with the Company on 1 June. One of the consequences is that I have now effectively moved from editor to editorial scribe, though I hasten to add the two events are entirely unconnected!

With the post of Operating Superintendent having disappeared as a result of this change, Steve Martin – who remains a very important member of the team – now assumes the title of Senior Operations Supervisor, and it is good to see that his encyclopaedic knowledge of the WSR, and its operations in particular, has been retained. The other two members of the Operations Office team based at Minehead, John Glover and James Mills, remain in post as Senior Operations Assistant and Operations Assistant respectively.

With an initial review of future staffing needs having now been undertaken, Steve Bailey, who has been acting as Signalling Inspector on an interim basis for the past few months in addition to his existing role as Guards Inspector, has agreed to combine both roles on a full-time permanent basis, and as a result becomes Chief Operations Inspector.

This year has certainly proved to be a busy time for the department, with resourcing many additional workings (charters, specials, dining trains, light engine moves, driver experience courses etc) on top of our timetabled services. This has stretched our current operations staff capability on occasions, and it is to everyone's credit that all our services have operated as planned, with no cancellations, though we did have to substitute a diesel on some steam services in late June/early July due to a shortage of available steam locomotives. Services over this period have been worked by a combination of Nos 5199 (now departed back to Llangollen) 6960, 7820, 44422, 53808, 53809, D6575, D1661, D7017 and D1010, which has certainly created plenty of variety! My thanks to everyone concerned for their considerable efforts in keeping the trains running over the busy summer.

Operationally, our Spring Steam Gala was very successful, with an intensive timetable and variety of trains worked by a quintet of visiting locomotives – Midland '4F' No 43924, BR Standard 2-6-0s Nos 76017 and 78018, GWR 0-6-0PT No 1501 and GWR 2-6-2T No 5199 – supported by Nos 6960, 44422, 53808 and 53809 from the home fleet. The Midland outnumbering the Great
Western did not go un-noted! Next year, the Spring Gala reverts back to its traditional slot in late March.

The LNER 'A3' Class 'Pacific' *Flying Scotsman* visited the WSR in late May for stabling and servicing at Bishops Lydeard in between various charter commitments on the national network. The locomotive arrived with us on the early evening of Tuesday 23 May on a Bristol-Minehead charter, which was worked on the WSR by No 53808. Three days later, No 60103 worked two (one in the morning, the other in the evening) circular BL-Bristol-Westbury-BL charters, with the loco and its support coach departing from us on 31 May to resume its main line commitments elsewhere. The general level of interest and the number of people who turned out to see and travel behind Flying Scotsman provided an early interest of what things will be like in September, when the 'A3' returns and will be working trains over the whole length of the WSR.

In preparation for this, the Operations Department will be supporting our colleagues in the Infrastructure Engineering Department in providing and resourcing a series of works trains that are required over the summer for ballasting and other duties required in order to upgrade parts of our permanent way.

The timetable for our own 'Flying Scotsman Week' has now been agreed, which will see eight timetabled trains in each direction – four of which will be worked by No 60103 and a second 'guest' loco supported by a 'standard steam set' worked by one of our own locos. On four days there will also be an additional dining/catering train in the evening, working between Bishops Lydeard and Blue Anchor. With all the additional support roles required in order to facilitate the visit of Flying Scotsman – not least in light of the number of passengers and onlookers expected – a considerable volunteer input will be required throughout the period in question (5-7 & 9-12 September), and all offers of assistance would be gratefully appreciated.

The most recent special event has been our Diesel Gala on 9-11 June. Almost 1,900 passengers enjoyed this year's event, which saw three visiting locos – Class 26 No D5343 and a pair of Class 20s, Nos D8059 and D8188 – brought in to support the D&EPG-supplied home fleet of Nos D1010, D1661, D6575 and D7017. The Friday and Saturday were both 100 per cent diesel, with two 40-mile steam diagrams on the Sunday. The special timetable worked well and timekeeping was good. The only real disappointment was the late cancellation by GWR of the proposed TN-BL shuttles due to a shortage of available units.
It is not just our traditional gala events that bring in significant extra volumes of people. To date this year, we have run two children’s character events – ‘The Gruffalo’ on 15 April and ‘Paw Patrol’ on 3 June – both of which have proved extremely popular, the former attracting over 1,500 passengers, the majority of whom travelled up by train from BL. With that in mind, active consideration is being given to introducing a special timetable at future such events next year, as we previously did at ‘Thomas’ events.

Richard Jones  Head of Operations

Permanent Way

Our main task this period has been concentrated on sleeper changing. Two Sundays have been spent changing 14 sleepers close to Avill Flood Relief Bridge, four Sundays changing 59 sleepers between the Bishops Lydeard Water Tower and signal 101 on the way to Norton and eight days changing 88 sleepers between the end of Williton Platform and Liddymore Bridge heading towards Doniford. In the same areas we have also coiled and replaced many wood ferules to prolong the life of existing sleepers and in some cases bring the track back into gauge. It has been quite hard going at times as the number of volunteers have dropped in the last year or so.

A joint effort with the company gang took place at Watchet where wood blocks were inserted between the inner ends of every fourth sleeper and the platform thus preventing the track moving. If left, the gap between the platform edge and the trains could narrow until eventually they would foul each other. While this was going on, the opportunity was taken to start fishplate lubrication in the station area with the manpower not involved in the main task.

One Sunday morning a couple of the gang were dispatched to the Leigh Wood area to repair fencing after reports of sheep on the line. Milepost refurbishment /repainting is now in full swing and all ten mileposts between MP 175 ½, just north of Stogumber, and MP 177 ¼, just south of Williton, have now been done. MP 175 is completely beyond repair and has been removed. A new one is in stock, manufactured by RAMS earlier in the year, but it requires a new bracket which I am currently making before it can be fitted.

Once again Mary, Mike and Terry manned our stall at Bishops Lydeard platform during the Spring Gala. We were not quite as busy as previous galas but that was probably due to the lack of trains departing from platform 2 and the poor weather on the Sunday. If you are interested giving us a hand on Sundays and would like more details you can contact me at kenandmaryb@hotmail.co.uk or 01252 878259 or 07592 770734.

Ken Barker

Cutting Back

8th & 9th April 2017

Following a request from Chris Hooper the Station Master at Doniford Halt for assistance with vegetation clearance around the station area, the weekend
brought a change of venue for the volunteer gang.

As parking in this area is very difficult Chris arranged for the team to park on the Queen Bee site just opposite the station. This allowed us to easily access the station with our equipment by making the short walk under Doniford Bridge. In order of priority, our jobs for the weekend were to clear the upper embankment to the upper road gate, the lower embankment adjacent to the permissive path (some 300 yards) and trim the hedge behind the platform. On the first day, with a team of sixteen people, two hedge trimmers and a chainsaw, we completed the upper embankment and a large proportion of the lower embankment. The brash was wheel barrowed in two dumpy bags to a bonfire site on the ballast just beyond the end of the platform on the up side.

On the second day, a smaller team of seven completed the vegetation clearance next to the permissive path and trimmed the hedge behind the platform. All the brash was cleared and burnt on site.

12th & 13th May 2017
This weekend yet again brought another change of venue for the volunteer gang, with a visit to Turks Castle cutting near the hamlet of Newton. This location is one of our more difficult sites to access, but we are lucky because WSR volunteer Martin Southwood allowed us to park in his driveway and sorted access out with a local farmer so we had a short walk across the field.

The first day I split the team up so that we could work from both ends of the cutting on the down side. One team worked from the Newton Bridge end, and the others from the farm crossing point. By the end of the day you could just about walk along the top of the cutting.

The next day was spent clearing up the mess from the previous session and burning the numerous piles of brash, including an old timber field gate that we found lying in the undergrowth.

4th & 5th June 2017
This time the weekend found the volunteer gang working not at one, but three different locations. Following a request from the owners of the cottages near Tribble Bridge for the grass bank to be strimmed, a two-man team was despatched to cut the grass bank and trim some overhanging trees.

The remainder of the gang headed to the triangle site at Norton Fitzwarren to continue with ditch clearance work between Orchard Junction and Allerford Bridge, whilst a team of eight continued with vegetation clearance work near Dene Bridge.

Future cutting back dates are as follows:

November 11th & 12th
December 9th & 10th
January 13th & 14th 2018

Steve Gooding
West Somerset Restorations

4936 Tender - all the brake gear has now been cleaned, painted, re-bushed and re-pinned. The front part of the coal space floor has been replaced as it would have not lasted the next 10 years. We only need to lift it off its wheels now to check bearings and that the front drag box has been needle gunned and is ready for paint. The photos below show the new brake gear bolts and the prepared tender.

6968 Owsden Hall - all the old bearings have been pushed out of the rods and the bores of the rods have also been cleaned out to remove the Barry corrosion. Some of the rods have original numbers still on them.

5952 Cogan Hall - we are slowly working our way through this engine. We have rebuilt the bogie for the Grange.

7812 - we have machined a blower ring for this loco, an interesting job as there are many angles, holes, slots and threads.

Blue Anchor Camping Coach - A lot of work has been done to bring this coach back up to a useable and safe coach. A proper mains electric box is now in place, and also a brand-new set of steps. Internal painting has started. It should be a smarter looking coach once this has been achieved.

As normal we have done yet more tractor jobs for local people in Williton. We are about to build a new shepherds hut to a customer’s own specifications. It will be very big once done. We also have a second blower ring, and have started to re-metal 9351’s crossheads plus other bits for Minehead MPD. All in all, very busy times.

Ryan Pope

Steam Locomotives

6960 Raveningham Hall

Failed on 30th June with broken piston rings, but back in traffic since 12th July after help from Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd (DMLL) in finding material at very short notice for new rings. Now in traffic, no issues to report.

44422

Returned to service on Friday 16th June following failure on the last day of the Spring Gala then 6 weeks out of traffic for attention to valves, pistons, mechanical lubricator, clack valves and snifting valves. Subsequently stopped on 30th June with three broken driving wheel springs, which are now away for repair.

53808

In traffic, no major issues to report.
Following the completion of lengthy main steam pipe and superheater header repairs, and return to steam in time for the Spring Gala, the loco completed 30 days of continuous steaming.

During elongated washout stoppage 9th – 28th June, many outstanding jobs were completed including new ejector cones, rectification of smokebox air leak, the rebuilding of a safety valve, cracked spectacle window replacement, repair to cab floor and lapping of injector steam shut-off valve seats. Loco returned to traffic on 29th June but was briefly stopped again from 15th-19th July due to having three broken driving wheel springs.

