



'ONLINE'



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY SEPTEMBER 2018

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY AND ASSOCIATED
ORGANISATIONS.

THANK YOU

To everyone who has worked on the Railway during the August period when we have run an intensive timetable on a daily basis, as well as coping with excursion traffic from the mainline network and various specials including dining trains and attachments of the Hawksworth Saloon to special trains. There have "tight spots" for the hard-working roster clerks but the spirit of co-operation and helping each other has meant that we have run the advertised services and provided a good day out for the travelling public. And with many of the British public deciding during the long hot spell to holiday at home this year we have been busy.

NEW VOLUNTEERS

However there is no denying that we need more willing hands in all areas of the Railway. Alan Smithers is now Acting Stationmaster at Minehead and we welcome Alan to that key role but he has places and roles to fill. That is a tale that can be repeated in many areas. We have some good looking new Volunteer Recruitment leaflets available but we have to find ways of getting them into the public view and to possibly interested groups. So if you have contacts with a youth group or a U3A, a WI or Rotary Club please ask Minehead for a supply of them. They may also be profitably placed in libraries or local shops. One thing is certain. Publicity materials in storage are dead paper and represent wasted money. The good news is that the work already done is bearing fruit with 5/6 expressions of interest in volunteering coming in each week.

THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE RESTORATION FUND

The Trustees of the WSRA have agreed a target of the 2021 Spring Steam Gala for the return to working life of GWR "Small Prairie" 4561 with the first intended milestone being to have the locomotive on its wheels by June 2019 and to have the boiler work completed and steam tested in 2020. However this is not going to happen without more volunteer assistance and help, not only working on the engine in the Restoration shed at Williton but also with publicity and fundraising. And donations will also be critical. Much more information can be found via the West Somerset Railway Association webpage. Donations to the Locomotive Fund by cheque can be sent to WSRA, The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, TA4 3BX.

THE MONTH AHEAD

We have daily train operations over the line throughout the month and having begun with the Late Summer Weekend on the first weekend we have a Family Day featuring appearances by the Gruffalo on September 8th. Then on the 15th and 16th we stage our first 1940's Weekend since 1994. This has events and things to see and do at most locations along the line and there has been a lot of interest in the event, so we are hoping for a good attendance. Saturday evening sees a Big Band Dance at Minehead station and some extra help will be welcome on Sunday morning to tidy up after this. Once again it should be noted that those who wish to dress up in Axis forces uniforms will not be welcome and will be asked to leave.

DIESEL NEWS FROM WILLITON

Some updates below this week on the various locomotive projects.

D1010: The loco is in the South yard and is now undergoing investigation for the "B" end transmission issue.

D1661: Still residing in WN shed on No 3 road, undergoing roof repairs. We now have a path forward for restoration of the cooler group louvres.

D6566: On No 1 road, undergoing attention to the electrical issue that caused it to be replaced by D9526 on the Diesel Driver Experience Course a few weeks ago. A new battery box is being manufactured by WS Restorations and should be available imminently. The aim is to get the loco back in service as quickly as possible to support the Railway.

D6575: Currently supporting the Railway operating trains.

D7017: The loco has returned to the Railway after the successful GWR Diesel Gala. During August the loco worked some Saturday diesel diagrams and an evening "Quantock Belle".

D7018: Ongoing work continues to get her completed.

D9518: Now in the Swindon shed, receiving attention from the WS Restoration team.

D9526: All good after some recent runs including providing banking support to a special several weeks ago.

(Andy Royal)

THE AUTUMN STEAM GALA:- CROSS COUNTRY TRAINS

This will be taking place between September 27th & 30th and we hope that it will continue the 2018 success story for enthusiast events. One more guest engine is being sought by the Gala Planning Team but various details of what is planned follow below.

