



'ONLINE'



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY JANUARY 2019

APOLOGY FROM THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT.

Where has the time gone?

I would personally like to apologise for the lack of Online for the past couple of months. As you may be aware, we have been extremely busy and short staffed within the Commercial Department and our number one priority has been the festive season, this meant that Online, (although extremely important) was put on the back shelf with the promise of a come back in January 2019.

So here we are, Online is back, and it's not going anywhere!

With that done, let's move on and focus on what we have missed.

Samantha White
Marketing Officer

THE FESTIVE SEASON

The festive period on the railway was a massive success, a press release sent out mid-December highlighted that some Santa dates were so popular, more seats were added. Here is what we had to say at the time:

Visitors and local people have come out in droves to support the West Somerset Railway this December ahead of the railway's extended closed period from January until the end of March 2019.

The West Somerset Railway's Christmas programme of special events has proved to be so popular with locals and visitors alike that the railway has had to

add additional tickets to the Santa Express services in order to cope with the demand.

The Santa Express services from Bishops Lydeard allow passengers to travel behind a steam locomotive whilst Santa visits families at their seat on the train. These services offer a warm, cosy and traditional Christmas experience, and a memorable family outing.

Mark Hill, WSR Head of Commercial services, says: ***"We're very pleased that so many visitors are supporting the railway ahead of our extended closed period next year, and it shows the community spirit and local support for us that is alive and well in West Somerset."***

"We now have just a few seats remaining for Santa services and Carol Trains that are running this weekend, so I advise people to book their tickets fast in order to avoid disappointment."

"But we also have running days just after Christmas too from 27th December to 1st January, our Winter Steam Festival will be taking place on 29th and 30th December. We're hoping to welcome as many people as possible over those few days to end the season on a positive note."

WSR plc Chairman Jonathan Jones Pratt said: ***"The level of support that the railway has seen over this festive period has been fantastic, and we'd like to thank each and every person travelling on the railway for coming to see us, whether on our Santa Expresses from Bishops Lydeard; the Santa Specials from Minehead, or our Carols and Dunster By Candlelight services."***

"The Christmas Market held at the railway was a great success too and started off our festive period with just the right tone, our Christmas Market DMU service was completely sold out. The West Somerset Railway strives for excellence, and after the great support we have received recently from both the railway's own family and from our visitors, we are confident that 2019 will be a great year for us."

The West Somerset Railway PLC would like to thank all volunteers and staff for all the effort that was put into Christmas. Feedback from passengers has been mostly positive, the marquee was received very well by all offering shelter for all our services, adding to the experience. We are hopeful that this will be repeated again in the 2019 Festive period.

RUNNER BEATS THE TRAIN

On Thursday (27th December 2018) Joseph Rogers, author of the forthcoming title *Britain's Greatest Bridges*, became the first person recorded by the West Somerset Railway to run from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead via every station on the line. Joseph, who also works with the railway's Commercial Team, left Bishops Lydeard Station with the first service of the day at 1015 and arrived in Minehead at 1544, 3 minutes before the final arrival at Minehead.

Along the route totalling 24.1 miles, he received signatures from volunteers at all the stations to record his time and even stopped at the unmanned Doniford Halt. He then returned to Bishops Lydeard on the final departure from Minehead at 1615.

The route follows safe areas around the West Somerset Railway following public footpaths.

Such a challenge had been proposed on the official West Somerset Railway website for the year, with a sheet available to print off to record each station visit, but until now, no such form had ever been completed and handed back to the railway.

"Hopefully many more will come forward to attempt this in the future" Joseph explained. "It would be a great way to help raise money for some worthy causes, including the railway itself".



Joseph's challenge came at rather short notice, with only a few running days left before the end of the running season.

The West Somerset Railway now commences its Winter maintenance programme, ready for reopening on 30th March 2019.

Are you up for the challenge? Start your training in the closed period, and see whether you can "Beat the Train" this year. Please feel free to share your progress with us via social media!

EXCITEMENT ACROSS THE RAILWAY COMMUNITY AS ODNEY MANOR RETURNS TO STEAM

Former GWR 78xx Manor Class No. 7828 'Odney Manor' returned to steam on the West Somerset Railway just before Christmas 2018 after being out of action for the last two years.

The locomotive's first outings took place on Saturday 22 December on Santa services, and it also ran on subsequent days and on the first day of the Winter Steam Festival on 29th December.

'Odney Manor' has been a popular and reliable member of the West Somerset Railway's home-fleet of steam locos since the 1990's and is an ideal engine for the line.

The locomotive was removed from service earlier than expected in 2017 due to defective boiler stays having to be replaced, but it was also nearing the time where a full boiler and mechanical overhaul was required anyway.