9351 was successfully re-wheeled on 5th July. The procedure was expertly led by Steve Ryall, who ensured the area was cordoned off, correct PPE was worn, and staff received a safety brief beforehand.

The overhaul team is now making rapid progress with springs having now been fitted, and a start has been made on the brake linkage.

The boiler was expected complete and ready for hydraulic testing by 21st July, but has been delayed, now anticipated back in Minehead mid- to late September.

7828 Odney Manor

Boiler was despatched under contract lift to Riley and Son Engineering Ltd on 28th June following full board approval for re-stay and re-tube. Work is proceeding apace, all tubes having now been removed.

With the placing of the order with Rileys, they have committed to a programme of training and formal certification for up to 8 x WSR staff in all aspects of routine boiler maintenance, including re-staying. At a time when key skills such as this are in short supply, this will be of considerable value to the WSR.

Loco department full-time employee and...
passed cleaner Harry Howe, aged 19, becomes the first member of the ME department staff to visit Riley's state-of-the-art factory, near Manchester, between 23rd and 28th July to undertake his first week of training.

7820 Dinmore Manor

Arrived on the WSR on 7th June for a 4 month stay. After some initial teething troubles with the fresh-out-of-the-box tender brake linkage and brake system which stopped the loco unexpectedly for a couple of days in early July, it is now in traffic and performing well.

Carriage and Wagon

At the time of writing the main thrust of the C&W's efforts are in removing wheel flats. As soon as a suitable quantity of wheelsets have been exchanged, a lorry-load will be despatched for wheel turning.

The Atlas wagon has been re-commissioned to assist with the wheelset changes, as this important asset (with lifting capability) allows spare wheelsets to be lifted 'out of the jungle' in the sidings and brought round to the front of the C&W workshop for exchange.

Meanwhile the overhaul of TSO no. 4260 continues steadily at the back of the C&W workshop. A relatively unusual feature of this carriage when outshopped will be the 'Trojan' pattern of moquette, which is the dark grey material with thin red, yellow, blue and white stripes favoured by BR in the 1960s, as opposed to most of the WSR carriage fleet which uses the purple 'Syncopation' moquette.

Meanwhile we have not lost focus on the desire to repaint all the dual-braked stock into red and cream. Currently having this treatment is TSO no. 5025, the remaining three to be done are 4956, 5002 and 4876. Andy Hurley, our Lead Engineer for C&W, is quietly confident that 4956 and 5002 can be done in time to make up a complete red and cream rake to be hauled behind Flying Scotsman. Watch this space.

DMU

Following the departure of Bob Rimell, our DMU fitter since 2012, the DMU was temporarily withdrawn as a precautionary measure at the beginning of July due to a lack of competent staff to maintain it. Since then Lee Sharpe, an experienced freelance DMU engineer from the Derby area, has been working with us for 3 days a week to get the DMU back in traffic. Issues identified so far have been two buffers require changing, no. 2 engine Minehead power car intermittent fault (thought to be fuel supply), a couple of stepboards needing renewal, and issues with the vacuum brake exhausters. Target date for return to traffic is 1st August, with Lee as supporting engineer on an as-required basis.

Lee has also been commissioned to undertake a general condition assessment of all the vehicles and spares, to determine where the main risks to short, medium and
long-term operation lie. The small but dedicated band of DMU volunteers have also been engaged in a wider discussion about the future of the DMU and maintenance strategy, bolstered by a couple of new helpers including Olly Wise, who is DMU Fleet Engineer for GWR.

**Wagons**

A new Wagon Restoration Team has been set up under the leadership of Peter Chilcott (one of our drivers) and James Price (Passed Cleaner).

The team will work predominantly on a Sunday, bringing life back to the workshop on a day when normally it is closed. The initial focus will be on 'quick win' projects e.g. wagons already in service with the heritage freight train that need a repaint or minor repair to arrest further deterioration, but the new team has agreed that the plan should be to focus on ex-War Department vehicles, of which we have many interesting examples on the railway, so that eventually we can assemble a World War 1 era freight train which will be a fairly unique offering in the preservation movement. The majority of the team is under 30, which is very pleasing!

*Dave Horton*

**Diesel Locomotive News**

**Class 52 No D1010 Western Campaigner**

The “Western” returned to service in May and she had completed seven days and covered 540 miles by the end of June. She worked on the Friday and Saturday of the Diesel Gala, giving way to a steam locomotive on the Sunday. On her first day back in service she suffered an electrical problem while working the first of the “Maybach Memories” series of trains and had to be taken off the train at Williton and replaced by class 33 “Compton” No D6575. The fault was quickly rectified by the DEPG team and D1010 returned to service the next day.

The following week-end she was used by the company to haul a 10-coach MK1 special from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead and return, to convey the passengers off a Great Western Railway HST Charter which originated at London Paddington. The original plan was to run the HST right through to Minehead but this proved to be a destination too far for the HST that would have fouled several structures on the Minehead branch.

**Class 47 No D1661 North Star**

Sadly this locomotive sees little activity, having completed just 12 days' work in 2017 covering 600 miles. Because of possible problems with track condition and under bridges she is currently subject to a weight restriction applied by the WSR company's Head of Infrastructure and we are not sure where we go from here if the locomotive is judged to be too heavy for the line in the long term.

**Class 33 No D6566**

Having reviewed the condition of the underframe and bogies, the decision was taken not to lift the locomotive as originally planned. Instead the air tanks and fuel tanks have now been refitted and by the end of June the re-commissioning checks were underway with a view to making a start with test runs in August.

**Class 33 No D6575**

The loco continues to be available for services and to date this year has completed 50 days and 1,550 miles in service.
**Class 33 No D7017**

No D7017 returned to service in May and to date has been used on five days, completing 370 trouble-free miles.

**Class 35 No 7018**

Sadly we didn’t finish the many outstanding jobs associated with the re-commissioning tests, so a “Fitness to Run” certificate could not be issued and she could not return to service during the June Diesel Gala. This was a real blow to some of the DEPG Williton team who had worked hard to make it happen, but signatures confirming work done on key papers are an essential requirement in this day and age. So we move on and a possible launch into service towards the end of October has been selected as part of a DEPG Depot members’ day.

**Class 14 No D9518**

Work continues on the restoration of this “Teddy Bear” in the former goods shed at Williton, and the next major step in the plan is a lift of the frames off the wheelsets in the autumn.

**Class 14 No D9526**

Problems with the testing of the overhauled Paxman 6YZ engine has slowed down progress with the overhaul of this locomotive. At the end of June, the engine was finally ready to lift into the empty engine compartment at the start of the rebuild.

*John Cronin*

DEPG Magnificence! Brush Type 4, D1661 North Star, arrives at Williton under the new signals with a rake of West Coast Railways excursion stock. *Photo: Tom Courtney*
Join the club
Support the WSRA
WIN prizes

www.wsra.org.uk/fifty-fifty-club
FLYING SCOTSMAN PREVIEW

Alan Nicholson previews the railway’s biggest and most challenging event ever.

Well, the big event is almost upon us: the visit to the West Somerset Railway of the world's best-known and best-loved locomotive, Flying Scotsman. She will be hauling trains along our 20-mile line for a week in September and, as was proved when she arrived with a mainline special back in May, will attract very many thousands of people to either ride on her trains or watch her steam past.

However, many will be disappointed as, with all 10,000 tickets snapped up almost as soon as they were put on sale back in May, each of the specials is fully booked with a waiting list of those still hoping for a ride behind this spectacular engine. Apart from a rest day on Friday September 8 when there will be normal scheduled services headed by the home fleet, she will be hauling four non-stop round trips a day between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead and there will be evening trains on four nights to Blue Anchor and back. Another special named loco will be on hand during the week to haul an equal number of special trains between the two ends of the line. A service train will also be running along the line calling at all the intermediate stations.

Dealing with what will surely be the biggest invasion of people in the West Somerset Railway's history would be regarded by most as an insurmountable logistical nightmare. But after months of planning and preparation and overcoming all sorts of problems, the Flying Scotsman Management Group led by Project Manager Frank Courtney for this massive operation have everything well in hand.

Bishops Lydeard is where all people with tickets will arrive to ride behind Flying Scotsman.

During the lunchtime period up to 1,000 will be at the station. The team have thought of everything and found ways of dealing with the crowds or any crises which may arise. They have arranged parking near the station for up to 2,500 cars and coaches; laid on marquees as reception and refreshment areas; sections dealing with retail sales, souvenirs and promotion for the WSR Family; worked out how to get 400 people a time safely onto their trains and handle those who have just arrived from Minehead.

Railway staff, stewards, security staff, car park attendants will be working in shifts from 7 in the morning until 10 o'clock at night to make sure all is well shepherding vehicles and people into place in the station area and then to their reserved seats on the trains; providing an endless supply of food and drink; selling a wide range of merchandise; providing help and information for visitors; making sure disabled passengers are well looked-after and looking after mobile toilets and refuse skips and collecting any litter which may be around.
Minehead will be facing similar problems, while volunteers at all the stations along the line have been gearing up to cope with the big crowds expected to descend on them. Professionals have been enrolled to look after security, road signs are being put in place over a wide area to guide visitors. Negotiations have been going on with owners of land beside or overlooking the track to make arrangements for people heading for the best vantage points to watch Flying Scotsman steam past without causing too many headaches.

The line, bridges, stations and rails have had to be checked from end to end and the timetable for the daytime and evening specials has had to be worked out to keep within strict conditions laid down by the National Railway Museum as to the number of hours and miles their locomotive can be used each day. Then, of course, her appetite for coal, water and oil has to be assuaged, and her crew cosseted...

All in all, a massive operation in which the whole West Somerset Railway family can feel confidence and pride.

easyfundraising

As mentioned in our chairman’s letter, we have raised over £100 up to the end of July via easyfundraising and it hasn’t cost our supporters a penny. When you shop online via easyfundraising with one of the 3,266 participating shops and websites they give easyfundraising a commission for your purchase. That money is donated to the WSR Locomotive Restoration Fund. Easy!
Flying Scotsman is not a Great Western locomotive but don't all of us who love railways have affection for this extraordinary engine just the same?

It is surely the best-known steam locomotive in the world. People who know almost nothing about steam or railways have heard of it. Inevitably there are those amongst us who will always point to the exchange of locomotives after the 1923 Empire Exhibition to say that those of the Great Western Railway were superior to their LNER counterparts, but equally there will be many who simply see Flying Scotsman as a celebrated member of the steam family and one whose story is full of romance and escapes from disaster.

