



"ONLINE"



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY AND THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY ASSOCIATION FEBRUARY 2010.

SPRING STEAM GALA

At the time of writing this report there are five visiting former British Railways Standard Class locomotives in the process of being booked to appear at the March 2010 Spring Steam Gala as follows:-

71000 "Duke of Gloucester", 2MT 78019, 4MT Tank 80104 and 9F's 92203 "Black Prince" and 92212.

Sadly not the eight or nine Standards we had hoped for but lack of availability and the need to cut our cloth to match the 2010 Special Events Expenditure Budget set by the Company Board in what all believe could be a difficult year as the country tries to climb out of recession. To support these five visitors the Minehead based locomotives will be as follows:-

6024 "King Edward I". 4160, 5553 and 9351.

This gives us nine locomotives to roster compared to the eleven last March so we have asked WSRA and Braunton Management Company to see if together they can make SR Pacific 34046 available to complement the "Standards". At this moment we understand "Braunton" is unavailable for traffic due to problems with the axles of her borrowed tender and her own, newly constructed tender, is some way being completed and ready for inspection prior to entering service. However the Special Events Planning Team believe the reappearance of 34046 at the Spring Steam Gala is key to the success of the event and so have asked the Association and the Braunton Management Group to investigate the hire-in of another suitable tender that will allow 34046 to once again emerge from the shadows and take her rightful place as one of the stars of the show.

The advance publicity leaflet for the Spring Steam Gala is now available and you will see we have designed a new hourly frequency timetable with departures on the hour

from Bishops Lydeard and Minehead. The new timetable should make life much easier for both visitors and staff and has built-in minimum station time at the key stations along the route to reflect the feed back from past Galas. However it does mean a few minutes longer journey times and this has given rise to some concern from some who have studied the timetable and believe some visitors will not be happy with the extended journey times. That point has been noted but SEPT believe all need to understand the West Somerset Railway is not a Train Operating Company charged with getting customers from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead in the shortest possible time. In reality the Company is in "Show Business" and the view from a comfortable seat through the clean carriage window as our trains meander through the lovely Somerset countryside is, perhaps, the most important part of the "visitor experience" and a few minutes more enjoying that experience will not be a problem to the majority. Can we ask you all to take a few leaflets home to share with family, friends and work colleagues so they are all aware of the great treats on offer and will come to see the "show" for themselves.

As always all our plans have still not been firmed up at this stage as we continue to try to put a contract in place with First Group to provide rail shuttle services from Taunton to Bishops Lydeard at weekends when they are said to have spare trains and crews. We are also having to find a new coach operator as Cooks Coaches (Stagecoach) have told us they are not able to help us this year. In itself that should not be a problem as there are other local coach operators we can approach to provide the free bus shuttle service. The complication is the availability of Silk Mills Park and Ride as we were led to believe Cooks Coaches have sole rights to serve that facility that if not available to us could create even bigger car parking challenges at Bishops Lydeard. The shops at Bishops Lydeard and Minehead plus the Turntable Buffet will be open for business on all six days of the Gala. The hot food mobile outlets have been booked again for Bishops Lydeard, Minehead and Williton, the latter being weekends only. Light refreshments will also be available at Crowcombe Heathfield, Stogumber, Williton, Watchet, Washford, Blue Anchor and Dunster although hours of opening may vary. On train catering will be provided by both the Company buffet staff and the Quantock Belle team and we hope to have buffets open on all services but that will depend on availability of staff each day. To cater for what we hope will be record numbers of visitors the additional mobile toilets will again be provided at Bishops Lydeard and arrangements are in hand to ensure both the mobile and permanent toilets are regularly serviced throughout each day. Fingers crossed, the weather will be much warmer, dry and sunny by the end of March so the visitors and staff can enjoy another great West Somerset Railway "show" and so hopefully get the Railway Year off to a great start.

(John Cronin – Chairman SEPT)

THE NEXT VOLUNTEER LIAISON MEETING

The next Volunteer Liaison Meeting has been scheduled for Saturday 13 March 2010 at Bishops Lydeard Primary School at 3pm. These meetings allow the volunteers of the railway to come along and talk to the managers of both the Railway Company and the Association. Parking for the event will be in the school playground accessed via Quantock Road.

EXCURSIONS ALEXANDRA PALACE 18th JANUARY

Once again the promotion effort for the year began with the annual trip by the Commercial Department to this show at Alexandra Palace. It was the first such attended by Justin Kerr-Peterson who found it an interesting and tiring day coping with a stream (which grew to a flood for an hour or more) of enquiries about the Railway. On the same date WSR publicity was also being distributed by a team from the Yarn Market Hotel in Dunster at a Trade Show in Manchester.