During the time Odney Manor has been out of service, extensive work was carried out on the loco by the WSR's locomotive department staff in addition to them keeping the loco fleet running on a day to day basis.

Odney's boiler was sent to Riley Engineering where the repairs took place, and it was returned to the railway in August 2018 for reassembly by the locomotive department ready for a Christmas return.

WSR General Manager Paul Conibeare said: ***"We were delighted that Odney Manor returned to service in time for Christmas and New Year, and it was the star of the first day of our Winter Steam Festival before it was stopped to rectify a fault that had developed.***

"I would like to thank our locomotive department staff for all their hard work in returning Odney to health, and we are very fortunate to have such a highly skilled and dedicated team working on the railway.



“With Odney Manor now having the potential to run on the WSR for the next ten years, we are looking forward to the engine being at the core of our home fleet of steam locomotives for 2019 when we re-open at the end of March and the years beyond.”

THANK YOU TO THE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The West Somerset Railway would like to thank the Mechanical Engineering Department for all their hard work on Odney Manor. She is a testament to the hard work and determination of you all, and we truly appreciate what you have achieved. To the right you will see a photo of some of the team responsible for the work carried out. Well done all, she looks beautiful!



4110: A JOINT STATEMENT FROM WSR PLC AND WSRA.

The WSR plc and the WSRA would like to congratulate those who took the initiative to fundraise, and those who have supported the appeal to keep 4110 on the West Somerset Railway whilst providing the WSR plc with much needed funds.

The WSR plc has been talking to the group throughout the process and have considered carefully their proposal that ownership in the locomotive be transferred to a special interest company. It is the WSR plc's view that this object can be better achieved by the ownership being passed to the WSRA, the Railway's principal supporting charity. The WSRA have agreed to accept ownership and future stewardship of the locomotive. It will thereby join a core group of WS Railway owned locomotive on which WSR resources will be focused in coming years.

The advantages of the locomotive passing to a charity include relief from some VAT liabilities, the availability of gift aid on donations for UK tax payers and the protection of the locomotive as a charitable asset. Difficulties between the WSRA and WSR plc are in the past, and the working relationship between the two bodies is excellent. The WSRA already owns GWR Prairie 4561 (undergoing restoration) and Manor Class 7821 'Ditcheat Manor' on display in Swindon Designer Outlet while awaiting its turn in the restoration queue. It is now WSRA policy that assets such as these locomotives can only be sold after a full vote of the members, and so 4110 will be well protected for future use on the West Somerset Railway.

The structures and organisations of the West Somerset Railway are already overly complex and following this route avoids the creation of yet another. Existing pledges and further donations for the purchase of the locomotive should be sent to the West Somerset Railway Association, The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, TA4 3BX or to the Association's bank account with Lloyds: Sort code: 30-97-00 Account number: 07005086 Reference: 4110



Donations will be held as restricted funds. Once the purchase price of £100,000 is achieved the locomotive will be transferred, and any surplus put to the Locomotive Restoration Fund in which 4110 already sits. In the unlikely event the target is not reached the money will be returned to donors.

To ensure that those who are contributing to the locomotive do not lose touch with it, anyone contributing £100 or more will be offered membership of the WSRA for the coming year, which normally costs £25.

Jonathan Jones-Pratt, Chairman WSR plc Paul Whitehouse, Chairman, WSRA

INVITATION TO SHAREHOLDERS, VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

To: all WSR plc Shareholders, Volunteers & Staff

In light of significant events affecting the West Somerset Railway, I would like to invite you to attend an important internal briefing meeting, open to WSR shareholders, volunteers and staff on Saturday 2nd February 2019 at 11am at Oake Manor Golf Club, Oake, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 1BA.

The private meeting will be hosted by the PLC Board including myself. As you would expect, it will not be open to the press or the public.

There will be a series of presentations highlighting where we are going, and what has been done so far. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask any questions at the end of the meeting. Some of our messages will be more detailed to those outlined at the well-attended and successful staff briefing meeting we held on Saturday 24th November 2018 in Watchet.

Our purpose is simple: we will discuss how your railway is facing up to the considerable challenges of funding and safely running England's longest heritage steam railway in an ever more regulated environment, and an increasingly volatile tourism market. We will need your help to achieve this.

We will be discussing what work has been done already to get us back on track; what future work is needed and planned; what work can be deferred for our future non-operating periods; and, above all, how we can fund it all.

Some of the decisions we face are difficult ones in order to cut our costs, increase our revenues and rationalise our assets, and so cannot be easily resolved.