To say that Flying Scotsman has led a charmed existence is something of an understatement. The locomotive was not among the engines listed for preservation by British Railways, and it may well have ended life in a scrapyard had Alan Pegler not intervened. The locomotive was marooned in America after Mr Pegler's business got into financial problems, and again the future looked dark.

Several owners later, each of whom had poured money into repairs and restoration work, Flying Scotsman was bought for the nation and handed over to the National Railway Museum. It was anything but a smooth journey back to full steam and the mainline. It took more than a decade and millions of pounds to bring the locomotive back to the pristine state we see today. Along the way there were false dawns and some unexpected nightmares. But this engine seems always destined to come through against the odds.

Flying Scotsman is now a member of steam royalty, a locomotive that will bring thousands of people to stations and tractsides wherever she goes. Those who have watched crowds standing around on platforms have noticed something special. People of all ages and backgrounds wander up and have their pictures taken and almost all of them reach out to touch its gleaming paintwork.

Many have been overheard quietly saying things like “Hello old friend” or “Welcome
back”. And there are many too who have wiped away a tear as they stood looking in wonder.

The debate about livery will always continue. For some, only the LNER’s apple green will do while for others, *Flying Scotsman* should be as it is now in British Railways' Brunswick green. Then there is the discussion about a double chimney and the German style smoke deflectors and even the days with a second tender. And when *Flying Scotsman* is discussed, someone will then make the point that of the engine that was completed in Doncaster almost 95 years ago there is very little left. But working engines regularly received spare parts, new parts and modifications. As the National Railway Museum points out: “In her lifetime *Flying Scotsman* has had three classes (A1, A10 and A3), four colours, six numbers, nine different tenders and at least fifteen different boilers.”

*Flying Scotsman* has always been a working engine rather than a museum piece.

Her visit to the West Somerset Railway gives us all a chance to see this locomotive steaming along a line which is dear to us all, and when we see that famous nameplate, hear that A3 whistle or the sound of that exhaust, we should perhaps all spare a thought for the men and women whose dedication, commitment, vision and hard work have ensured that there is still a railway between Bishop’s Lydeard and Minehead on which *Flying Scotsman* can travel.

Thanks to our members and supporters and, of course, that includes those no longer with us, we can all celebrate *Flying Scotsman* on the West Somerset Railway.

During its visit in May, LNER 4-6-2 A3 *Flying Scotsman* is seen arriving at Bishops Lydeard under clear signals. The locomotive has just arrived off the main line at the head of the Cathedrals Express from Bristol.  
*Photo: Tom Gulliford*
It is one of those things which normally happens on a wet Friday afternoon when you are eager to return home for the weekend. “We are going to bid to have *Flying Scotsman* on the Railway”, the voice on the phone said. A long pause and then, “It will be OK, won't it?”

The only problem was I was not at an office anywhere but sitting comfortably at home. *Flying Scotsman*, I mused, that iconic beast of Sir Nigel Gresley which had been rebuilt with public money and was about to do its very limited second year of touring which would include three visits to heritage lines?

Well, firstly, it is a very big beast weight-wise above our local ex-GWR Hall class locos. It is fortunate that our Infrastructure Engineering manager was surveying our line. When asked about *Flying Scotsman* I am sure a shudder went through him, but the WSR is nothing but resourceful and the whole of the Infrastructure people plunged into the tasks that were needed to successfully operate the beast over our line.

Commercial department spun into action and we were then asked to host an excursion in May 2017 that none other than - you've guessed it - *Flying Scotsman* would be pulling. The locomotive would take the train to Minehead and then remain there for several days before leaving after several excursions from the WSR.

Discussions were held in the Board room, the GM office, the Commercial Office and almost every corridor and even some of the toilets as to the visit of *Flying Scotsman*. John Irven, our Chairman on behalf of the Board invited Frank Courtney to take the role of Project Manager and Frank accepted. Frank's first major meeting was held at Minehead, in the Beach Hotel, and I was invited. He was overwhelmed. In true WSR fashion, many able and willing people turned up to give their support. Frank quickly arranged for two groups to manage the project: the *Flying Scotsman* Management meeting composed of a much smaller number of key people, and the General Meeting which was much larger but less frequent.

It then began to dawn on us all just what a task we were taking on. The Severn Valley Railway had produced a 60-page planning document. Various people were allocated various jobs, station safety and security, crowd management, ticketing arrangements, line access and trespass, emergency services, coach formations, a second locomotive. The list goes on and on, and while this is happening the Infrastructure team has appointed two outside contractors to examine the many bridges on the railway.

Some hard business discussions took place on the Board, and it was becoming apparent that some large amounts of money were needed to be spent on the infrastructure. All
the earnings, after costs, were ring-fenced for infrastructure upgrades. Plus, a sizeable chunk of money was also held as a contingency. The survey of the track was completed with just some final work on several bridges. The railway needed to replace some lengths of rail. Some of you will remember the rail-grinding exercise some eight years ago. This left us with a narrower railhead than normal, and the railhead width influences the rail height. There is also the matter of gall (briefly, the thickness of the deterioration due to rust between the chair and the rail). When measured, it was this figure that led the Infrastructure Manager to recommend those rails be replaced. All these considerations to do with the rail were being handled by the Infrastructure Project Board (IPB). Having considered all the survey information, the IPB recommended to the Company Board the way ahead.

In May *Flying Scotsman* arrived at Bishops Lydeard having handed its train over to one of our locomotives. On this first occasion, we were not satisfied that we could safely send such a big locomotive over the line. So *Flying Scotsman* spent a short holiday in the locomotive depot at Bishops Lydeard. The *Infrastructure group ordered replacement rails to replace some rails on the line. This work needed to be done at night so that our services could continue. Our stations sub-group made huge strides in its planning and we know what numbers of people we want and the levels of security required. The roster clerks prepared bid sheets to show staff needed for *Flying Scotsman*’s visit. The catering people commenced ordering items (not food of course). All the tickets for the day-time trains sold months in advance and evening train ticket sales commenced later.

The meetings between the team and the emergency services are proceeding and reporting good progress. Our new Head of Operations is engaged and having seen a *Flying Scotsman* event through at his last position is planning ahead. Bishops Lydeard station, acting as the place where most will join and leave the special trains, has its own plans well advanced. The Mechanical Engineering department is looking at ensuring the amount of rolling stock is available and loco crews are available.

Perhaps all those merry people who work in Minehead works are not affected but I really expect they are. This has been and will continue to be a whole-railway project. Confidence levels are high and everything is proceeding to plan. Personally, I am pleased with the regard to safety that embraces all our hard-working people who must not be allowed to become fatigued, so that different shifts will be required.

Finally, I would like to express a huge 'thank you' to all the people associated with the planning of this event. They have worked exceedingly hard and in many cases, as volunteers, for no reward other than being able to know that they were part of this magnificent effort to have *Flying Scotsman* running on the WSR. Those thanks are also extended to all the paid staff who have worked tirelessly to check the track, sell the tickets, order items and the myriad of other jobs both small and large that were needed.

It is said that the railway is a family and every member of that family is to be congratulated on their efforts. We are almost there and one last push will see Frank and I pulling together the pages of the WSR plan for *Flying Scotsman* – be it 60 pages or even bigger.
FLYING SCOTSMAN

Destination West Somerset! Above: LNER A3 Pacific *Flying Scotsman* is seen leaving Bristol with the down *Cathedrals Express* on 23 May 2017. Photo: Bristol Post

Below: Heading west on the Langport cutoff, the train is seen passing Staith, near Althelney. Photo: Don Bishop

Below: On the return journey, the locomotive is seen at the head of the train as it approaches Creech St Michael bridge. *Both Photos: Don Bishop*
With Flying Scotsman due to arrive on WSR metals this September, railway author and journalist Andrew Roden assesses her evergreen appeal. He is the Editor of Steam World and the author of four bestselling railway books: Flying Scotsman, The Duchesses, Great Western Railway: A History and Trains to the Trenches.

As the world's most famous steam locomotive – No. 60103 Flying Scotsman - prepares to arrive at the West Somerset Railway in September, it seems timely to examine its enduring appeal. What is it about this big 'Pacific' that appeals to the wider public so much more than anything else on the rails?

It would be easy to argue that there are other locomotives which are larger, more powerful, faster, technically, and historically more significant – and many do. I suspect that everybody reading this could make a credible case for their own favourites as being more deserving of the public's affection than Gresley's sublime 'A3'.

Inevitably, this is a personal view – but let's start first with the objective facts about the locomotive. It is the only survivor of Britain's first truly successful 'Pacific' type, the Great Northern Railway 'A1' – which was developed with higher pressure boiler and revised valve arrangements into the 'A3'. This alone merits the locomotive's inclusion into the National Collection – and it was scandalous in the 1960s that no 'A3s' were saved for the nation.

It was the first locomotive to run non-stop between London and Edinburgh, exposing the artificially slow London-Scotland journey times of the 1920s. Later, in the 1930s, it became the first steam locomotive to verifiably reach the landmark speed of 100mph. All of these are good arguments for the locomotive's fame. But then, as the streamlined 'A4s' took centre stage, Flying Scotsman became an everyday fleet locomotive. Famous, for sure, but not really regarded as being anything special.

To get to the nub of Flying Scotsman's appeal, I think we have to go back to the Wembley exhibition of 1924. The London and North Eastern Railway was due to exhibit a locomotive, but with barely a handful of 'Pacifics' in service, it must have hesitated about whether to send one. Its quandary was solved when No. 1472 (as it was then known) failed in service and faced the prospect of being in Works for some time. It was chosen as the LNER's exhibit, and somebody, somewhere, had a stroke of absolute genius. 'The Flying Scotsman', the 10.00 departure from London King's Cross to Edinburgh, was the company's most famous train. Why not name this 'Pacific' after the train? It would showcase the LNER's latest
development and promote the flagship service at the same time. In just two words, the name *Flying Scotsman* told you everything you needed to know about this locomotive: it was fast, powerful, and ran all the way to Scotland. It was a stroke of genius, and the LNER wasted no time in exploiting the publicity possibilities.

But by the 1960s, although *Flying Scotsman* (by now rebuilt as an 'A3' and numbered 60103) was famous amongst railway enthusiasts, it seemed less so amongst the wider public. It was only when the preservationist Alan Pegler bought the locomotive in 1963 that a sense of public affection was born again. Crowds flocked to every vantage point from London to Doncaster to see its last run – and when it later emerged from Doncaster Works in its original apple green livery, it seemed the public couldn't get enough of her.

