



"ONLINE"



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS APRIL 2018

A MESSAGE FROM THE WSR CHAIRMAN

On behalf of the whole WSR board, may I thank you and your teams for an excellent Spring Gala. I know that a lot of people put in a huge amount of time and effort to make sure that the event was a success and their efforts paid off. The work they put in, the early morning starts, the late finishings, is all very much appreciated. Everywhere I went, I felt a real buzz and a feeling of excitement. Our railway looked fantastic and the staff were friendly and helpful. I happened to be on a train with a blind man and the train crew went out of their way to make sure he was properly looked after and that he managed to get on and off the trains ok. The planning throughout was very good, I admire those who can draw up the timetable and then make sure it all works, which it did. Special thanks should go to the staff who sorted out the problem with the S160 on Thursday night and those who dealt with the sad event at Stogumber. I spent the whole four days riding the railway and talking to passengers and staff. Without exception, everybody was very enthusiastic about the event, clearly enjoying it and having a great time. I spoke to one couple who had come from Warwick for the weekend and who said it was easily the best organised and most interesting railway gala they had been to. Another family were here from Mansfield and were equally complimentary. I had lunch on the 'Quantock Belle' three days running and very much enjoyed it. The new caterers did a good job and I am optimistic about the "QB" this season. We had our lunch on Sunday outside the Turntable Cafe sat in the sun listening to the lady singer, watching engines being turned and soaking up the atmosphere. We didn't want to leave! The military train looked perfect and the army reenactors took their time to explain the train and what they were doing. There was a lot of talk about the 1940s weekend in September and this is

shaping up to be a very popular event for the railway too. We should capitalise on that and make sure that the entire railway is in 1940s mode for the weekend. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned. Well done, it is much appreciated. You should be very proud of the railway and the work that your teams put in. I am looking forward to the next galas and the 1940s weekend very much.

(Ian Coleby WSR Chairman)

Gala Planning Team

I would like to extend the thanks given by the Plc Chairman for everyone's efforts in making the recent spring gala the success it was. It was good all-round effort by all involved with the railway and it was good to see everybody happy and enjoying the event. Whilst manning my display stand at Minehead it was great to get repeated nice comments about the gala and what a good show the WSR had put on, the same was heard many times when out on the lineside with my camera on the Sunday, with several people making a point of passing on their thanks to me and the team in person. We carried 4,367 passengers over the four days and revenue topped £71k from ticket sales, with on-train buffet, café and shop figures still to be notified, so a very satisfactory result. Time keeping was very good overall, with only the incident involving the S160 causing any significant delays, but this well managed and sorted by those involved.

The Gala Planning Team now move onto their next event, the diesel gala being held over the weekend of 8th – 10th June and details are given in a separate feature for you to read elsewhere in this edition of Online. It is planned to be a significant enhancement to our recent diesel galas with some running of trains into the evening, probably until around 8.0pm on Friday evening and 10.0pm on Saturday evening with a couple of limited stop trains running to provide our visitors with evening entertainment and enable them to enjoy a pint at our mini beer festival planned for Washford with the kind co-operation of the SDRT. Feedback and initial excitement at the announcements we have made on social media indicate that we will be very busy, so if you are available to do a turn of duty and help with the running the railway that weekend it will be much appreciated, please get in touch with your roster clerk to offer your services. We will need extra experienced footplate crews to offer to act as pilot-men for the visiting diesels and crews, so if you fancy a turn on a Deltic, 50 or Peak (no promises!) then your support will be appreciated.

Vintage Diesels to the seaside: West Somerset Railway diesel gala 2018

The West Somerset Railway Gala Planning Team are delighted to announce that plans are now sufficiently developed for our 2018 diesel gala for us to make a formal announcement about the event and the attractions we intend to offer for the event which runs from Friday 8th to Sunday 10th June 2018.