P.WAY TO P.WAY

It's that time of year again when the WSR plc Permanent Way Department thank the WSRA Permanent Way Department for all the work they have done to help us in 2009. The last "Online" nipped out and away before I could catch it but we're talking about fishplate oiling from Norton to Williton, plus changing sleepers at Dunster, Old Cleeve, and Bishops Lydeard carriage sidings. Not to mention moving concrete sleepers through Doniford Curve – now that really did help us to progress. I know it doesn't take long to write this, or to read it, but the work does time and effort and it is much appreciated by all of our small team.

(Alan Cottrell)

WEST SOMERSET RESTORATIONS WORKS MANAGER

Following the resignation of Gareth Winter as West Somerset Restorations Works Manager interviews have been held to appoint a replacement. I am delighted to tell you that Ray Waldron has accepted the post and will take up his duties immediately. Ray who has been involved with West Somerset Restorations as works foreman stepped into the position of Works Manager temporarily when Gareth left and will now head up the team as they complete the tender for Braunton, continue the assembly of Raveningham Hall and carry out work for Dinmore Manor Ltd on the chassis of the Manor. These three contracts will receive priority.

Once Ray and the team have got to grips with that little lot then 4561 will enter the shops for assessment. With all this work there is plenty to do at Williton for both staff and volunteers alike!

(David Holmes)

AUTO 169 NEWS

Work on 169 continues at a steady rate and the move of our main joinery shop into our new premises has certainly been welcome during the recent cold spell with inside temperatures hitting a balmy 10 degrees compared with 'sub zero' in the Swindon Shed. Work has, amongst other things' concentrated on the finer points of droplight channels in the main framework, continuing construction of a drivers door and preparation for our newest venture within the project, that of steam bending, in readiness of production of new roof hoops. We managed our first experimental session of this 'art' on Saturday 30th and were pleased with our first results. Hopefully will be able to move onto our first real production within the next few weeks. Please note that the regular midweek working days will now be generally be on Mondays and Fridays as well as our usual Saturday sessions. Please contact us via our web site prior to travelling or if other days suit you, as we do often have work progressing on other days. We have recently had discussions with regard to location and storage of the frames of our carriage but with the Williton site undergoing a small revolution at present we will be not have any further news on that front for several weeks.

5542 remains at the Gloucester Warwickshire railway and at present is in 'Winter Storage'. A 3 week visit to the Swindon and Cricklade Railway is likely in late June with one other visit to 'new' territory possible later in the year.

For all the latest news about 5542 and Autotrailer 169 visit www.5542.co.uk and www.auto169.co.uk

DIESEL NEWS

January has proved to be an eventful month for the DEPG during some of the worst winter weather we have experienced at Williton in recent year. Our Class 25 D7523 suffered some reliability problems due to the freezing cold weather because the residual water in the control air system inside the locomotive froze whilst it was stabled for a few days in the platform at Crowcombe Heathfield station. The problems surfaced when Richard Jones arrived to drive the locomotive on engineering duties. Richard had no trouble starting the 25 but then ran into difficulties when he tried to move because the brake came on automatically and he could not get it off again despite repeated attempts to sort out the problem. Eventually the brake came off as the ice in the control air system melted as the engine slowly warmed the interior of the locomotive despite the outside

temperature still being well below freezing point all day. A similar problem arose the next day so the decision was made to substitute D7523 with Class 08 D3462 so the engineering work could continue and to return D7523 to Williton Depot. Here the locomotive was looked over and the total air system was drained to free up any residual water in the system created by the air compressor. Following these tests the locomotive was given a full functional test and declared ready to continue in service and she was again exchanged with D3462 so that the latter could return to Williton Diesel Depot for attention. The winter works programme for the Class 08 includes an investigation to establish the cause of the leaks in the cab reported by several drivers in recent weeks. An inspection of the roof from the outside revealed areas of rust around the large equipment removal roof hatch and the lifting roof hatch. When the rust was cleared away we found several small holes that we will need to repair once we can get the locomotive under cover in No. 3 road in the Diesel Shed. Unfortunately that move is not possible at the moment because the access to the road is obstructed by the boiler wagon carrying "Raveningham Hall"'s boiler that is not in a moveable condition at present.

In the Diesel Shed work continues on the repair of Class 52 "Western" D1010 "Western Campaigner" and the team are nearly ready to try a first start of the fully overhauled Maybach MD655 engine whilst off-site the restoration of the battery box lids continues at St Leonards and we hope they will be ready to collect in the near future. The other locomotive in the Diesel Shed at the present time is Class 03 D2119 that is in for an intermediate overhaul. To date the locomotive has received a thorough clean and a detailed inspection is underway. The two starter motors have been removed and have been sent away for repair whilst the air tanks have been disconnected and removed ready to be inspected by the Pressure Vessel Inspector. Several areas of rust on the body have been cleaned up and some minor body repairs will be required before the body can be prepped for repainting in the former British Railways Corporate Blue Livery.