There's no question that Alan Pegler marketed *Flying Scotsman*’s railtour programme with the same genius the LNER had espoused 40 or so years before – but this time with main line steam firmly on the decline and often in deplorable condition, she was a gleaming novelty, and a reminder, perhaps, of a more confident past.

The fame is global – she was a smash hit in North America during her two tours there in the late 1960s and early 1970s (becoming marooned there until being rescued by Sir William McAlpine), and in Australia during the bicentennial celebrations of 1988.

As to the why she is so famous, I think it comes down to two factors. The most visually obvious is Gresley's superbly elegant design – in a sense it echoes the Art Deco movement of the 1920s, and even today she still exhibits a cleanliness of form that few locomotives can quite match. But much more importantly, her name evokes a golden age of speed, service and style later that still echoes to us. She is a talisman for the steam railway, and for railway preservation – and we should all be thankful that she continues to enthral and entertain in equal measure to the present day.

*Prepping up!* *Flying Scotsman* receives close attention whilst on her visit to the Severn Valley Railway. *Photo: Rob Stokes*
centre spread photo
page 41
WSR Locomotive Restoration Fund (LRF)

The summer edition of the Journal announced this important fund-raising programme, aimed at restoring locomotives 4561 and 7821 of the WSRA and 4110 of the WSR plc.

This is a very substantial commitment requiring a large and sustained fund-raising effort over a long period of time, and the Association is going to have to raise its game.

The Fund Raising & Membership Committee of the WSRA has been set up and tasked with managing this programme. It has identified two key elements for success:

1. Robust, credible plans for each locomotive
2. A firm base of support to generate a reliable income stream.

As a first step, a Locomotive Committee headed by Mike Sherwood, Vice Chair of the WSRA, has developed a line-by-line Restoration Plan for 4561 breaking the process down into 400+ steps, and identifying key milestones, dates and financial amounts required. This now gives us a solid plan and a secure basis for going forward.

To date, we have received some £13,000 in donations to the programme, for which we are very grateful. However, it is essential that we build on this, generate some momentum and avoid falling in to the trap of the programme becoming a slow burn, or worse still, stalling.

To that end, we are setting up the “LRF Founders Club” where we will be seeking stakeholders who are prepared to make a substantial financial commitment up-front of £1,001, either as a one off, or by 4 installments. Gift Aid is available. Anyone who has donated in the last 12 months can top up their donations to join the Club. In return, members will have regular updates, arranged visits to the restoration team and private viewings. This will be at key milestones, including first steamings. Watch out for details.

The LRF Founders Club is intended to build up a “war chest” to get things moving. However, the programme’s success is also going to depend upon as many people as possible making regular monthly donations – starting at £10.00 per month. There will be additional clubs for major items, combined with component sponsorships.

Further work will be undertaken to pursue additional external sources of funding, and we would very much welcome assistance from anyone with experience in this field.

Make no mistake, this is an ambitious programme and there will be doubters. To them we say: others have shown it can be done, why not us?

Join us. Help us.

_Bill Knell, WSRA Trustee_

**WSRA fifty-fifty club winners**

Each month a random draw is held and a winner, second place, and 4 third places are drawn. The results are published on the WSRA website. [www.wsra.org.uk/fifty-fifty-club](http://www.wsra.org.uk/fifty-fifty-club)
LOCOMOTIVE RESTORATION FUND

HELP US

JOIN the WSR LRF Founders Club
make a donation of £1001, in one lump sum or instalments and receive regular updates, visits, private viewings and more

Enquiries: - manager@wsra.org.uk or 01823 433856

Join online at
www.wsra.org.uk/LRF-founders-club

Write or send your cheque to
WSR LRF Founders Club, West Somerset Railway Association,
The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard TA4 3BX

www.wsra.org.uk/locomotiverestoration
The WSR Locomotive Restoration Project is focused on restoring 3 ex-GWR locomotives, all owned by the WSR family.

*Ditcheat Manor*, owned by the WSRA since 2008, needs extensive chassis and boiler work and is currently safely on display at Steam museum in Swindon, where it will stay until at least 2020.

Large Prairie 4110 is owned by the WSR PLC and has not been in steam since it was withdrawn for scrap in 1965. Interestingly, not only is it a sister locomotive to 4160, but it’s also of the same class as the original 5193, more familiar to WSR supporters as the re-built 9351.

Small Prairie 4561 is owned by the WSRA and last ran on the WSR rails from 1989 until 1998 when it was withdrawn for major overhaul. Overhaul has been a long-time coming with very slow progress being made and then halted due to a lack of funds. It is now time to complete the project and return her to the WSR rails. A team led by WSRA Vice Chair Mike Sherwood, with contributions from Andrew Forster, Ray Waldron, David Horton and others have worked hard on a carefully drafted project plan for the locomotive. Completing the overhaul of this locomotive is the first priority for the WSR Locomotive Restoration and Fund, and the target for completion is the end of 2020. Very soon specific funding and sponsorship opportunities will be made available via our website and other places, but if you can’t wait and would like to make a donation NOW to the WSR LRF, please go to: www.wsra.org.uk/locomotiverestoration

or call the WSRA admin office on 01823 433856

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*Early morning Locomotive preparations at Minehead shed in September 1990. Keen eyed readers may spot a younger version of our recent Journal Editor, busy prepping 4561. Photo: Alan Turner*
ALLAN STANISTREET provides the latest quarterly look highlighting key events of 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago.

From Newsletters June, July and October 1977

The Editor suggested that the time might have come for a reorganisation of the Newsletter, possibly reducing it to bi-monthly, with a separate News-sheet for the active volunteers (rather after today’s On Line).

Thanks were extended to all those who were working hard to restore the nine stations to their former glory (there was no Doniford Halt in those days). It is cheering to note how many names are still to be seen around today, though no longer active due mainly to advancing years!

Taunton Model Railway Group was shortly to begin erecting its club room on Bishops Lydeard station. It is still there after forty years and continues to make a useful contribution to proceedings on high days and holidays.

Filming of the first series of The Flockton Flyer had come to an end. It was followed by a second series and these provided excellent publicity for the line, hopefully helping to put lots of bottoms on seats.

The July 1977 edition of the Newsletter had a new editor – your present writer. He expressed his intention of changing the format of the Newsletter and appealed for a large variety of different articles.

The new Committee contained a few names who are still active on the line today, albeit in different capacities, among them Nick Jones (5542 Ltd), Brian Stainton (Blue Anchor museum), 'Hugh' Perrett (cutting back gang), John Wood (5542 Ltd) and Steve Martin (now Senior Operating Supervisor).

After over 1000 man-hours, the Minehead ground frame was rapidly approaching completion. Among those who worked on it is John Jenkins, who still oversees our signalling installations and has made an incalculable contribution to the signalling department for over forty years. The July Newsletter contains a fascinating article by Nick Jones dealing with the logistics of this installation.

On the publicity front the first Stock Book, compiled by Tim King, made its appearance. One of the very first publications about the revived line, it cost 40p, including postage and packing.

There were no Newsletters for August and September as the Editor had decided that it should be converted into a quarterly Journal and had asked the Committee for its approval for this. Unfortunately, there were the inevitable delays while the matter was considered and costings obtained and although it was hoped to have the new Journal out before the end of the year, this proved impossible. However, there was a final stop-gap Newsletter dated October 1977 (No 48).
Mr Gerry Parkhouse of Taunton had returned on permanent loan, the original brass lever leads belonging to Blue Anchor signal box, these having been removed on the closure of the line in 1971. They are still to be seen there today.

For their services to the Association and the railway, Brian Crudge and Harry Lee were both elected Honorary Life Members of the Association.

*From the Journal Autumn 1987*

Association membership rates were: Adult £8; Senior Citizen/Student £6 and Family £8. Thirty years ago, your subscription entitled you to two days' unlimited free travel (excluding certain special events). Membership stood at 1,218.

Having joined the plc board at the beginning of the year, Dennis Taylor was to assume the office of Chairman from 1 November 1987. He is still happily to be seen in Minehead occasionally, though, as with the rest of us, the passing years have obliged him to slow down a bit, but he still maintains his interest in the railway. Ron Prickett resigned as Association Treasurer in September and Audrey Short had agreed to take on this important task.

One of the modern WSR's few derailments occurred on 26 August, when the 1215 ex-BL was derailed on the Williton down catch points. The loco involved was 2-6-2T No 5572. Both the loco and the first coach were involved, but happily there were no injuries and little damage was done.

Don Spencer retired due to ill-health and Will Scarlet joined the staff at Minehead. A replacement for Don was sought as signalling inspector.

Doniford (Beach) Halt was opened on 28 June, only to be closed shortly after until difficulties with access could be resolved. It was opened to serve the nearby holiday camp.

The Williton station report from the 1987 issue, notes, that during the summer the S&T renewed the steps of the signal box, which had become unsafe. It comments that “they should now be good for many years to come”. (See the Williton station report in the summer edition 2017). The present Minehead booking office, incorporating parts of the former Cardiff General, was opened in time for the summer season.

*Victor* and ex-GWR 2-6-2T 5572 carried most of the traffic, until the welcome return to steam of former S&DJR No. 88 (BR 53808). This went into service during the summer, having been successfully test-steamed in August.

*From the Journal Autumn 1997*

Tuesday 16 September marked the two millionth passenger since reopening.

A meeting was held at County Hall in Taunton to discuss the findings of a feasibility study into improving rail links between Taunton and Minehead. The option proposed upgrading the signalling at Norton Fitzwarren at a cost of around £200k. It was appreciated that through services could not begin before 1999.

Two noteworthy awards were the 'D. Noel Draycott Trophy' for the continued excellence of the Journal, and the 'Ian Allan Independent Railway of the Year' for 1997.

The toilet block at Bishops Lydeard had been completed and provided a welcome and much needed improvement to the facilities at the station.

The stone trains bringing in material for the
Minehead sea defences were in full flow, with a variety of main line motive power to be seen. In the main Class 37 were used. There was fierce competition between the main line drivers for the privilege of bringing in these trains, experiencing railway working in a time capsule. The resignalling of Bishops Lydeard also appeared in this edition of the Journal in an interesting article by Pat Langan.

*From the Journal Autumn 2007*

The plc announced a feasibility study to establish what would be needed to upgrade one of the railway's DMUs for limited through working to Taunton. It also looked into the costs of so doing. Even with a favourable outcome, it would be 2010 before such a service could begin.

Another project under investigation was the possibility of moving the redundant Brunel-designed station building from High Wycombe, perhaps to Norton Fitzwarren as part of the redevelopment there. Both this proposal, and the one mentioned above, appear to have foundered due to insuperable problems.