If you would like to attend the meeting, please register your attendance as soon as possible with Kerry Noble on 01643 700408 or kerry.noble@wsrail.net.

Yours Sincerely Jonathan Jones-Pratt Chairman.

UPCOMING RAILWAY EVENTS.

The West Somerset Railway 2019 timetable has been released with many tickets already on the website for purchase. For more information on each event please visit our website.

CHILDRENS EVENTS

Easter Trail 6th – 22nd April 2019

Halloween Trail - 19th October – 3rd November

Paw Patrol's Chase and Marshall – 19th & 20th April 2019

Peter Rabbit – 26th July 2019

PJ Masks – 26th October 2019

Dunster Castle Express – Most Wednesday and Saturdays from April until November.

HISTORICAL EVENTS

Classic Car Run – 2nd June 2019

WSRA Steam and Vintage Vehicle Rally 3rd- 4th August 2019

West Somerset 1940s Weekend – 14th & 15th September 2019

ENTHUSIAST GALAS:

West Somerset Railway 40th Anniversary Weekend – 8th & 9th June 2019

Diesel Gala – 20th – 22nd June 2019

Mixed Traction Day – 23rd June 2019

Autumn Steam Gala – 3rd – 6th October 2019

Winter Steam Festival – 29th & 30th December 2019

CATERING EVENTS:

Steam and Cream – 9th, 16th April, 7th, 20th May, 14th, 28th June, 12th, 19th July, 6th & 20th September, 1st, 15th October 2019.

Fish and Chip Special – 17th May, 19th July & 12 October 2019.

Cheese and Cider Special – 14th, 28th June, 12th July, 6th, 20th September 2019.

Murder Mystery Evening –

20th July - Fish and Chips – A Holiday to Die For

21st September - Fish and Chips - Away Day to Murder

19th October - QB - I Die with My Little Spy

30th November - QB - Christmas to the sound of Slay Bells

QUANTOCK BELLE.

Sunday Lunch Services:

31st March 2019

14th and 21st April 2019

12th, 26th May 2019

16th June 2019

14th July 2019

18th August 2019

1st September 2019

Midweek Summer Lunches:

3rd, 17th & 31st July 2019

14th August 2019

Summer Saturday Evening Dinner:

6th & 20th July 2019,

10th & 24th August 2019.

HERITAGE RAILWAY CARDS 2019-20

Applications may now be made for the HRA cards.

A member of staff or a registered volunteer on the WSR, qualifies for the scheme which offers free or reduced rate travel on the majority of the Heritage Railways, and various Narrow Gauge and Minor Railways, in the British Isles. Further information via email ra.green@talktalk.net

Please make anyone who does not see "Online" aware of the Card scheme.
Hard copies of this form are available from the Information Office at Minehead.

PLEASE NOTE the following :

- 1 WSR does NOT have reciprocal travel arrangements with any other Heritage Railways.
- 2 Cards are valid from **1st March 2019 to 29th February 2020** – a fixed 12 month period, NOT for 12 months from the date of application.
- 3 Cards cost £30 and are valid for the **Holder (alone) or with one other person** if travelling together.
- 4 Some of the participating Heritage Railways (especially the larger ones) make a charge for the use of the cards which may be up to 50% of the normal fare and there are usually restrictions on the use of cards for Special Events Days.
A full list of participating Railways will be provided with the card.
- 5 **IMPORTANT - Please note the arrangements for payment.**

HOW to APPLY - Early application is requested and encouraged !

Allow at least four weeks for processing – initially cards will not be sent until mid-February.

Complete the form below and send it to Robert Green with cheque and S.A.E.

by post to 1 Paganel Way, Minehead, TA24 5HA

OR

Leave it in my marked pigeon-hole in the Information Office at Minehead Station.

A stamped addressed envelope **must be enclosed** for the return of the card.

Please note that there is no facility for the collection of cards from Minehead Station unless you have a pigeon-hole there in which case please mark envelope accordingly.

If you intend to apply for a card, you are urged to apply soon as later applications may take longer to process. (Robert Green)

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HERITAGE RAILWAY CARDS 2019-20

Send this completed form to - Robert Green, 1 Paganel Way, Minehead, TA24 5HA

I am a Member of Staff or a Registered Volunteer on the West Somerset Railway.

I apply for a Heritage Railway Association Inter-Rail Card and **enclose** :

- my **cheque for £30** payable **West Somerset Railway Plc - if sent before 28th February**
OR Heritage Railway Association - if sent on/after 1st March
- a **stamped self-addressed envelope.**

NAME (including forename for the card please)

ADDRESS

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STAFF ID NUMBER.....DEPARTMENT.....DATE

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER (just in case !)