

Railway fundamentals – Track

Questions and Model Answers

1. Between which two ranges of hills does the West Somerset Railway run between Bishop's Lydeard and Williton?
A: The Quantocks and the Brendons.
2. From which three materials are the sleepers used on the West Somerset Railway made?
A: Wood, concrete and steel / metal.
3. Which three types of rail are commonly found on the West Somerset Railway?
A: Bridge; bullhead and flat bottom.
4. How heavy is a new 60 foot long length of bullhead rail?
1900 lbs (862kgs): Calculated as 20 yards (60 feet) times 95 lbs per yard.
5. What is the design fault with GWR two-bolt rail chairs?
A: Sleepers split as they decay.
6. If a dropped rail joint isn't dealt with, what more serious fault can develop?
A: Crippled rail ends.
7. Below which radius of curve is a check-rail required?
A: 10 chains.
8. What other device is used to ease the passage of trains round a tight curve?
A: A flange greaser or oiler.
9. What is rail 'galling'?
A: Loss of metal on the foot of bullhead rail where the rail sits in a rail chair.
10. What is the standard gauge of British railway track (and the West Somerset Railway)?
A: 4 feet 8 and a half inches (1435mm).