Over on the Trading Estate in our engine overhaul facility a second Maybach MD655 engine rebuild has just started with the engine block being made ready to pressure test to establish its condition before any serious rebuilding commences. If all goes to plan and block proves to be suitable the rebuild can get underway once the next batch of spares ordered from MTU in Germany arrives at Williton.

Finally, in agreement with Andrew Forster, we have taken over the designated "Company Bay" in the Works so we can progress the repair and repaint of the two DEPG owned freight vehicles that see regular service in the Company Heritage Freight Train. These are Vanwide Box Van B 784676 and the Goods Brake Van B952527 and the aim is to complete the work and outshop the two vehicles early in March ready in time for them to appear in the March 2010 Spring Steam Gala. To date work has focussed on the Vanwide and progress has been helped by a new WSRA volunteer who is a professional painter and decorator. Hopefully he likes diesels as well as steam locomotives because I can see the DEPG could keep him

employed gainfully in the coming months if there are no steam locomotives requiring his skills.

Sadly I have to report that during January we suffered another break-in, a reminder that we will continue to be at risk unless we can move all our spares stored outside into secure, covered storage. Obviously that objective costs money but we continue to look at how we might get more material that can easily be carried by a man out of the external storage compound and into secure, covered, storage.

Finally despite the weather this last month it is pleasing to note our volunteers continued to get to Williton on Saturdays in good numbers and the DEPG Council thanked the volunteers for their dedication during the January Volunteer Briefing meeting. Long may their valuable contribution continue in support of the DEPG and the West Somerset Railway.

(John Cronin – Chairman DEPG)

ALL CHANGE AT CROWCOMBE HEATHFIELD

The Joint Station Masters of Crowcombe Heathfield have retired. Walter Harris and Mike Hodge were guests of honour at a retirement lunch at the Rectory, Cannington. Some thirty Crowcombe Heathfield Station volunteers, past and present, enjoyed an excellent buffet provided by Reverend Peter Martin. The magnificent desserts were made by some of the station's lady volunteers. WSR General Manager Paul Conibeare presented Mike and Walter each with large framed photographic prints of the Station taken by Don Bishop ARPS. At the same meeting, came the news that "Lad Porter" Ted Cubitt had gained promotion to Station Master at Crowcombe Heathfield after some thirty years service. Paul Conibeare announced to the volunteers at the lunch that Ted was successful at his interview and will take up the reins from Mike and Walter from 1 February 2010. The "Friends" of the Station look forward to supporting Ted and ensuring that Crowcombe Heathfield remains the favourite station on the WSR for many visitors and volunteers alike. Meantime, the Inaugural Meeting of Friends of Crowcombe Heathfield Station is to take place on Saturday 13 February 2010 at 2.30pm at The Church House, Crowcombe Village. All are welcome - free tea coffee and biscuits!

TRUSTEES BOARD NEW APPOINTMENTS

Steve Roberts and Don Bishop have jointly stepped into the position of Vice Chairman of the Trustees Board of the WSR. Both are already heavily loaded, Steve with S&T work and assisting with Williton, Don with the Heritage Carriage Project and Station Farm. It was felt that by combining the roles it would allow the additional duties to be shared and I am grateful for their additional help.

(David Holmes)

WILLITON WORKS

Following interviews held during January Ray Waldron has formally been offered the job as Engineering Manager. Since the beginning of the month his priorities have been to get to grips with the variety and progress of work currently in hand and the supporting office records and materials ordering systems and to maintain ongoing production. We all wish him well.

Ray's railway engineering knowledge is limited so to complement his other skills he is looking for someone to join his team who does have the relevant experience and can assist him when needed. If you feel you could make such a contribution please contact Ray at Williton on 01984 633547.

"Braunton"

With the management changes at Williton the intended programmes of work on locomotive, new tender and support coach have been delayed. The tender wheel sets are ready for axle testing to confirm they are not cracked. The frames have been painted and the main carrying springs fitted ready for lifting on to the wheels. Once done the tank can be lifted on to the frames and secured in position to allow completion of the water sump box and delivery pipes. Assembly of the brake gear components can be progressed. SEPT has asked for no.34046 to be available for the Spring Gala but the new tender is unlikely to be ready in time so availability depends on whether the loan tender can be made fit for service.

Support coach no.35451 has been painted but bogie overhauls and fitting out are outstanding. Work by members of the Support Crew has resumed internally. They would welcome some extra help if you think you could assist on a Thursday or possibly Sunday working party. Please contact via the Williton office on 01984 633547.