THE LOCOMOTIVES

BRITISH RAILWAYS 5MT 4-6-0 73082 "CAMELOT"

The British Railways 5MT class was the last in a series of developments of a mixed traffic "family" which began with the "Halls" of the Great Western Railway in the 1920's. When William Stanier moved from Swindon to become Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London Midland and Scottish his "Black 5" class was a variation on the theme and so successful that over 800 were constructed. The BR 5MT's evolved from the "Black 5" and 172 were built, although their working lives were cut short by dieselisation in the 1960's. The majority were unnamed but 73082 is one built for the Southern Region which were given names previously carried by "King Arthur" class locomotives. The BR 5MT's could be seen all over Britain and were regular performers on the Manchester – Bournemouth "Pines Express" on the section of its journey between Bath and the south coast.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY "MODIFIED HALL" 4-6-0 6960 "RAVENINGHAM HALL"

The "Modified Halls" were a 1944 adaptation of the original "Halls" although the details of the modifications take some careful viewing to spot and in practice the original and modified versions worked interchangeably until the end of the steam

era. All of both classes carried names of stately homes but having to find 330 different ones meant that many of the commemorated houses were found well outside GWR territory. Raveningham Hall is situated in Norfolk whilst its locomotive namesake was built at Swindon in 1944.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY "MANOR" CLASS 4-6-0 7820 "DINMORE MANOR" & 7822 "FOXCOTE MANOR"

Introduced in 1938 the "Manors" were the smallest of the GWR mixed traffic 4-6-0's intended for work on the more lightly constructed main lines. There was an original batch built in 1938 and 7820 and 7822 date from further construction carried out at Swindon by British Railways in 1950. The "Manors" are particularly associated with the network of lines in Mid Wales but their cross country work included the now-closed Midland and South Western Junction route between Cheltenham and Andover or between Reading and Redhill. A further member of the 1950 batch 7828 "Odney Manor" is approaching the completion of a heavy overhaul at Minehead and may be in light steam at the Gala. It is due to feature in the Winter Steam Festival.

BRITISH RAILWAYS REBUILT BULLEID LIGHT PACIFIC 4-6-2 34052 "LORD DOWDING" (temporarily renamed and renumbered from 34046 "BRAUNTON")

Oliver Bulleid was one of the most original thinkers in 20th Century locomotive design and the locomotives that appeared during his time as Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Southern Railway incorporated many revolutionary ideas. In day to day service the performance of his express locomotives could be exceptionally good but too often matters could be erratic and in the 1950's the Southern Region of BR began to rebuild them along orthodox lines in which form they remained strong and fast machines. (For much more about the story see "The Book of the Bulleid Pacifics" by Richard Derry, published by Irwell Press). Regular duties for the engines included the daily service between Brighton and Plymouth and over the Somerset and Dorset. 34046 has assumed the identity of scrapped classmate 34052 which takes its name from Sir Hugh Dowding who was the head of Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain.

LONDON MIDLAND AND SCOTTISH RAILWAY 2MT 2-6-2T 41312

With a view to replacing a variety of ageing locomotives working on the secondary and branchline duties of the LMS George Ivatt designed a lightweight tender locomotive and a tank engine variant. 41312 is one of the latter. Known as "Mickey Mouse" and "Mickey Mouse Tanks" the 2MT's proved remarkably strong for their comparatively small size and worked on lines a considerable way from the LMS network. They could be found in North Devon and Cornwall (sometimes appearing at Taunton via the line from Barnstaple) and also on the Somerset and

Dorset. The design tradition of light 2-6-2 tank engines began with the 45xx class of the GWR, one of which 4561 is being restored at Williton. The work is being funded by the West Somerset Railway Association Locomotive Restoration Fund.

UNITED STATES ARMY TRANSPORT CORPS S160 2-8-0 6046

Now here is a type of locomotive that did not head cross country passenger trains. The S160's were built in large numbers by American locomotive companies to work freight trains in Britain and Europe during the Second World War. After the war was over many stayed on to replace locomotives lost during the conflict and 6046 is one that saw service in Belgium and Hungary.