We will be having visiting locomotives brought to the WSR by our friends at GBRF from several locations around the country which will be brought together

for a single move from Kidderminster SVR to Bishops Lydeard prior to the event. These are planned to be **Class 20's 20189 & 20205** (courtesy of Michael Owen) hauling **Class 45 No. 45041 "Royal Tank Regiment"** (Courtesy of Peak Locomotive Company), **Class 50 No. 50035 "Ark Royal"** (courtesy of Class 50 Alliance) and **Deltic Class 55 No. 55019 "Royal Highland Fusilear"** (courtesy of the Deltic Preservation Society). All these visitors are in BR Blue livery, so could this be one of the longest train formations of BR Blue locos together in many a year? These visitors will be joined by the home based Diesel & Electric Preservation Groups fleet of **Class 14 No. D9526**, making its return to traffic after a heavy overhaul, **Class 33's Nos. D6566 & D6575**, with D6566 re-entering service after a heavy overhaul, **Class 35 Hymek's Nos. D7017 & D7018**, with D7018 making its first public runs since a catastrophic engine failure in August 1995 and a full rebuild and restoration by the DEPG team and ever popular **Western Class 52 No. D1010 "Western Campaigner"**. These are likely to be joined by **Class 09 shunter D4107** for some rare haulage opportunities on shuttles between Bishops Lydeard and Norton Fitzwarren, quite likely in the company of the Class 14 whilst the later is gently run-in for its initial return to service.

Each of these locomotives fits our theme of "Vintage Diesels to the Seaside" in that not only are they are working to the seaside at Minehead but each of these types often worked holiday trains to the seaside in various parts of the country in their working careers for BR. This will allow many diesel fans to visit the WSR and relive their "bashing years" of the 1970's & 80's.

A new intensive timetable is being designed for the event with all diesel timetables on the Friday & Saturday and a single steam hauled trip on the Sunday to cater for casual visitors to the railway who want and expect steam and also a regular coach party booking. We are also planning to run a limited number of diesel turns on the Thursday as a preview day.

The gala will also be complemented by a beer festival which is being planned for the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust site at Washford to run over the weekend. It is planned to have a good number of real ales available from both local west country breweries and some from further afield to cater for all tastes. Food will also be available at the festival. All trains will call at Washford to enable diesel gala visitors to indulge in a pint or two in between their haulage runs. Please note that there will be no car parking available at Washford and all visitors are encouraged to travel by train.

With the WSR's stiff gradients and plenty of mileage to be had across the weekend and a good variety of motive power to enjoy we are hoping for a bumper gala turn-out.

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY WINS TOP NATIONAL AWARD

The annual Coach Tourism awards were presented at a dinner held at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham on Wednesday March 21st and one of the winners was the West Somerset Railway.

Samantha White and Ally Roe of the Railway's Commercial Department attended the event and received the "Best Heritage Railway for Coach Tours" award. The accolade came after a successful 2017 season in which the Railway carried over 189,000 passengers and amongst other highlights hosted a very successful visit by 'Flying Scotsman' in September. Either side of the Awards Dinner, Samantha and Ally spent two days meeting existing customers and new contacts at the British Tourism and Travel Show in the National Exhibition Centre.

WSR manager Paul Conibeare commented, "As there are well over 100 heritage railways in the UK, the receipt of this top award reflects on the work of everyone on the West Somerset Railway, from those who deal with coach company bookings initially and then the station staff and train crews who meet the customers and ensure they have an enjoyable journey and time with us. We are not welcoming "Flying Scotsman" again this year but we do have another "big engine" event planned for September with more express locomotives from the great days of steam".

"TYRES FOR "KILMERSDON"" APPEAL

This year's main fund-raising target for the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust is being aimed towards the cost of four new tyres, which will have to be obtained from South Africa, for the Washford-based 0-4-0ST 'Kilmersdon'. Built by Pecketts in Bristol in 1929 (Works Number 1788) the locomotive worked at Kilmersdon colliery near Radstock until it closed in 1972. By that stage, it was the last steam engine working in industry in Somerset. The funds raised by the Trust's 2018 Raffle will go towards the tyres and donations will also be welcome. Cheques, payable to The Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust Ltd can be sent to George Judd, 4 The Glebe, Queen Camel, Yeovil, BA22 7PR.