"Raveningham Hall"

Following detailed examination by Andy Forster, WSR CME, a list of outstanding jobs is being worked through preparatory to lifting the boiler into the frames during February. This will allow re-assembly to progress in earnest. The smokebox has been fitted to the boiler temporarily ready for this lift after which its final alignment can be set before final fitting to the barrel and saddle. Work has continued on the boiler cladding and cab platework with internal surfaces being painted ready for fitting in position.

(Mike Johns)

NEW STATION MASTER AT DUNSTER

Roy Dungalison has been appointed the new Station Master at Dunster Station. At the turn of the year, Chris Dowrick retired after 22 years at Dunster Station. Chris was ably assisted by Colin Dowrick during this period. Applications were invited and considered by the Railway's managers with the result that Roy Dungalison is now in charge at the delightful Dunster Station. Roy is a former Station Master at Minehead and is looking to recruit a team of station staff to make further progress. If you would like to help and want to know what is involved please call him on 01643 706891.

WSRA PROMOTIONS BOARD

Andy Chatwin, chairman of WSRA (Promotions) Ltd the wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Association has announced his intention to stand down as Chairman. Andy who served as Loco Officer on the Main Committee and then Vice Chairman to Humphrey Davies took on the role of WSRA (Promotions) Ltd in 2008. Andy who is also a Director of 4160 Ltd has confirmed his intention to remain a Director of Promotions. The main Trustees Board is very grateful to Andy for his work over the last two years.

At their meeting of January 21st the Promotions Board elected Susan Kaufman as their new Chairman. Andy will assist Susan as Vice Chairman.

(David Holmes)

MINEHEAD LOCOMOTIVE NEWS

The brief winter shutdown period when no public services are running goes very quickly, being only 6 weeks long, and this year it has been made more difficult by staff not being able to get to work due to snow and ice. Despite this progress has been excellent with work being done on the entire service fleet with 9351 and 5553 due to be ready for Feb half term, 4160 ready for mid March, 88 ready for Gala if required and 3850 ready for Easter.

3850 is subject to the most significant work with a valve rebore and new valves, piston exam and new piston rings, several side and connecting rod bearings requiring attention including new big ends, work to fit new blower ring and possible change of chimney if time allows, new expansion links and die blocks.

88 is due to have work done on the regulator valve to make its movement easier but this is a very difficult component to access.

6024 is currently residing at Minehead whilst the owners undertake their own repairs on the loco and this is expected to be ready for the Spring Steam Gala.

“Odney Manor” progresses with cladding within the cab almost complete and installation of boiler fittings starting. Much of the brake gear is now fitted and most of the motion and rods etc ready for fitting.

Carriage dept.

The operational stock has received its annual examinations and servicing. In addition 5002 and 5030 have been reupholstered and 5030 is receiving attention to its roof which had rusted through in various places at the toilet end so it has been necessary to remove fittings and rain strips to weld repair before repainting. Work is progressing well with the new buffet 4346 in the carriage shed with the main saloon complete except for upholstery, the small saloon requires heaters and upholstery and the toilet is complete except for sundry fittings on the wall. The actual buffet area has part of the partition erected but requires considerable additional work to complete, in addition the vehicle will require wiring, plumbing and painting prior to the fitting of all the specialist buffet equipment behind the counter.

BL Compound

The contractors are getting on well with the installation of the 2nd pit within BL loco compound and the connection of drains to mains sewerage. This work is due for completion in early March, until that time the compound is a work site and access is restricted.

(Andy Forster)

JUNE 2010 MIXED TRACTION GALA

Looking ahead to June when the sun should be shining everyday out of a clear blue sky, planning for the Mixed Traction Gala has started and we are hopeful we shall have three visiting diesel hydraulic locomotives to complement the DEPG Williton based fleet. The locomotives invited are as follows:-

Class 14 D9520, Class 42 D821 “Greyhound” and Class 52 D1062 “Western Courier”.

We did also invite Class 52 D1015 “Western Champion” but unfortunately she is not available between 11th and 13th June 2010. Thus it is critical to the success of the event that the DEPG make their Class 52 D1010 “Western Campaigner” available so we can showcase two “Westerns”, two “Warships” and two “Teddy Bears” plus a “Hymek” to celebrate another part of GWR175 in style. The Williton based locomotives available for the Gala will be as follows:

D1010 “Western Campaigner”, Class 47 D1661 “North Star”, D832 “Onslaught”, “Hymek” D7017, Class 25 D7523, and Class 14 D9526.

The DEPG Class 33 D6566 will be held in reserve as the type was rarely, if ever, seen in service in the West of England in the Diesel Hydraulic era.