Only ten years after they were replaced (see above for Autumn 1997), RAMS were once again renewing the steps on Williton signal box, with the Station Master, Chris van den Arend, lamenting the fact that modern timber did not seem to have the durability of its predecessors.

There were several changes on the Association board. Humphrey Davies, Norman Hawkes and Mark Smith had relinquished their responsibilities and Andy Chatwin, Don Bishop, Mike Buttel and Ray Caseley had assumed various positions on the Association board and the Promotions board. The proposed appointment of an Association Manager was announced, with applicants to be interviewed early in the New Year (2008).

Work had begun on the excavations for the Minehead turntable, with the intention of its installation the following year (2008). At the same time, work on the triangle was proceeding apace, with the western chord complete and ballasted. Much remained to be done, but David Holmes in charge of the project, predicted that the whole layout would probably be in service during 2009.

Plans were being drawn up for the intended operation of the Butlins' *Exmoor Express* between Minehead and Bristol for 2008. This brilliant idea eventually suffered from insufficient prior publicity and an incomprehensible failure to market it properly. Consequently, and understandably, it was poorly patronised serving as a trip to Bristol for minimal fare-paying passengers, and principally as a free day out for some members of the staff!

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**Wick House Bed and Breakfast, Stogumber.**

Philip and Sheila welcome visitors to the West Somerset Railway. With a friendly informal atmosphere, your comfort is important to us. Twin double or super King rooms available. All rooms ensuite with either a bath, a shower or bath with shower over. Hospitality trays, complimentary toiletries and flat screen TVs in all rooms. TV lounge, sitting room, garden and licensed bar available.

Please ring Sheila or Philip 01984 656422 or sheila@wickhouse.co.uk

www.wickhouse.co.uk
Ex SDJR and West Somerset stalwart, 2-8-0 7F No 53808 makes a stirring sight as it approached Crowcombe Heathfield with a down train on 30 April 2017. Photo: Cliff Woodhead.
Chris was the eldest of the three children of Roy and Molly Tucker. He was slightly ashamed of being born near London, as he was brought up near Hull, and was a Yorkshireman through and through. Railways seeped into his blood early. From age 7 he slept under a model railway layout. He attended Hymers College in Leeds, then art college and subsequently he took a degree in Art at Leeds University. Chris taught on Tyneside and then followed his parents down to Somerset taking up employment at the Somerset College of Art and Technology where his technician skills, particularly with etching equipment, were greatly appreciated.

His early railway volunteering was on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, where he qualified as a fireman in the 1970's and served for over 40 years. Summer was known to NYMR regulars as 'Tucker Time', when Chris would appear in his legendary Capri, and lodge in The Goathland sleeper for the long summer vacation, bringing on another round in the friendly annual battle between Station Master John Bruce's efforts to keep the accommodation respectable, and Chris's disdain of, as he saw it, unnecessary fastidiousness in domestic arrangements.

With the move down to Somerset he began to volunteer in the locomotive grades and with loco restoration. He qualified as a WSR fireman in 1991 and served in that grade until ill-health caused him to stop in 2011.

Chris's greatest characteristic was his generosity with his great knowledge of all things locomotive and railway, especially LNER. He was particularly keen on encouraging new volunteers, but was prepared to give anyone the benefit of his wisdom, whether you had time for the conversation or not.

Chris's personal style was all his own. He usually gave the impression of having just escaped from six months incarceration in a particularly dusty coal mine, even though he had not been near a steam loco in weeks. His cars rapidly adopted that style, and the combination of oil, cigarette ash and 'Steam over Shap' on the cassette player made for a unique automotive experience. Passengers often took a little of that away with them to enjoy later.

Beyond his footplate work, Chris was a core team member of the Iffy Rivet Company of volunteers who restored pannier 6412 and then moved on to Braunton and large prairie 4160. He would tackle any task that was required, no matter how onerous or apparently unpleasant, with universal
We were saddened to read in the last journal the report on the passing of former WSR volunteer John Sumbler.

John was brought up in Calne in Wiltshire. He was very much a farmer's boy, with a love of the outdoor life. He once related that during harvest time he could drink vast quantities of cider, perspire profusely, but never get drunk.

Later as a married man, he moved to Wellington with his wife Betty and two children. He then worked in the area as a JCB digger driver.

Before the opening of the WSR the family joined the Association and were keen to help in any way required. As a result of this, John then started as a volunteer working on limited track maintenance, as at that time the line was still the property of British Rail. Once negotiations had been completed, John alongside others, spent the next two years getting the first section of the line ready for re-opening.

In 1976 John joined the company on the pay role as assistant to the late Harold Blackmore. With Harold’s expertise, having worked on BR permanent way all his life, and his knowledge of JCB work, they made an excellent team. Together with a team of volunteers led by Graham Harwood, an enormous amount of work was accomplished in a short time. This included sleeper replacement, rail turning, clearing land slips and up grading crossings.

When Harold retired in 1983 John took on the mantle of person in charge. He carried on this role for 18 months. The family then had the opportunity to move to Cornwall to

John's knowledge of JCB work, they made an excellent team. Together with a team of volunteers led by Graham Harwood, an enormous amount of work was accomplished in a short time. This included sleeper replacement, rail turning, clearing land slips and up grading crossings.

cheerfulness. The preservation world owes Chris a great debt for his meticulous salvaging and cataloguing of sometimes unrecognisable bits of metal. Today these locos are back in traffic mainly because of his efforts.

After ill-health forced him off the footplate, his innate sense of right and wrong led him to be a core member of the 'Reform Group' who helped WSRA members end the unfortunate period when Association and Company were not working well together.

A great bloke (and Yorkshireman) whom no-one (apart from door-to-door washing machine salesmen) had anything other than a good word for.

Rest in peace, old friend - and try not to get oily marks on the pearly gates...

Robin White

JOHN SUMBLER (1936 - 2017)
run their own market garden and subsequently became very successful tomato growers.

When some of the long-serving members of the PW team were chatting recently, memories of John came flooding back. One particularly memorable occasion on the Wickham trolley stood out. John, towing a trailer loaded with sleepers, rounded a bend to meet with a small herd of bullocks on the track. The majority of volunteers aboard the vehicle left swiftly, but John stayed on and managed to bring the machine to a halt in the centre of the herd. Not an easy task on a vehicle without disc brakes!

On another occasion, the crossing accessing the camping coach siding at Blue Anchor was lifted out in three sections. John, his family and other volunteers pushed the whole lead to Minehead.

The relocation of the Dunster signal box to Minehead was another operation in which John was involved, and another of John's achievements was the excavation of the pit in the loco shed using a digger loaned from his local plant hire employer.

It has been suggested that had it not been for the likes of the Sumblers, the WSR would not be the railway it is today.

In John's later years, with the restarting of the Helston Steam Railway, he was able to apply his expertise, assisting in getting their track up and running again.

John never once lost his interest in the Permanent Way and we will remember him fondly.

David Randall

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**BOOK REVIEW**


With a mixture of monochrome and colour images, this is a nice little book recalling former and contemporary lines of this well-known company.Sadly, of the fourteen lines covered, only two remain: the West of England main line from Bristol to Exeter and of course, the West Somerset Railway. Most of the illustrations are from the Online Transport Archive and naturally, by modern standards, vary considerably in quality. However, this should not detract too much from the content and there are many shots here which have not often been seen in print. While there are three monochrome photos of Minehead branch trains in the main body of the text, the last nine pages are devoted to colour images of some of the many locomotives that have run on the line since reopening; indeed, the very last photo is of 44422 at Watchet in 2016, bringing the story right up-to-date. All the captions are informative and although perhaps a little pricey, this is an entertaining read.

This book can be purchased from the Station Shop at Bishops Lydeard.

JAS
SPRING STEAM GALA :: STANDARDS AT NETHERCOTT

The Spring Steam Gala saw two visiting standard locomotives, both pictured here at Nethercott.

Above, Standard 4MT 76017 is seen on a passenger train on 28 April 2017. Below, Standard class 2, 78018 heads a mixed freight. *Both photos: Cliff Woodhead*
Double headed trains are always a popular attraction for visitors and photographers.

Above, 4F 44422 is seen piloting its sister locomotive 43924 in a rare pairing near Watersmeet Bridge. Below, Prairie tank 5199 gives much welcome assistance to GWR Modified Hall 6960 *Raveningham Hall* near Nornvis Bridge. *Both photos: Cliff Woodhead.*
Minehead Museum

FREE ENTRY
Saturday 25th March to 31st October 2017
Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 - 4.00
Sunday 11.00 – 4.00
Open on Bank Holiday Mondays

Visit the Maritime Minehead Exhibition

Museum is located opposite the West Somerset Railway Station
Minehead Museum, Beach Hotel Complex, The Avenue,
Minehead, Somerset TA24 5AP
mineheadmuseum@btconnect.com
Charity registration number 1169355
RECENT EVENTS

DIESEL GALA

Friday-Sunday 9-11 June

Visiting trains for this year’s Diesel Gala were Sulzer Type 2 (later Class 26), No D5343 from the Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Railway, and two Class 20 locomotives, numbers D8188 and D8059, courtesy of the Severn Valley Railway. This was the first time a Class 26 had traversed the Minehead Branch.

The DEPG provided the following locos from their fleet:

- Class 33 ‘Crompton’ No D6575;
- Class 35 ‘Hymek’ No D7017;
- Class 47/8 No D1661 *North Star*;
- Class 52 ‘Western’ No D1010 *Western Campaigner*.

Takings and passenger numbers were slightly up on those of 2016, but the poor weather was certainly a limiting factor.

Many visitors enjoyed the opportunity to sample craft beers provided by members of the Small Independent Brewers Association at Minehead and Stogumber Stations and at Quantock Brewery.

CLASSIC CAR RUN

Sunday 4 June

This year’s Run was limited to pre-1980 vehicles only. Cars gathered at Bishops Lydeard Railway Station and then set off on a lovely sunny day, following a pre-arranged 35-mile route through stunning West Somerset scenery, wooded valleys, seaside, ancient towns and villages, with the Railway and its historic steam trains never far away. The Run ended at Minehead Station, where 87 cars were displayed to the delight of the many visitors to the station.

The event was a great success and we already have entries for next year’s run, which will take place on Sunday, 3rd June 2018. Entry forms for the 2018 Classic Car Run can be obtained from Ally Roe – allyroe@wsrail.net or by phoning 01643 700406.