INAUGURAL CLASS 802 TO THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY?

The April 'Railway Magazine' reports that it is planned that the first working of the new Great Western Railway Class 802 trains will be on 07.30 Paddington-Penzance on July 16th. Interestingly, the 07.30 is a train on which it is possible to obtain the inclusive package of train travel to and from Taunton, Buses of Somerset's service 28 between Taunton and Bishops Lydeard station, and a day ticket on the WSR. The tickets for this can be found on the GWR website. 'Destinations and Events' takes the user to 'Heritage Railways' from where the

West Somerset Railway package can be selected. The package is also available from Reading, Swindon, Bath Spa and Bristol Temple Meads. Please ensure that West Somerset Railway is entered as a destination. Putting in Watchet, Minehead or others will get the PlusBus package, excluding the WSR from the trip.

BLUE ANCHOR STATION MUG

This year's limited edition (200) mug from Blue Anchor is on sale at the station, priced £4.00. It features a picture of "Flying Scotsman" steaming away from the station, taken by Eric Vickerstaff during 60103's visit to the WSR in September 2017.

2017 PASSENGER FIGURES

Passenger numbers on the West Somerset Railway totalled 189,359 for the 2017 season, an increase over the 186,603 carried in 2016.

NEWS FROM THE STEAM TRUST

A relic from the early days of one of the West Country's busiest railway branch lines, and which was rescued when it was axed in the 1970s, is to go on public display for the first time.

The now-tattered ledger was kept at Minehead station and was used for more than 60 years to record many thousands of items which were found after being left behind by forgetful passengers between 1904 and 1968. The property ranged from false teeth to guns, farm machinery to jewellery, bowler hats to swimming costumes, and picnics to Christmas crackers.

The register was originally saved by a railwayman who was afraid that otherwise it would have been dumped when the line was closed, and it has now been handed to the West Somerset Railway Steam Trust, which runs the museum at Bishops Lydeard station.

The very first entry was made 114 years ago in now-faded pencil: "November: package containing pig net" which had been left on a train from Taunton and was never claimed. The terse last one, as services were being run down and staff made redundant: 'Umbrella 8/5/68'. Over the years the hundreds of pages show that much of the property was claimed by telephone, telegram, letter or personal visit and returned on payment of anything from a few shillings to several pounds.

All the rest was sent to Paddington to be sold or destroyed. Throughout the year, early morning and late afternoon services from Taunton to Minehead yielded countless school caps, satchels, football boots, cricket bats and tennis rackets. Trains from London, the Midlands and South Wales brought a harvest of suitcases, tin trunks and briefcases, hundreds of hats – even bowlers – gloves, fur wraps, coats, waterproofs, shoes, walking sticks and brollies, often left by passengers who had got off at Taunton for connections to South Somerset and North Devon. Oddities included an iron saucepan, a ploughshare,

a bag of seeds, a basket containing 'shirts, corsets and a pair of shoes,' bicycles and even a white hen and chicks. The ledger reveals evidence of considerable military use of the line during both world wars: in May 1914 there were two soldiers' kitbags plus 'captain's luggage' found on a platform bench after a Yeomanry regiment's special train had departed.

At other times there were countless officers' coats, sailors' hats, military gas masks, and tin helmets. Despite the food shortages in 1915, there was a basket containing four bananas, a bunch of flowers and a purse with 19-and-a-half pence and some stamps (the basket and purse were returned to Paddington, the flowers and bananas destroyed) while other edibles included a clutch of eggs, parcel of herrings, package of 2-and-a-half pounds of margarine (destroyed) and a brown paper parcel containing tomatoes, gooseberries and flowers. Weaponry occasionally came to light including 'a miniature rifle' left on the 8.55am train from Taunton in November 1910. There were sporting guns and in 1945 a Service revolver and ammunition which were handed over to the local police.