The timetable adopted for this three day Gala will be the same hourly frequency as for the Spring Steam Gala again with the on the hour departures from both Bishops Lydeard and Minehead. The first day of the Gala, Friday 11th June will be all-diesel operation with Large Prairie 4160 joining the locomotive line-up on the Saturday and Sunday and we hope to pair her at least once with D7017 to recall the last days of steam on the Minehead branch when both types worked over the line. More news to follow next month.

(John Cronin – Chairman SEPT)

TAUNTON AREA GROUP

Peter Darke who has led the Taunton Area Group for several years has stepped down due to ill health and we both thank Peter for his hard work over the last couple of years and wish him in his retirement.

The Taunton meetings were key to the early development of the WSRA and remain an important meeting point for local members. The group is now looking for someone to help organize and arrange its monthly meetings which are always well attended by WSRA supporters and volunteers alike. Meetings are held in the GWR Staff Association adjacent to Taunton Station.

If you feel you would like to help either as an individual or maybe as part of a small group organizer then please get in touch through Susan Kaufman at Bishops Lydeard or any member of the Trustees Board.

CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT NEWS

I. LATEST DEPARTURES

The existing contract arrangement whereby Chief Civil Engineer John Buxton is professionally responsible to the Company Board for the maintenance and repair of the physical infrastructure of the railway, will come to end on March 31st 2010. The collective railway experience held by John Buxton and his assistants, Tony Phillips and Mike Shaw, currently runs to more than 100 years between them and was brought to the railway some 3 ½ years ago in order to instigate a necessary step change in the quality and standards of the WSR permanent way in particular, but also to address other Civil Engineering infrastructure issues on the railway. The opportunity for the railway to obtain the services of a senior professional railway Civil Engineer, who had been one of the final B.R. Western Region era Divisional

Civil Engineers, was considered to be an excellent move to make. As a result many people have recently been asking why this latest change is now being implemented and the answer is because the Company Board has decided that the time is now right to employ an in-house Civil Engineering Manager. This will result in a full five day a week 'hands on' presence to the railway following a phased transfer of responsibilities that will be completed by 31st March 2010.

2. NEW CIVIL ENGINEERING MANAGER

Shaun Hodges was recently appointed to the new post of Civil Engineering Manager and he has made a prompt start in introducing himself to the many departments and people on the railway that the Civil Engineering Department interfaces with in its day to day work. Interestingly Shaun also started his career with British Railways and upon rail privatisation he also moved into the private sector by setting up a rail contracting company. Recent changes in the industry have caused him to review his career path and being a local lad has decided that applying his rail engineering skills and knowledge to his local heritage railway would be an ideal move to make. John Buxton has recently stated that 'The objectives that were set some 3 ½ years, when I originally agreed to take on the challenges of the West Somerset Railway's civil engineering functions, have been driven forward during the intervening time. When I originally externally audited the Civil Engineering Department on the West Somerset Railway, I found that much needed to be rectified in order to meet both the changing engineering requirements of the railway and also to meet the ever more changing and onerous modern day standards. The work has involved me in significant personal expenditure outside the terms of the basic contract, but the work has been both interesting and challenging. We have received independent validation from a number of external sources that have confirmed that the WSR infrastructure is now in substantially better state than when we arrived and I am grateful for the Board's recent recognition of these hard won achievements. With the substantial degree of improvements now made and the recent acquisition of my own small heritage railway, this is probably the optimum time for me to depart from my involvement with the West Somerset Railway. I certainly could not have achieved what I have done without the hard work and dedicated support of both Tony Phillips and Mike Shaw and the sheer determined graft of the company gang under the supervision of Alan Cottrell. I also wish to thank all of those who have assisted the C.E. Department with the myriad of tasks that are undertaken around the railway, from the Association PW gang, to the Cutting Back / Special Projects teams, to the RAMS team and the individual station maintenance teams, because without your help and support the infrastructure of the railway could not be maintained in the condition that it currently is. I wish Shaun Hodges the very best for the future and I am sure

that he will work hard to build upon the solid foundations that have been put in place.'

3. WINTER WORK PLAN

Since the start of January work has been concentrated at Crowcombe Heathfield, where we have been undertaking further track drainage improvements. Unfortunately the snow that fell in the first part of the month and the associated very cold weather related failure of the Class 25 locomotive whilst on engineering departmental duties, have set progress back on this scheme. Prior to Christmas there was a notable success in overhauling a significant amount of the existing GWR pipe drainage system between Norrvis Bridge and Lydeard Bridge. Thus the new drain works have been more limited in scope than originally envisaged and whilst this meant that expenditure on materials was saved, the actual time that has been expended has been as per the planned scope of the work. This scheme is important not only because of the historic flooding problems at Crowcombe, but also because of the poor formation conditions right through to the Norrvis Bridge vicinity and any attempts to improve the general track condition in this section would be largely wasted if the formation were to remain in such a wet state. It is now intended that many of the life expired timber sleepers will be renewed within the cutting area and so allow the removal of the four temporary gauge ties that had to be recently installed in this vicinity in order to prevent gauge spread.