FUTURE EVENTS

STEAM & CREAM

Fridays 1, 15 September

Travelling initially by any train from Bishops Lydeard to reach Minehead, on the return journey (departing Minehead at 16.30) enjoy a traditional West Country Cream Tea served to your table in a specially reserved carriage, whilst watching from the comfort of your seat, the delightful coast and countryside pass by. Pre-booking essential – book online at www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk or by telephone on 01643 704996.

CHEESE & CIDER SPECIALS

Fridays 1, 15 September

This lunchtime Special Train (12:40 ex-Bishops Lydeard) is in support of local Somerset food producers. The lunch is a tasting of local Somerset cheeses, with garnish and freshly made local breads,
RE-OPEN THE WAVERLEY ROUTE
FROM CARLISLE TO EDINBURGH

Grade B-listed Shankend Viaduct, nr. Hawick

PHASE 1 NOW OPEN!
EDINBURGH-TWEEDBANK
Opening day service at Stow Station 2015

Founded in 1999, the Campaign for Borders Rail (CBR) has been one of the most successful grassroots rail campaigns in Great Britain, a story of concerned citizens from all walks of life getting together to right the 1969 injustice of complete closure of the 98-mile Waverley Route through the Borders.

With our initial goal secured - services on the rebuilt 35-mile ‘Borders Railway’ from Edinburgh to Galashiels and Tweedbank began on 6th September 2015 - CBR is now focussed on onwards extension to Hawick and Carlisle, lobbying hard for a full and fit-for-purpose feasibility study as soon as possible.

With YOUR support we can achieve our aim!

Membership is from only £5 a year to £50 for life; just ring our secretary on 017683 62022 or email dgma@talktalk.net for details of how to join online, or send a cheque to ‘CBR’ at The Station, Long Marton, APPLEBY, Cumbria CA16 6BJ.

www.campaignforbordersrail.org
Facebook campaignforbordersrail
Twitter @BordersRail
washed down by a pint of Somerset Cider or fresh apple juice drink.

If desired, the 'Cheese & Cider' and 'Steam & Cream' can be combined. Pre-booking essential – book online at www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk or by telephone on 01643 704996.

PEPPA PIG

Saturday 16 September

The third and final children's character event of the year sees the ever-popular porcine character coming to Minehead Station, making personal appearances at intervals during the day between 10am and 4pm.

In addition to a regular timetabled service, entertainment on the day will include:

- free vintage bus ride trips round Minehead and sea front from Minehead Station;
- free Face painting;
- free crafts;
- an entertainer on the platform;
- a Helter Skelter and Bouncy Castle (additional charge applies, subject to weather).

Access to Minehead station is free, and normal train fares apply.

FISH & CHIP SPECIALS

Saturday 26 August

These Specials offer a lunchtime steam train excursion from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead and back. On the outward journey, you can enjoy a meal of fish and chips, accompanied by a complimentary glass of wine or fruit juice. The buffet car and bar will also serve hot beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

Departure is from Bishops Lydeard at 12.40. Passengers from Minehead can travel from Minehead on the 10.15 steam train and return on the same train.

Your ticket includes a day return journey on the service of your choice.

Pre-booking is essential - book online at www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk or by telephone on 01643 704996.

MURDER MYSTERY SPECIAL

Saturday 28th October

It's 1929 and five brutal murders have been committed on the Little Hampton line. Only three people were present on each occasion; Historian - Anne Tickwitty, Musician - Belle Canto and Clock Restorer - Nev Erlayte. But which one is a murderer?

The themed 'Timetable to Murder', our next Murder Mystery special evening train of the coming season, promises to be an excellent evening. The entertainment begins on the platform at Bishops Lydeard promptly at 19.00. Boarding is from 18.45.

Passengers should arrive in good time to find their seats, and leave the train again for the first scene on the platform at 19.00. The train departs from Bishops Lydeard at 19:15 and travels the full length of the line and return, with a main course of local chuck steak and kidney pie, salt and black pepper roast potatoes and chantenay carrots, followed by autumn fruit sponge with custard or cream, served en-route, arriving back at approximately 23.00. The coaching stock will be the Quantock Belle dining set.

All-inclusive tickets are priced at £70 per person and pre-booking is essential - book online at www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk or by telephone on 01643 704996.
THE QUANTOCK BELLE

No annual visit to the WSR is complete without sampling our First-Class Luxury Dining train, The Quantock Belle. Whatever the occasion – a special anniversary or birthday, a romantic dinner or just a Sunday lunch out together – we are sure you will find your trip on the Pullman style Quantock Belle a delightful and memorable experience. On boarding the train, you will be shown to your reserved seats by our volunteer stewards. Tables are for two or four persons. Running at a very leisurely pace, the 'QB' (as it is affectionately known) gives an opportunity to view the passing scenery whilst being served with pre-meal drinks, before your freshly cooked meal arrives. We use local produce, prepared and cooked in our award-winning kitchen.

Quantock Belle dining trains offer a range of options – Sunday Lunch, Saturday Evening Dinner or Wednesday Lunch – and are scheduled to operate on the following dates over the next few weeks:

**Traditional Sunday Roast Luncheon:**
20 August, 17 September, 1 October, 15 October, 22 October

**Saturday Evening Dinner:**
26 August

And don’t forget the QB will be operating at our galas and will be offering a festive meal on Sunday 3 and 10 December.

The all-inclusive fare is £49.50 per person, apart from the Christmas dinner, which is priced at £59.50. Tickets are selling fast and pre-booking is essential – book by telephone on 01643 704996 or 01643 700398.

A family enjoying fish and chips on the West Somerset Railway. *Photo: WSR Plc*
AUTUMN STEAM GALA

Thursday-Sunday 5-8 October

We have already confirmed our second guest loco in the form of BR Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No 73082 Camelot from the Bluebell Railway. This will be the first time the loco has left the Bluebell since returning to traffic from overhaul. The Class 5 joins BR(W) 'Manor' No 7820 Dinmore Manor which will be staying on the WSR for the Gala after its summer stay. We hope that GWR 'King' 6023, King Edward II, will be hauling gala trains, subject to permission being granted.

FESTIVE SERVICES

Throughout December we will be operating a selection of Santa Expresses, Santa Specials, Carol Trains, Sherry and Mince Pie specials and of course, at the beginning of December, our Dunster by Candlelight services. Don't forget the Winter Steam Festival which is a great way of shaking off those Christmas cobwebs. Details can be found on the website or ring 01643 704996.

AND FINALLY……

At the last meeting of the Special Events Planning Team, Don Bishop took over the role of Chairman and it was agreed that, to avoid confusion with other events on the railway, the group should be known in future as the Gala Planning Team. John Cronin will continue to represent the DEPG on the team, but several members have now stood down, including Colin Howard, Paul Guppy and Steve Martin. The former chairman and the above were presented with a framed photograph by the group to acknowledge their valuable service over the years in the organisation of galas.
Compared to 2016 the weather mid-June this year for the three day Special Event was much more like early Summer, although the photographers reported that the light at times was a real challenge. In total this year the railway welcomed 1,893 passengers compared to the 1,778 in 2016.

The Breakdown in figures was: Friday +105; Saturday –9; Sunday +19; overall +115.

This year the company agreed to SEPT planning to run diesels only on the Friday and Saturday, with both diesel and steam traction on the Sunday. The theme was intended to be to remember the end of the British Railways Western Region diesel hydraulic era back in February 1977, and the plan was to bring in another diesel hydraulic locomotive as a visitor and return the DEPG class 35 “Hymek” No D7018 to service. This would have given us four diesel hydraulic locomotives with the DEPG also providing class 35 “Hymek” No D7017 and class 52 No D010 Western Campaigner. Sadly the visitor was unavailable and the overhaul of D7018 wasn’t completed in time due to ongoing electrical control issues.

Thus with the DEPG only able to provide four serviceable heritage diesel locomotives, SEPT needed to hire in two visitors in order to meet the demands of the Gala timetable. The visitors chosen were Class 26 No D5343, from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, and Class 20 Nos D8059 and D8188, from the Severn Valley Railway.

Records show there has never been a class 26 visitor to the WSR before and as expected D5343 entertained all our visitors and staff as she "chattered" her way backwards and forwards through the Quantock hills. Built by the Birmingham Carriage and Wagon Company, she entered service with British Railways in October 1959, based at 64B Edinburgh Haymarket Depot, and we think was withdrawn from there in 1993, a mainline working life in Scotland of some 24 years.

Our other visitors were the pair of class 20 locomotives Nos D8059 and D8188 working together semi-permanently coupled. Both looked superb in newly painted British Railways Green livery. D8059 being introduced in May 1961 at 41A Sheffield Darnall whilst D8188 was introduced in January 1967 to D16 London Midland, Nottingham division. In fact, 2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the entry into service of the first Class 20 locomotive no D8000, built by the English Electric company at Lancashire and delivered new to 1D London Devons Road depot in June 1957. In total 229 Class 20 locomotives were built and most worked in pairs on freight services in the Midlands and the East of England. On summer Saturdays they were often used on excursion trains from the Midlands to East Coast seaside resorts such as Skegness, and those trains were popular with railway enthusiasts.
The distinctive whistling sound of the Class 20’s English electric engines were enjoyed by those of us manning the depot at Williton on the Saturday afternoon as the pair departed for Bishops Lydeard.

The final line up of heritage diesel locomotives for the two diesel only days was Class 20 Nos D8059 and D8188, Class 26 No D5343, Class 33 No D6573, Class 35 No D7017, Class 47 No D1661 North Star, Class 52 No D1010 Western Campaigner and the Class 115/117 DMU.

Thankfully on all three days the service trains ran reliably to time with only one diesel locomotive in service with a technical problem when the Heritage Freight train had to be cancelled on the Friday morning because one of the Class 20 locomotives would not start owing to flat batteries. This problem was resolved by the Williton depot DEPG volunteer team who gave the locomotive a 20-minute boost charge when it arrived at Williton dead, towed by her sister locomotive.

A new attraction for this Gala was the provision of a “Real Ale Trail” created by Colin Howard and his commercial team in conjunction with the Society of Independent Brewers. Bishops Lydeard, Stogumber and Minehead stations were host to brewers based in the South West who sold real ales and cider at just £2.50 per pint. Bishops Lydeard and Stogumber proved popular with visitors but Minehead was quiet on all three days.

Away from the trains the DEPG Williton diesel depot was open to visitors on all three days and the depot team experienced a steady stream of visitors, raising over £400 in donations towards the Saturday evening BBQ held in the depot to thank visiting train crew and volunteers.