Some 26 years earlier, mystery surrounded an unclaimed package containing '14 imitation gold watches, five imitation silver watches plus other watches, six fountain pens in cardboard boxes, six gold watches in brand boxes' – possibly the stock of a forgetful travelling salesman or even the haul of a shoplifter! Steam Trust chairman Chris Austin and his team of volunteers have been carrying out a major revamp of the museum where this historic relic from the branch line's past will be in safe-keeping. More on what it reveals can be seen in the latest edition of the West Somerset Railway Journal, free to members of the WSR Association or available from the Bishops Lydeard station shop.

STOGUMBER STATION

The cream tea season at Stogumber station resumed over Easter Weekend and will continue until the end of October. So, if the weather is kind, there is the pleasant prospect of a train ride to the station and a cream tea in the station garden. In addition there has been a further reprint of Gil Cox's book of cake recipes which can be purchased at the station.

WSRA QUIZ NIGHT RAISES MONEY FOR LOCOMOTIVE RESTORATION FUND

The quiz night held at Bishops Lydeard village hall on March 6th was a successful and enjoyable evening with a good turn-out of teams and resulted in over £300 being raised for the WSR Locomotive Restoration Fund.

D1661 "NORTH STAR"

Although the Williton based Class 47 is not planned to appear during the 'Vintage Diesels to the Seaside' event it will have two outings in May working the 80 mile diagram (11.15 and 15.15 from Bishops Lydeard and 13.15 and 17.15 from Minehead on May 12th and 19th. Class 33 D6566 will feature on May 5th and Class 52 D1010 'Western Campaigner' will operate on May 26th.

Geoff Cross appointed as Stations Co-ordinator

Geoff Cross has been appointed to the position of Stations Co-ordinator, reporting to Richard Jones Head of Operating.

He took over the role from Lesley Farthing on 26 March 2018.

Geoff will be continuing to act as Station Master at Crowcombe Heathfield Station.

USA S160 no 6046 started work on Sunday 18 March

As announced earlier, USA-designed Class S160 no 6046 has joined the home fleet for 2018 and will work passenger trains throughout the season. No 6046 arrived in Somerset on 15 March 2018 and, following examinations and crew-familiarisations, two days later the loco was moved under its own steam to Minehead. The loco made an immediate start into service by working the 'Minehead' diagram (starting with the 10.15am from Minehead) on Sunday 18 March 2018.

The 2018 Blue Anchor Station Mug

David Carter of the Friends of Blue Anchor Station writes:

This year's mug is not of the station but is a reminder of last September's visit by *Flying Scotsman*. The photo taken by a volunteer from the station shows the train crossing Ker Moor. These limited edition mugs are now available from Blue Anchor Station at a cost of just £4.

Details kindly provided by the Friends of Blue Anchor Station

Gauge Museum Model Railway re-opened on 17 March

The Model Railway at the Gauge Museum, Bishops Lydeard Station will re opened on 17 March 2018 after the winter engineering work. James Pearson tested circuits at the end of the work with Tom Donnelly and Matt Jackson working with him. See [pictures](#) by Alan Meade on the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust website.

WSR Journal no 160 published

The West Somerset Railway Association have published the latest Journal. Number 160 reveals a welcome new fresh look to the publication - well done to the designer and to the Journal team for this improvement. This Journal includes all the regular items along with a Letter from the Chairman, news of military-

themed trains and events, a feature titled 'A Minehead Booking Clerk', and lots more.

The West Somerset Railway Archive Store

Chris Austin, Chairman of the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust, writes:

The RAMS team have done a great job in enlarging the archive store in the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard and fitting it out with shelving. A working party of museum volunteers - including Ray Clack, Alan Randle, Mary Randle, Derek Blazdell, Geoff Evens and Peter Darke - put back the material yesterday (Friday) and the museum reopened on Saturday 17 March 2018.