(Tony Phillips)

60163 – “TORNADO”

A reminder that the Institute of Mechanical Engineers would like to extend an invitation to any members of the West Somerset Railway interested in attending a talk on Locomotive 60163 Tornado scheduled to be given at SCAT in Lecture Theatre A on 25 February 2010 at 19:00 by Bob Alderman the AI Steam Locomotive Trust Presentations Coordinator.

The Presentation will cover the creation of the Trust and a brief history of the class of locomotive we are building. Note that this is Re-creation not Restoration. The management of the Trust - especially the engineering side - will be covered as well as our means of fundraising. We have already spent over three million pounds to build the engine! The construction so far will be illustrated using original engineering drawings and the new components. Accompanying these illustrations will be a description of the engineering behind the creation of the parts comparing the resources to hand today with those for the original engines. Our base in Darlington where the locomotive has been assembled will be shown as well as details from the testing of the locomotive on the Great Central at Loughborough and subsequent

mainline testing. Our hopes and aspirations for the future will conclude the Presentation

If you are interested or would like further information please contact Mr Richard Peacock of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers on rppeacocke@hotmail.com or by telephoning 01823 432740. It is suggested that those from the WSR wanting to attend should let Richard have their contact details just in case they have to cancel at the last minute for any reason.

(Richard Peacock for the Institute of Mechanical Engineers)

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY WELCOMES BACK “TORNADO” FOR TWO WEEKS IN 2010

Following an enormously successful initial visit to the West Somerset Railway in 2009 the A1 Class Pacific locomotive 60163 “Tornado” will be returning to the West Somerset Railway for two separate weekly visits in 2010.

“Tornado” will be working trains over the line between Bishops Lydeard (near Taunton) and Minehead on the Mondays to Fridays July 12th to 16th and September 13th to 17th inclusive, visiting the WSR between operations on the main line network. It is intended that it will work two round trips over the WSR on each day and the WSR will charge normal fares to travel on the trains which it is working. A leaflet is in the process of being prepared and information and booking form will appear shortly at www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk.

CUTTING BACK

Beaten back by the snow the Special Projects Group will be re-forming for an assault on coppiced re-growth at Combe Florey on February 20th and 21st. This was originally planned for January but had to be called off due to the severe weather conditions – a real tragedy as the Cutting Back gang Christmas Dinner was scheduled for the same night! However not to be beaten the Xmas Dinner is also re-arranged although whether we are now late for 2009 or early for 2010 is a moot point for debate. As usual all hands will be welcome and if you contact David Holmes quickly enough there may be a Xmas dinner available as well!

(David Holmes)

NORTON FITZWARREN

Spurred on by an increasing pile of concrete sleepers the WSRA P.Way gang have been busy of late laying out sleepers along the original Barnstaple formation. These now stretch from Orchard junction toward the new junction with the East Chord

and with the track already laid make a total length of over ¼ mile relaid on the Barnstaple alignment which takes us well alongside the Up main line.

The Plym Valley railway has bought a lead surplus to or requirements and this will be dispatched shortly to Marsh Mills where it will form one end of their new run round loop. Whilst the lifting plant is on site the P.Way gang plan to lift the new lead between the East and West chords into position taking advantage of the current HOBC outage to get possession of the track. Completion of this task will mean that two of the three triangle points will be in place, one side of the triangle fully laid and railed, a second side laid in concrete sleepers and the Allerford headshunt laid.

(David Holmes)

NEXT ALAN HAMMOND SOMERSET & DORSET BOOK TO BE LAUNCHED AT SPRING STEAM GALA

In what has become a West Somerset Railway tradition Alan Hammond will be launching his latest book about the Somerset and Dorset Railway at the Spring Steam Gala with signing sessions at Minehead Station.

The book is entitled “Splendour of the Somerset and Dorset Railway” and follows the successful established pattern of memories of the former line from former staff and enthusiasts, plus an essay about the 7F 2-8-0's, and over 230 photographs of the former S&D.

Published by Millstream Books of Bath the print run will be limited to 2500 and it will cost £20. If you are unable to visit the Gala but would like to order a copy please send your order plus a cheque for £23 (which includes postage and packing) to the Buffer Stop Shop, West Somerset Railway, The Railway Station, Minehead, TA24 5BG. Cheques should be made payable to West Somerset Railway plc.

WSRA BRISTOL AREA GROUP

In the last “Journal”, the sad loss of Dave Mills was reported, along with the understandable belief that this may be the end of the previously thriving Bristol group. Earlier requests, during the period of Dave's illness, for someone to take on the group had brought no takers.