SOMERSET AND DORSET 7F 2-8-0 53808

The 7F's were built in two batches (1914 and 1925) for working mineral and heavy freight trains on the steeply graded sections of the Somerset and Dorset Railway line. However during the 1950's they were pressed into passenger service on holiday trains over the route including one classic cross country trip that ran from Exmouth to Cleethorpes via Templecombe, Bath and Birmingham on Saturdays in the summer.

ANDREW BARCLAY 0-4-0ST 1219 "CALEDONIA WORKS"

The Kilmarnock workshops of Andrew Barclay Ltd produced hundreds of tank engines for industrial shunting duties. 1219 is an example of the smallest standard gauge types and during the Gala will be shunting in the yard at Washford station.

The West Somerset Railway would like to thank all of the locomotive owners and their various home railways for making their engines available to us.

MUSEUMS AND WORKSHOPS

There are three railway museums along the route of the West Somerset. The Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard and the Museum in the down platform building at Blue Anchor are part of the work of the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust and are mainly devoted to exhibits from the Great Western Railway and the Western Region of British Railways. Washford station is home to the Museum of the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust.

The workshops of West Somerset Restoration at Williton and the WSR Locomotive Dept. at Minehead are not normally open to the public but will welcome visitors on the Saturday and Sunday of the Gala. Locomotives under restoration that can be seen at the workshops include GWR Small Prairie 4561 and 56xx Class 0-6-2T 6695 at Williton and GWR-designed "Mogul" 9351 and "King" Class 6024 "King Edward I", plus LMS 4F 44422 at Minehead The first trio

and the 4F will all work on the WSR when overhauls are complete. As will "Large Prairie" 4110 which is parked by the seafront at Minehead in unrestored condition.

The Diesel and Electric Preservation Group at Williton take care of a diverse fleet of first generation BR diesels dating from the 1960's and most of which once worked cross country trains. Their Depot and Heritage Centre will be open on Saturday and Sunday.

MODEL RAILWAYS

The 4 mm scale model on the upper floor of the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard should be in action on all four days of the Gala and in the next door building the Taunton Model Railway Group will welcome visitors on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Watchet station will have a model railway sale of donated items on Saturday.

FOOD AND DRINK

Most trains will have a licensed buffet car in their formation and the "Quantock Belle" dining car set will be part of the make-up of selected services during the Gala. Breakfast on the "Belle" is always popular and it is necessary to pre-book to make certain of a seat via www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk or 01643 704996. There are cafes at Bishops Lydeard, Williton and Minehead stations (the one at Minehead is licensed) and home-made refreshments can be sampled at Crowcombe Heathfield, Stogumber and Blue Anchor. Sweets, crisps and drinks can be purchased at all other stations except Doniford. Adjacent to Bishops Lydeard Quantock Brewery will welcome visitors.

THE HAWKSWORTH SALOON

Built at Swindon whilst F.W. Hawksworth was Chief Mechanical Engineer of the GWR this vehicle was used for inspection work by railway management and was fitted out with comfortable seating and tables which could be used for paperwork or eating. During the Gala it will be attached to a number of trains to offer enhanced views of the event and the countryside to passengers. A supplementary fare will be payable to the travelling ticket inspector on the day of travel. Outside of Gala events it can be hired for special occasions. Contact the Commercial Department at Minehead Station for more information.

BOOK SIGNINGS

On the Saturday Chris Austin will be at the station shop in Minehead signing copies of "Holding the Line", a detailed but highly readable account of the days of the period between the 1960's and 80's when various governments sought to close most of the national railway network. On the same date Richard Derry will

be at Bishops Lydeard shop signing copies of the books he has authored and co-authored for Irwell Press. Readers interested in how Richard researches locomotive histories can gain some insight into the many hours of work involved.

STATION NEWS

The 2019 "Best Kept Station Award" was won by Blue Anchor. Station representatives Gill and Ivor Baulch were presented with the engraved trophy, a certificate and a cheque for £100 to be spent on the station. Runners up were Williton and Crowcombe Heathfield. Judging was by an independent judge who spent half an hour at each station on a selected date, looked at everything and asked lots of questions. Meanwhile at Williton a Memorial Fund has been established to mark the service of volunteer Steve Kirby with the intention of erecting two lights at the station.