D1010 Western Campaigner approaching Blue Anchor level crossing with the 11:47 Minehead - Bishops Lydeard limited stop service during the Diesel Gala on 10 June 2017. Photo: Tim Edmonds
POPULAR CLASS 20s

Class 20s D8188 and D8059 proved popular visitors at the Diesel Gala. Here an orderly line-up of photographers record them leaving Blue Anchor with the 13:03 Bishops Lydeard. **Photo: Tim Edmonds**

Class 20s D8059 and D8188 at Nornvis Crossing near Crowcombe with the 14:47 from Minehead on 9 June, 2017. The 'Jolly Fisherman' headboard recalls the class’s work on summer excursions to Skegness. **Photo: Glen Batten**
DIESEL VARIETY

Above: Visiting from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Class 26 D5343 (26043) tackles Washford Bank at Kentsford Farm with the 11:55 Bishops Lydeard to Minehead on 11 June 2017.

Below: “Celebrity” named Brush type 4 D661 North Star passes Nornvis Crossing. Both photos: Glen Batten
9351 RE-WHEELING - 1

After far too long away, 2-6-0 Mogul 9351 has been finally re-united with its wheels as this sequence of photographs show. Above: the wheels are in position and the frames are gently lowered into position.

Below, axleboxes engage with hornguides with just a ‘few thou’ clearance. Both photos: Paul Orrells
9351 RE-WHEELING - 2

Above: Newly painted wheels and frames.

Below: Job done! The frames and wheels stand ready at Minehead. *Both photos: Paul Orrells*
A DAY IN THE LIFE

Jennie Barge tells us what a typical day on the railway is like for her.

As a member of the railway catering staff, working mainly in the on-board buffet from the Bishops Lydeard end, but also assisting with special catering when required, a typical 'buffet' day begins with ensuring the buffet is fully prepared for the day ahead. Normally there are two members of staff on duty, but there are occasions when it's necessary to work 'solo'.

The first task is to 'sign on' to say that I am fit to work, appropriately dressed, have not consumed alcohol in the past nine hours and agree to abide by the company's rules and regulations. Next, I check the fridges, both in the storeroom and on board the train, to ensure they're operating at the correct temperatures and that all food stored in them is within date. I replenish where necessary and record all this information on the appropriate documents, before switching on the microwave and hot cupboard. Having done this I look around the buffet to check what needs restocking, replenishing from the store room (as required) and recording what I've taken.

Buffet volunteer Jennie Barge interacting with passengers on the first train of the day. Photo: Jacquie Green
from store. This assists with stock control. If the TTIs (travelling ticket inspectors) haven't already done so, I go through the train to ensure there is a 'Buffet' leaflet on every table so our passengers know there is a buffet on board and what can be purchased from it.

Once fully stocked and the float’s in the till, I open up the shutters, ready to greet and serve my first customer, normally some 30 – 45 minutes before we depart. Provided it won't get in the way of the shop and café customers, I display the 'Buffet Open' board so our passengers know we're open for business. Initially trade can be slow as many passengers want to visit the shop before they board the train, but once I start heating the pasties and sausage rolls (carefully checking and recording the temperatures), and the smell of hot food permeates through the train, I'm soon busy! How busy, can depend on the weather, the day of the week – typically weekends and mid-week are the busier days – and the time of the year. Whilst I aim to serve everyone as quickly as possible there are times when there is inevitably a short queue. But I always make time for a brief chat whilst serving customers, pointing out any special offers we may have whilst assisting them in making their choice. Many are also interested in the history of the line, which loco is pulling us and what places of interest there are in the area. The children love it when I make a special point of talking with them and asking where they're going, and what they're hoping to do. If they see me again on their return journey they want to tell me all about their day! One of the most important tasks of the day is to ensure the loco crew are kept 'watered', normally at Bishops Lydeard, Williton and Minehead in each direction.

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normally quieter trip, I check what stock is getting low so I can make a 'shopping' list ready for the next day's crew. I have a good clean of the shelves and floor, leaving just a final wipe over for the end of the day.

The final trip from Minehead can vary from reasonably busy, to manic – depending on the weather! If the weather's cold or wet, many passengers return on an earlier train but, if the weather's good, they want to take full advantage of the beach and facilities in Minehead. The buffet remains open until we reach Williton, some 35 minutes before we get back to Lydeard, to allow time for cashing up, final cleaning and bin emptying and completing the end of day paper work.

So, there you have a typical day's work.

Why do I do it? Because I want to and I love it! Having always been involved with meeting the public face to face throughout my working life, I wanted to continue this in retirement through voluntary work, and what better organisation could I have chosen?! I feel very much part of a large 'family', have lots of fun (well, most of the time!) and the pleasure of being able to give something back to the community.

If this has whetted your appetite for joining the catering team, or you would like a 'taster' session to see whether it's for you, please contact Denise Parker, Buffet Manager, on 07989 167182 or catering@wsrail.net who will be happy to arrange this for you.
Journal readers will know that the WSRA owns the Hawksworth designed Taunton Inspector's Observation Saloon, but did you know that it is available for private charter on the WSR?

Carriage W80976W was constructed to the design of Frederick William Hawksworth, the last Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Great Western Railway. It was delivered for service in September 1949 and allocated to the Taunton Engineering Manager. Purchased by the WSRA in May 2012, with the help of members' donations, it has returned to the West Somerset Railway and is maintained by the WS Restorations team at Williton.

This historic carriage is 52 feet long with a saloon at either end, a galley kitchen, toilet and guards compartment. It’s available for private charter for up to 20 people and offers a very special day out. A concierge service ensures every detail of your day is attended to in style: menus, celebratory cakes, chocolates, flowers, photographer and much more. Charters so far have included anniversaries, corporate days and significant birthdays, including a very special lady celebrating her 100th birthday.

To book your day out in the Observation Saloon call WSR Retail Manager David Noble on 01643 700384 or email retail@wsrail.net

The photos below show the exterior of this magnificent vehicle and the luxurious inside, complete with bottle of wine! Photos: WSRA
West Somerset Steam Railway Trust

WSRRT Annual General Meeting 2017.

The Steam Trust held its 35th Annual General Meeting on Saturday 22nd April in the Gauge Museum, chaired by Chris Austin. John Jenkins and Pete Treharne were re-elected as Directors and Geoff Evens elected as a new Director. Alan Meade, who manages the model railway in the Gauge Museum was also invited to join the Board from Monday 24th April.

Progress With Collett BCK No. 6705

Work has started on the brake van, painting the ceiling and now working on the doors and walls. The inside of the van is 'scumbled', a mixture of paint and varnish, where a comb is used to draw out the varnish to create a wood grain effect, a new challenge for the team working on the coach. Work is well advanced on the toilet compartments where fibreglass repairs have been carried out to the sinks and toilet pedestals to enable to the original items to be retained. We are still working out how to manage the plumbing in the toilets, and, reluctantly, how to replace the frost damaged lead piping with something that will be safe and robust to use in service.

In the corridor, the lights are recessed into the ceiling and were protected by an inverted dome shaped glass shade. Some were missing and some cracked, but replacements have been sourced, formed from plastic but looking identical to the originals, a result that gives the proper 'period' feel to the corridor ceiling.

We should shortly receive the first of the re-upholstered seats back from Abingdon for a trial fitting, and then the remainder of the seat frames will go away to be dealt with. We have ordered some replacement netting for the luggage racks, and have ordered the flooring material. We hope that by the time the Journal is published, the fitting of the flooring should be well under way. The gangway doors are being overhauled with new outer skins and will shortly be re-hung. Work continues on the myriad small fittings in the compartments and around the windows.

Museums In Somerset

The Trust has joined the 'Museums in Somerset' group, which comprises museums of all sizes across the county. This is a useful source of advice on matters such as conservation and emergency planning. One key message for us was that Brasso is
banned, because it can cause long-term damage!

We have also joined with other Somerset museums to survey our visitors using a simple one-page survey form, with online analysis to summarise results and compare with other museums, which was first rolled out across museums in Devon in 2016. We started using the survey forms at the Spring Gala, and have a target of 350 completed forms by the end of the season.

Through these links, we have also paid a return visit to the Swanage Railway Museum at Corfe Castle, following a visit to Bishops Lydeard by some of their volunteers in November.

**Museum Making: Project To Refresh The Gauge Museum**

In March, the Trust applied for HLF funding for its 'Museum Making' project to refresh and upgrade the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard and to develop an education programme for the railway, linked with local schools and colleges.

We have now heard that our bid was unsuccessful. Following a useful feedback session at Bishops Lydeard with Kelly Spry-Phare, the HLF Development Manager, we will be revising our bid with the aim of resubmitting in the Autumn. We will also be developing our funding strategy for the carriage shed and display area at Bishops Lydeard, to discuss with her.

**Model Railway In The Gauge Museum.**

The Steam Trust are pleased that Alan Meade and his team operating the model railway are now part of the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust. Alan has also been co-opted onto the Trust Board and we hope he and the rest of the team will feel part of the Steam Trust and the Trust will be able to give them support in the future.

*Our youngest volunteers are very usefully employed on the extensive model railway in the Gauge Museum which sees many hundreds of visitors each year. Photo: WSSRT*
Update From Blue Anchor Museum

It is pleasing to note that through the increase in volunteers, the Museum will be open every Sunday, Bank Holidays and Galas. It is hoped over the winter period to look at the displays in the Museum and to ensure they are relevant to the Great Western Railway and possibly put in one or two interactive displays. There is still room for one or two volunteers so if anyone would like to volunteer to help,

please contact David Baker on: davidbaker687@btinternet.com

The BBC Antiques Roadshow

Second only to Fiona Bruce, the Trust's sleeping car was a star attraction at the Antiques Roadshow filming on 17th May. Despite torrential rain (only some of which got inside the coach through a ventilator!), thousands of visitors came to the show and hundreds stopped to admire the sleeping car, or to look inside. It was the backdrop to many of the expert assessments, and three of the valuations were made in filmed interviews inside the passenger saloon of No. 9038. From September when the first show is to be screened, we can certainly say "as seen on the Antiques Roadshow" in our leaflet. A second programme from the filming is being made for next year.

The UK audience is six million viewers, and the show is seen in Australia and New Zealand, on BBC i-player and Yesterday. Both the PLC and the BBC were delighted that we were there, and in terms of spreading the word, it was a good day for the Trust.

For regular updates on the WSSRT news and activities please visit our Website: http://www.wssrt.co.uk/

West Somerset Steam Railway Trust

SDRT

The Trust commemorated the 50th anniversary of closure of the S&D with a major programme of events supported by £58,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Trust was pleased that according to an evaluation consultancy acting for the HLF, the programme was delivered well. Around 47,000 people saw the Trust's exhibition and many more attended the walks, talks and other events.