However, we are extremely pleased to announce that Dave's widow, Jayne, has kindly agreed to continue with the good work that the two of them had achieved over recent years, so the Bristol branch will re-commence in September this year at the same venue (BAWA, Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol. BS34 7RG. Tel: 0117 976 8064) although the programme is still to be put together.

All previous and new members will be most welcome and the following dates have been compiled for your diary:

2010 Tuesdays, 28th September, 26th October, 30th November.

2011 Tuesdays 25th January, 22nd February, 29th March, 26th April, 31st May, 28th June and possibly 26th July.

Meetings will commence as usual at 1930hrs and for further details please email WSRABristol@aol.com or send details of your name and address to Jayne Mills, 14 Nordown Road, Cam, Dursley. Glos. GL11 5RX (Tel: 01453 546670) and you will be added to a (Protected) mailing list.

Your support would be appreciated!

FRIENDS OF MINEHEAD STATION

Much activity behind the scenes at the seaside terminus of the West Somerset Railway. The [Friends of Minehead Station](#) report working parties busy in most areas. The Maintenance team now have five new platform seats supplied in kit form by the RAMS team based at Bishops Lydeard; the outside of the Buffer Stop Shop stores van has been waterproofed and racks installed inside; several tasks undertaken at the Turntable Buffet including re-varnishing all the chairs and tables. Another task underway is the installation of a modesty screen for the disabled toilet, with the holes dug, the upright poles now in place and the screen itself awaited. Repainting the platform edge white lines is another of the annual tasks soon to be undertaken.

CANAL AND RAILWAY SHOWS

Hi there – something a bit different for rail enthusiasts – a canal cruise

We are trying to advise railway enthusiasts of our rail themed canal cruises which we have a programme of three over the next few months.

The cruise will be on our wide beam boat “Kingfisher” which is fully licensed. All video and photographs will be on our big screen and we have a fish and chip supper lined up as well.

Our first cruise which departs on Wednesday 24th February will feature steams last days in north Lancashire and the Fylde.

The night cruise will depart from Barton Grange marina at 1900 and return approx 2200.

The cruise will also include our famous fish and chip supper and is priced at £15.00

Stagecoach bus services operate to Barton Grange from Lancaster and Preston

A special mini bus service will operate from Preston station to Barton Grange at 1830 and return to the station for 2230. The return fare will be £5.00 per person.

Please note that the fish and chip cruises fill up very quickly so book as soon as possible.

This cruise will be followed on March 23rd with a BR diesel power cruise. Then on April 27th we have a great night out as we relook at the famous Somerset and Dorset line and other braches.

For further details call us on 01524 389410 or look on our website www.budgettransport.co.uk

MODEL RAILWAY PROVING POPULAR AT GAUGE MUSEUM

2009 was the best operating year for the Model Railway at the Gauge Museum, Bishops Lydeard Station. Compared with 2008, the Model Railway enjoyed an extra 17 operating days and attracted an extra 860 visitors. More volunteers would be welcomed to help with construction work and with operating the layout. Anyone interested should contact Graham Rothwell, 01278 427829. The Model Railway is operated to entertain visitors, especially families. It is a very popular attraction at Bishops Lydeard Station and helps bring folks to the Gauge Museum. The current operating team consists of a small number of adults and senior Trackers and provides a opportunity for Trackers to become involved in a railway related activity. During 2009 the team managed to consolidate into a regular working team with the younger operators gaining much more experience when dealing with visitors. The Model Railway is closed until the [Spring Steam Gala](#) for maintenance and continuing the construction - funding for the latter is in short supply and donations are always welcome. The 2010 challenge is to reach the 11,000 visitors.

THE STEAM FAYRE AND VINTAGE VEHICLE RALLY 2010

Make a diary date now for the 2010 Steam Fayre and Vintage Vehicle Rally. One of the biggest shows of its kind in Somerset, the Rally attracts thousands of visitors who flock to see the spectacular showman's engines and the workhorse traction engines, along with over 150 vintage cars, military vehicles of all types, and fire engines, police cars and ambulances. Add to this the miniature railway, steam vehicles, tractors, motorcycles and stationary engines, children's entertainment, large craft marquee, railway art display, fairground and street organs, trade stands, food and drink, beer tent, all topped by the parades in the main arena. The Rally is organised by the [West Somerset Railway Association](#) and is held at the WSRA Fields, Norton Fitzwarren on 7 and 8 August 2010. For more details please 01823 433856.

MORE RIPPING YARNS AND MECHANICAL GREATS FROM OUR FAVOURITE PETROLHEAD'S BRITISH HISTORY...