SEPTEMBER DISCOUNTS AT BISHOPS LYDEARD SHOP

For the month of September, Bishops Lydeard Station Shop is offering 15% off the list price of all locomotives currently in stock except where items are already marked with a 'Reduced' ticket. The offer of 20% off the price of three or more coaches and/or wagons will also continue throughout the month.

(Kate Beard)

MINEHEAD STATION PLANNING GROUP

The latest newsletter from Friends of Minehead Station (FoMS) reveals the formation of the Minehead Station Planning Group. Representatives from the engine shed, operations, commercial and FoMS will meet under the chairmanship of FoMS chairman, Martyn Snell, and will plan ahead to improve facilities for visitors and staff to the line's largest station. A good start has been made with a FoMS-sponsored professional survey on three particular parcels of land; the newsletter provides more details and it is clear these are indeed priority areas for improvement. Meanwhile, FoMS have again shown commitment to the local and visiting community:

The experiment with keeping our toilets open seven days a week even when trains are not running has proved very successful and has made our station a much more welcoming place. To help offset the cost of additional cleaning, it was decided to put well signed donation boxes in the toilets and it has been surprising how much has been given by those 'using the facilities'. Whilst not covering the cost of cleaning, it has certainly helped.

HERITAGE CARRIAGES PROJECT

At the recent meeting of the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust the project was discussed.

Chris Austin apologised that he had not been able to produce a paper on the wider heritage carriage project in time for the meeting. He would circulate proposals separately for discussion. Ian Coleby raised the question of whether the current policy of seeking to restore all 10 coaches in the current climate was both realistic and achievable. He suggested that the Trust should adopt an intermediate strategic position of seeking to create an agreed set as a more sustainable objective for existing volunteers and supporters. It was agreed that they should be further initial discussion between Chris Austin and Ian Coleby. In the meantime, the Board supported the principles around formation of the Carriage Project Group of volunteers which will include:

- Outline objectives and timescales
- Project management
- proposals for financial delegation
- requirement for project plan Chris Austin to include in his forthcoming paper

FUNDING SUPPORT FOR STATIONS AND OTHER SMALL GROUP PROJECTS

Hopefully everyone is aware that the WSRA supports stations and other small groups with heritage projects to help maintain the appeal and authenticity of our railway. The good news is that there is still scope for new projects for this year and we'd love to help if we can. So, if your group has a heritage project that you'd like some funding help with, why not approach the WSRA? So far this year we have helped with tarpaulins for wagons, materials for restoring a 1942 MoD Brake Van, lever leads for Williton Signal box, seating for Stogumber station and materials for the first phase of rebuilding the cattle dock at Stogumber. How can we help with your heritage project?

If anyone would like a chat or to run an idea past me please feel free to give me a call on 01823 433856. My direct line is 01823 431997, but there is no voicemail facility on that line.

Full details of funding guidelines and application forms can be found at <https://www.wsra.org.uk/stationsgroups/>

Jacquie Green

WSRA General Manager

PETER BARNFIELD

Many people on the Railway will have been saddened by the news of the death of Peter Barnfield. Peter and his wife Ginny were regular volunteers on the Railway during the dark days of the early 1980's and worked hard towards

turning matters around, managing to do this with a cheerful disposition. For many years Peter also made the printing plates for the Edmondson ticket machine at Dunster, contributing to that useful income stream for the WSR. Another role he fulfilled was editor of the "Journal". Peter was also a writer of enjoyable books based on his railway travels and a talented photographer. But perhaps his outstanding talent was as an artist, particularly when using pencils to produce railway studies and his "Whimseyrail" drawings, as portrayed on a lovely range of cards, conveyed a love of the narrow gauge and eccentricity.