Details kindly provided by West Somerset Steam Railway Trust

Godfrey Baker

It is with profound sadness that the WSR announces the death of Godfrey Baker, former Chairman of the S&DRT. Godfrey died at Dorchester Hospice on Saturday 3rd March. Godfrey first became associated with the S&DRT in 1973 when the fledgling group was located at Radstock. He was also present on the first day of the Swanage Railway. Godfrey became a committee member of the S&DRT in 1988 and eventually held the post of Publicity Manager and more recently, Chairman from 2007-2017 when his illness forced him to stand down. Godfrey had many friends both in the S&DRT and the WSR and I'm sure everyone will wish to send their condolences to his family. Godfrey is survived by his Pauline, and their children and grandchildren.

John Betts

We have received news regarding the sad death of WSR volunteer John Betts in the early hours of Saturday morning 3 March 2018 at the age of 81. John was the Booking Office Clerk at Bishops Lydeard on Saturdays for many years and a volunteer since 1997 and would have been the first face that many passengers would have seen before starting their journey. We are sure all WSR folk will join us in sending sincere sympathies to John's family.

Celebrating twenty years of the Readers Halt at Minehead Station

On 8 March 1998, Readers Halt opened for the first time. All those who have donated things to sell, those who have bought items and especially those who have opened the 'Halt' over the years are sincerely thanked by the Friends of Minehead Station committee. Come and see what has been achieved. Martyn Snell, Chairman of the Friends of Minehead Station, adds:

Readers Halt was preceded by the late John Richards selling magazines and books off a platform trolley before the late David Perry persuaded the FoMS committee to build Readers Halt. Due to its success, it has been extended once to provide a larger storage area and, during the last few days, sliding glass screens have been inserted in the outer two serving windows to provide better protection from east winds for those hardy souls who open the 'Halt' on all operational days. The money raised over the years has been ploughed back into the infrastructure of Minehead Station to make it a place of which to be proud.

AMAZON SMILE – A NEW WAY TO SUPPORT THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

Amazon has launched its new support mechanism for charitable organisations and the WSRA has signed up to be a part of it. Access your amazon account via the new <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> website and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net value of every purchase you make to the WSRA.

How to join in:

1. Visit <https://smile.amazon.co.uk>
2. Choose your charity – under 'pick your own charitable organisation' type in West Somerset Railway Association and click search
3. Select the WSRA when given the option
4. Shop via <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> You will notice that under the search box in your browser it says 'supporting: West Somerset Railway Association'
5. Donation of 0.5% of your net purchase price is made by Amazon to the WSRA.
6. Bookmark <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> for future purchases.

Future PTS courses

Information as 01/04/2018

When applying to join a course, please supply:

* A postal address to which material can be sent before the course, and a PTS card sent after the course.

* A contact phone number for small problems with test answers, and for sudden changes of date, time or venue.

* An e-mail address for minor pre-course information and less sudden changes of date, time or venue.

Courses can be arranged for groups or departments on other dates than those listed.

To book a course, please e-mail Rhiannon Powis at training@wsrail.net. If you have no e-mail, but not otherwise, please telephone Rhiannon on 07766 306 624 during office hours only.

General - All comers

Spaces	14 April 2018	Minehead Training Room	10:00
Spaces	21 April 2018	Ash Priors	10:00
Spaces	12 May 2018	Bishops Lydeard Station Farm	10:00
Spaces	30 June 2018	Bishops Lydeard Station Farm	10:00
Spaces	14 July 2018	Bishops Lydeard Station Farm	10:00
Spaces	25 August 2018	Bishops Lydeard Station Farm	10:00
Spaces	29 September 2018	Bishops Lydeard Station Farm	10:00

Course dates for Minehead SEC training room will be confirmed shortly.

Upcoming Events

Paw Patrol Sky and Rubble	2 nd June 2018
Classic Car Run	3 rd June 2018
Diesel Gala	8 th – 10 th June 2018
WSRA Rally	4 th - 5 th August 2018
Late Summer Weekend	1 st – 2 nd September 2018
The Gruffalo	8 th September 2018
Autumn Steam Gala	27 th – 30 th September 2018

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