Chris Barrie is back for a brand new series of Britain's Greatest Machines and once again he's in pursuit of the engineering icons that shook the world and changed the way we live today. From some lesser known war winning machines of the 1940s to the very first aeroplane to cross the Atlantic non-stop, these are masterpieces of design and execution that Britain can be proud of.

In this new series Chris tackles the 1910s, 1920s, 1940s and in a "trains special" he investigates the origins of the railways, culminating in the great locomotives and pioneering railway lines of the 1820s that set the templates for all that followed.

Chris takes a hands-on approach to history, driving or operating most of the vehicles in the series. He's on the footplate of the first high pressure steam locomotives that made the railways possible, at the wheel of one of the extraordinary three-wheelers that turned Britain into a nation of motorists and getting to grips with the trucks that built the infrastructure to feed our unquenchable thirst for petrol. He'll be digging out the moments of invention and engineering genius that made these machines so special and he'll be revealing fascinating, lesser known stories behind all of them.

Premieres on National Geographic Channel UK:

Monday 1 st Feb, 9pm	1910s "Triumph & Tragedy"
Monday 8 th Feb, 9pm	1920s "The Engine Roaring Twenties"
Monday 15 th Feb, 9pm	1940s "War: Mother of Invention"
Monday 22 nd Feb, 9pm	TRAINS "The Steam Pioneers"

EPISODE GUIDE

EPISODE 1 – 1910s "Triumph and Tragedy"

This was an era of great leaps in technology and mind-blowing new wonders. The start of mass motoring with Charabanc coach trips and the amazing Edwardian cyclecar. New electric machines and the birth of long distance radio communications. Chris demonstrates the equipment that saved 700 lives on Titanic, and investigates the ingenious, deadly machines that first created and then broke the deadly stalemate of trench warfare. And he pays tribute to the Vickers Vimy an extraordinary war plane that at the end of this decade achieved one of the greatest landmarks in aviation history, flying non-stop across the Atlantic.

Starring: 1914 Leyland Torpedo Charabanc, Morgan Runabout Cyclecar, Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge, Titanic's Ship Radio, Vickers Machine Gun, WWI tanks and the Vickers Vimy.

EPISODE 2 – 1920s “The Engine Roaring Twenties”

The 1920s was the decade that forged the modern petrol-centred world we live in today. Chris Barrie takes on the famous high speed banking at the world’s first purpose-built racing circuit in a 1920s Bentley, races against a plane on a 1925 Brough Superior motorcycle and then takes to the air in a De Havilland Moth – the tiny aircraft beloved of the aerial explorers, which helped pioneer the commercial air routes we still use today. Chris also gets behind the wheel of Britain’s first articulated petrol tanker – the blueprint for liquid transporters to this day - and relives the extraordinary and tragic story of what was then the largest flying machine on the planet - the R101 airship. Starring: Bentley 3 Litre, Brough Superior SS100, De Havilland Gypsy Moth, Scammell Petrol Tanker, Scammell Pioneer, R101 airship.

EPISODE 3 – 1940s “War: Mother of Invention”

The 1940s began with Britain ill-prepared for war and in this episode Chris tells the story of how Britain’s engineers fought back with a combination of improvisation and clever invention. In this episode Chris explores the origins of radar, mechanised farming, the modern fire service, sea rescue and jet aviation. He tells the stories of world changing technologies and, at the controls of some great unsung heroes of World War Two, he re-lives the Battle of Britain, the Blitz and the aftermath of the D-Day landings. Starring: Chain Home Radar and H2S, HSL RAF Rescue Boat, Jowett Fire Pump, Austin 12 Taxi, Austin K2 Fire Truck, David Brown VAKI Tractor, Daimler Dingo Scout Car, Gloster Meteor, Martin Baker Ejection Seat and the Aston Martin DB2.

EPISODE 4 – Trains “The Steam Pioneers”

At the turn of the Nineteenth Century, Britain saw the dawn of a great transport revolution. A combination of the great James Watt steam engines and the needs of a thriving mining industry inspired and made possible the railway locomotive. Chris traces the evolution of rail transport from Richard Trevithick’s first high pressure steam engines and road vehicles through to the first railway lines in the 1820s, the Rainhill Trials, the Rocket and ultimately the first scheduled railway as we know them today and it’s finest locomotive, The Planet, which perfected the template for all steam loco’s that followed. Starring: James Watt Steam Pump, Trevithick’s London Steam Carriage and Coalbrookdale Locomotive and the Stephenson’s Locomotion Number One, Rocket and Planet. Also featuring the stories of the Stockton to Darlington and Liverpool to Manchester Railway Lines.

Some of the filming for this series took place on the WSR last year during the visit of “Bittern” but we don’t know which episode the footage may appear in!