SOMERSET OPEN STUDIOS 2018 FROM THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

15- 30 SEPTEMBER

Between 15- 30 September, artists are opening their studios and working spaces to the public for Somerset Open Studios. Many of the studio venues in West Somerset are readily accessible on foot from West Somerset Railway stations and the event offers the opportunity to experience a day out on the railway in a new way. Guided by directions in the Open Studios guide booklet and looking out for the distinctive bright yellow signs you can discover artists in all sorts of unexpected locations and buildings, from rural barns to garden sheds to quayside shipping containers. The event allows a rare opportunity to meet and talk to the artists and makers in their workplaces and learn first-hand about their creative processes. And, of course, there is the option to buy or commission work direct, at best prices, or just to pick up a souvenir card or postcard.

Easiest to reach from the train are venues in Minehead, Blue Anchor and Watchet. Within Minehead there are five venues to visit. Leo Davey, a prize-winning painter, has a wide choice of beautiful work, including recent paintings of the SW coast path, in his studio gallery off Friday Street. Debbie McCarty (jewellery) and Gary Mills (textiles) are clustered nearby. A short walk away, towards North Hill, Hilary Adair RE is showing paintings and fine art prints and a little way out of the town centre, Joanne Horrobin shows enameled copper vessels and sculptures.

Along the line, just a couple of hundred yards up from Blue Anchor Station, Peggy Lock is showing exquisitely detailed linocuts and screenprints based on nature and still life. A longer walk from Washford Station, passing Cleeve Abbey, will take you to Jane Hood (painting), next to the White Horse Inn.

Watchet offers the largest cluster of venues on the art weeks trail, 10 artists over 6 venues. Studios are dotted around the town, several in artists' houses, for example Jenny Barron's (painting), up the hill from the station towards St Decuman's Church and Well, or Emma Bradshaw, Jan Martin and Jill Newton (paintings and prints) all up the coast road past West Beach. On the harbourside, just at the seaward end of the station platform, Contains Art presents four artists' studios in converted shipping containers and an exciting, colourful installation by Georgina Towler extending into the welcoming courtyard. In addition to its open

studios Watchet also offers two gallery exhibitions during the art weeks fortnight, Lydia Halcrow's 'Mapping Place' at Contains Art and a retrospective of the artist John Wealthy, at The Lynda Cotton Gallery in Swain Street, with Alison Jacobs' Mayfly Studio close by.

For those up for a longer walk or cycle (planning and a map needed), it is possible to reach some of the more rural venues, along the edge of the Quantocks, from Stogumber and Crowcombe Heathfield stations. Barry Hibbert is showing paintings in Stogumber, there are venues in Crowcombe and Bicknoller villages and Cecilia Leete's jewellery workshop is at Upcott Farm. A highlight of the trail is Andrea Oke's residency project 'Shadowland' at Halsway Manor, the National Centre for Folk Arts (NB 27 – 30 Sept only).

Take care to check artists' open days and hours in the 2018 Open Studios Guide, which gives details of all venues and can be found in Tourist Information points, libraries, museums, galleries and other cultural centres as well as cafes, bookshops and some of the WSR station waiting rooms. To receive a copy by post please email artweeks@somersetartworks.org.uk or you can browse an online version at somersetartworks.org.uk.

IS IT TOO EARLY TO MENTION CHRISTMAS?

The Christmas services for the West Somerset Railway are now on sale. Our Christmas programme includes, Dunster By Candlelight, Santa Expresses and Santa Specials, Quantock Belle Christmas Lunches, Carol Trains, Winter Steam Festival, Hot Chocolate and Cookie Specials, Irish Cream and Mince Pie Specials.

For more information on the above festive experiences visit www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

Autumn Steam Gala	27 th – 30 th September
Dunster Castle Express	Wednesday and Saturdays
Steam and Cream	21 st September
Fish and Chips	12 th October
Murder Mystery	20 th October & 1 st December
St Margarets Hospice Cream Tea	21 st October
October Half Term Witches and Wizards Trail.	20 th October – 4 th November
Dunster By Candlelight	7 th & 8 th December
Santa Express & Specials	Various Dates throughout December
Winter Steam Festival	29 th & 30 th December