The AGM in April returned to its usual venue in Edington and three new members were elected to the Board - Roger Hardingham, the well-known video maker; Ryan Pope, whose name is familiar within these pages due to his work at Williton and with Caledonia Works 1219; and Jonathan Rodney-Jones, who has a more general interest in matters historical and is very adept with grant applications.

Our annual Special Train ran on July 8; it's provided free of charge by the WSR plc as part of the hire agreement for No. 53808. Naturally, the train is headed by 53808, though it is interesting to note that prior to the return run from Minehead, 53808 was paralleled by No.53809 on the Dunster Castle Express, waiting on the opposite platform face.

The Trust's restoration work has received much publicity - and recognition - with the superb completion of Coach 4, now a regular visitor to Minehead during galas. Recent work has included the 1955 BR Fruit D van, with work on the Southern Parcels and Miscellaneous Van to follow.

Rod Ormston

6695 group

The big news for this season's publication is
that agreement has been reached between the 6695 Loco Group and the WSR Plc for 6695 to become part of the WSR steam fleet. This agreement was publicly announced during the WSR Spring Steam Gala, and will see 6695 join the WSR fleet for a minimum of 25 years from entry into traffic. The agreement gives security and stability to both parties for the next quarter century.

As I write in June, the setting up and alignment of the slidebars is in progress. This is a critical stage, and once complete, will allow Ryan to complete the machining of the crossheads. Work continues on the cleaning and refurbishment of both side tanks, reinstatement of the water level gauge, and refurbishment of various parts ready for reassembly. Scott is steadily cleaning and painting the boiler/firebox to prevent further deterioration and improve the visual appearance.

As anticipated in the last report, the inspector has now conducted an examination of the boiler and issued his report. His findings are very much in line with what we expected and we are currently (June) drawing up a scope of work in conjunction with Dave Horton before inviting contractors to submit estimates. As is often the case, it is the progress with the boiler which dictates when the loco will return to traffic. The aim is to have the engine ready for the 2019 season, but much will depend upon sufficient funds being available as well as there being a suitable ‘slot’ in the order book of the selected contractor. We are running a boiler appeal to raise around £100,000 to help finance the work. The sponsoring of small smoke tubes at £30 each is proving successful, and we plan to similarly offer sponsorship of other items (such as boiler stays) soon. Ownership shares at £250 each are also available.

As well as sponsorship, monthly working parties continue to provide support and individuals have offered odd days’ work to help towards getting this wonderful machine into action again.

For all enquiries regarding the loco, fund raising, or joining the working parties please contact the Group via email at locomotive6695@btinternet.com.

Nigel Clark

Dinmore Manor group

It is good to see No 7820 Dinmore Manor running on WSR metals again! As mentioned in the last Journal, we did bring the newly-restored tender – and very smart it looks. The paint job of restored locos can always be a subject for much debate and strong feelings, but at least for the present we will continue “in the black”. There have already been some brilliant photos on Steve Edge’s website and we are very grateful for the publicity.

We do hope friends old and new will take the opportunity for a ride over the coming months. We do have a milestone coming up in the near future (in fact it may even have passed when you read this): Dinmore Manor’s 100,000 miles in preservation, an
achievement that we think is worth a celebration. Perhaps it is fitting that this will be on the WSR, as the first 78,000 miles was all on these tracks. Within days of arriving at Bishops Lydeard we were in steam, first to bring a diesel down to Minehead and then to provide the sole steam power on the Sunday of the Diesel Gala. A small problem with our “new” tender caused us to miss a couple of trips for which we do apologise, but the issue was quickly fixed with some wonderful support from all in the loco department at Minehead.

The plan is to remain on the line until after the Autumn Gala. While Dinmore Manor is on her holidays we will crack on with the heavy overhaul of No. 3850. Tender T1761, just off 7820, is now getting some attention – the wheels will shortly be going off to the South Devon for turning. Meanwhile, the wheel set for 3850 will be coming the other way, having been turned and all journals given some attention - and there is a container full of parts to clean, overhaul, paint or polish so we certainly won’t get bored.

David Foster

TN model railway group

From the 16th to the 18th June 2017 we attended the enormous Great Central Railway exhibition with our Bath Green Park layout. Unfortunately, this took place during the hottest weekend of the year. It took place in two giant marquees (totalling 35,000 square feet), erected in the former goods yard at Quorn with no air conditioning, or even ventilation! A number of layouts including ours had heat expansion problems, although it did not stop us from operating. It therefore came as a relief to know that there will be no need to cater for future Summer exhibitions by replacing trackwork with continuously welded rail! One of our more thoughtful youngish members rushed down to the local Screwfix and bought two fans, one of which was just about big enough to drive a swamp glider. It came in handy!

We were fortunate that the temporary floor was quite solid where we were. In the other marquee the floor was very springy, and several exhibitors gave up, packed up their layouts and went home, as the resultant bouncing (caused even by children walking past) was enough to throw model wagons etc off the track. On a more positive note, the organisers had planned for exhibitors, a train trip on a "special". It was interesting to see how other preserved railways do it. Fortunately, we were seated next to the travelling bar, which kept dehydration to a minimum...

On the Sunday of that weekend I was treated by my wife and son to a 'Father's Day' trip on the WSR. I was amazed at, and commend, the resilience of the volunteer staff that day who were wearing their full uniform (shirt, tie waistcoat etc) despite the heat.

I recently had reason to travel to Swindon and took the opportunity to make my first visit to 'Steam', the amazing museum dedicated to the GWR. It is well worth a visit. Currently on display: 6000 King George V, City of Truro, 7821 Ditcheat Manor, Caerphilly Castle, replica of broad gauge engine North Star, 2516 Dean Goods, 9400 Pannier Tank and the 'skeleton' of 4200 Class 2-8-0T 4248. There are also examples of passenger carriages and goods stock.

Many displays show various aspects of the works as they were in their heyday. I realise that I am probably preaching to the converted, but if you have not as yet visited, I can thoroughly recommend it.
All change at Bishops Lydeard - we have decided to dismantle the older of our two layouts after the October Gala. The TAMERIG layout was effectively started in 1967, and like topsy, has grown over the years. The level of maintenance required has been growing exponentially, and as we need space for our next great project it was decided reluctantly that it goes this winter. Over this summer we will construct new stand alone return loops for the home version of Bath Green Park. They are currently incorporated into the TAMERIG layout so will need replacing when the chainsaw gang moves in. The new layout(s) will be portable and exhibitable, and we are looking at a couple of years to get anywhere near completion on that project. I say layout(s) as we are considering whether to build one large, or two smaller layouts to allow us to expand into other gauges/scales. Decisions, decisions ...

As I write this, we are looking forward to opening our doors to the public for our 'Gold Wednesdays', coinciding with school holidays on every Wednesday through August. We will then be open for the weekend of 2nd and 3rd September (coinciding with the WSR's Late Summer Weekend Gala) and then for the Autumn Steam Gala, Friday to Sunday inclusive, 6th to the 8th October.

On another matter, we are looking to attract 'fresh blood' to the hobby which gives us so much pleasure. If you have not yet visited us, come along and see what we get up to. We meet most Mondays and Thursdays from around 7:30pm, at our premises on Platform 1. If you would like to visit, email me at: secretary.tmrg@hotmail.com so that I can make sure I, or one of our other members is there to greet you.

Simon Ford

Andrew Barclay Group

All upgrade work is now complete on 1219 and it is ready for the big trip to the WSRA rally in August with Kilmersdon. At Washford we have had 1219 out in order to test various parts.

The modifications we have undertaken better seal up the blast pipe area, as the fire cement only lasts a few steamings. We then needed to re-seal and replace a cracked window, and also make it easier to oil up the steam brake.

1857 is now on its wheels, and work is progressing on the brake gear, motion rods and bearings. We assembled the leaf springs and parts, and it now sets on its springs properly.

As mentioned last time, it's like an Airfix kit with no instructions. It's a case of knowing where most parts go, but occasionally odd little bits puzzle us and we end up having no idea where they go. We then end up with a box of small bits with no home, but we are slowly getting there!

1260 and the fireless have had no work done to them, other than keeping the area around them clean and clear.

Ryan Pope

The chassis and smokebox of 1857 stand ready outside at Williton Works for the next stage of work. Photo: Ryan Pope
3850 – a Collett development of G. J. Churchward’s incredibly successful 28XX-class and built at Swindon in 1942. Returned to service in 2005, she has covered over 80,000 miles and steamed for over 1,200 days. Late 2015 saw her withdrawn by owners Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd for heavy overhaul, now well underway at Toddington on the GWSR.

DMLL are running a Sponsor a Part scheme throughout 2017, by which individuals can help with costs of various parts for the locomotive so she can continue the ‘Dream of Steam’ alongside DMLL’s flagship loco, 7820 Dinmore Manor.

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Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd, Registered Office 22 South Park, Minehead, Taunton TA24 8AL. Company Number 09844611. © Dinmore Manor Locomotive Ltd. © John Holland © Jack Spade
Dear Editor

I was interested to read Allan Stanistreet's article in the recent magazine, and in particular the mention of the inspection pit and moving the Dunster signal box. I was involved to a large extent building the inspection pit with Hugh and several others, including John Sumbler, whose expertise enabled the excavation of a not insignificant amount of material from the pit with his Massey Ferguson wheeled digger. I was saddened to hear of John's passing.

The pit was constructed to original Swindon drawings, using several tons of reinforcing steel delivered bent to the bending schedules provided. We were fortunate to be loaned all the shuttering and support struts, together with high frequency poker vibrators to ensure adequate consolidation of the concrete. The timing of the pours had to be made at low tide, as the excavation filled with water at high tide, which to say the least, was a pest. However, and despite one heart stopping moment when a shutter moved whilst concrete was being poured, the finished scheme was something Hugh, I and the rest of the volunteers, proudly viewed on its completion - its longevity has now been proven.

Following this project, Hugh took charge of moving the Dunster signal box, an operation I was pleased to have assisted with. Hugh's expertise enabled us to raise the box to a level which enabled it to be winched onto a set of pre-engineered bogies, without a single pane of glass being displaced. Subsequently being comfortably removed to Minehead. The attached photos are those I took at the time and they may be of interest.

I, and my young son (now 48 years old) thoroughly enjoyed accompanying Hugh on these and various other tasks during our time between the opening of the railway and 1979 when the start of a new business interrupted the pleasure we had during that period.

kind regards

Terry Light
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