

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST



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Gauge Junction, the WSSRT model railway (Alan Meade)

Feedback on any of the reports would be most welcome.

The next Newsletter (No 12) is planned for May/June 2019. Relevant submissions are invited, any time between now and the end of April beginning of May 2019.

Statement from the West Somerset Railway PLC Board

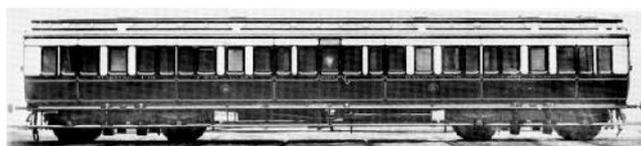
Staff and volunteers will be aware that the railway recently had an inspection visit from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and it is planned that there will be a follow-up visit in March next year.

The Board have taken the view that the railway should close completely from 2nd January until 1st April next year. This will mean that the Spring Gala and the proposed ACE Event will now not take place. There will also be no trains during the spring (February) half terms in order to give infrastructure teams additional time to undertake maintenance and also to allow paid and volunteer staff to focus on qualifications and effective record keeping.

The WSR PLC board will be in touch with more detailed information as it becomes available.

Gauge Museum News

Work on the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard and Gauge Junction, the model railway will continue throughout February and into March whilst we are making some internal alterations to the museum as well



as carrying out extensive remedial work on the model railway.

The Museum will be closed to visitors from January 2nd 2019 and will re-open on March 30th 2019 after a spring clean and some display changes as well as the work described below on the model railway.

For the latest information please visit the WSSRT Web site <http://www.wssrt.co.uk/> the Trust Facebook page or e-mail the Trust on info@wssrt.co.uk

(WSSRT Board of Trustees)

WSSRT Board of Trustees Meetings from April to November 2018

Copies of the full minutes of Board meetings and the Annual General meetings are available from the WSSRT Web site <http://www.wssrt.co.uk> If you are unable to access the WSSRT Web site either e-mail via info@wssrt.co.uk or write to:

West Somerset Steam Railway Trust
The Railway Station, Station Road
Bishops Lydeard, Somerset, TA4 3BX

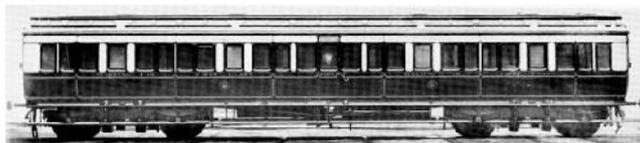
Trustee Changes

Chris Bolt has now kindly completed his role as WSSRT Treasurer and we have welcomed Don Fraser to the Board of Trustees as his replacement and as the new Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

Steve Williams has also taken on the role of Company Secretary and Heritage Lottery Fund Project Lead.

The WSSRT Board of Trustees is very pleased that Steve and Don have taken up these appointments and very much look forward to us all working together.

(WSSRT Board of Trustees)



Membership Details

Can members who change home or change their e-mail address please inform the Membership Secretary in order they can continue to receive Trust Newsletters and other information relating to the Trust. Changes can either be e-mailed to info@wssrt.co.uk or by post to The Railway Station, Station Road, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, Somerset. TA4 3BX.

2017-18 Financial Results

The Trusts Financial Year ends on 30th September and the draft accounts for the year ending 30th September 2018 were approved by the Board and sent to Monahans (who are the Independent Examiner for the accounts – in effect a simple form of audit) in November.

The main highlights were:

Income £39,338 (206-17 £20,829) This included £20,000 from the successful Heritage Lottery Fund Grant.

Net income was £27,351 (2016-17 £13,692). Income from Legacies was £105 (2016-17 £4,925).

Gift Aid Income was £3,507(2016-17£2,909).

Capital Expenditure was £10,051 (2016-17 £6,231), most of this was on BCK 6705 which is nearing completion.

Net Current Assets were £73,406 (2016-17 £56,106) which is mainly Cash, including the £20,000 HLF Grant. This will be used mainly to fund the recently appointed Learning Officer and improvements to our Museums. Our main regular sources of income are from memberships and Voluntary Donations in the Museums.

(Don Fraser WSSRT Treasurer)

Annual General Meeting

Can Members please note that the 2019 AGM will be held on Saturday 23rd March at 2 PM in the Meeting Room at Bishops Lydeard Station. The agenda and papers will be sent out in January and I would be grateful if you could put this in your diaries.

Business Plan Update

The Board is currently in the process of updating the three-year Business Plan and a copy of the revised Plan will be circulated to Members and other stakeholders in the next few weeks. The updated document will be included as part of the AGM pack for discussion.

HLF Project-Gauge Museum

The Project is making good progress against the project plan and objectives agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund. In particular, we have just appointed the Learning Officer. Her name is Helen Anson. Helen has a background in primary school teaching together with experience in the museum and heritage sectors. She starts on 10th December with a fixed term contract for two years. Helen will be getting around the Trust volunteers and the rest of the railway fairly quickly following her appointment and will be focusing on putting together the learning offer to take out to schools and colleges, community groups and other relevant bodies. I hope you will give Helen a warm welcome to the Trust.

On 13th December we interviewed for the Design and Interpretation consultants who will lead the work on improving and developing the Gauge Museum. We have had two submissions and are hopeful that we will be able to make an appointment to this second crucial strand of the HLF Project.

Taking forward other aspects of the project plan in the next phase of work will include further emphasis on volunteer recruitment, developing/updating our conservation and

archiving policies and raising the visibility of the Trust through our Marketing Plan for the Project.

Fundraising Plan

In conjunction with the HLF Project, the Trust Board has approved a new Fundraising Plan which encompasses both ideas for raising revenue within the railway for the Trust and pursuing income generation from external sources.

Volunteer Induction Pack

The Trust Board has agreed a new approach to recruiting and inducting volunteers and this work will be undertaken in conjunction with the PLC.

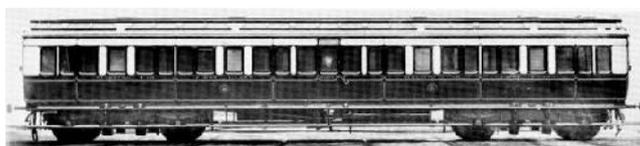
Blue Anchor Museum

The Trust would like to appoint a new Curator to the Blue Anchor Museum. We now have appointed the Learning Officer for the Trust and the Curator at both Bishops Lydeard and Blue Anchor will be important to supporting the Learning Officer in this new role.

(Steve Williams, Company Secretary and HLF Project Lead)

Volunteers Invited to Join the Museum Teams at Bishops Lydeard and the Blue Anchor Museum.

It is the intention of the Trust to open and staff both the railways Museums every Sunday, Bank Holiday and Gala day from 01 April to the last running day in November. The Gauge Museum will be open but not staffed on all running days and Gauge Junction, the museum model railway, will be open for as many days as volunteers can be found. If you are interested in helping at Bishops Lydeard, please contact Geoff Evens on 07742 655 339 or email info@wssrt.co.uk for further information.



In addition, if you have a spare Sunday a Month the Trust is looking for a few extra volunteers at its Blue Anchor Museum to open up and look after the Museum on a Sunday or Bank Holiday next year between April and November. It is not onerous, and training will be given. The commitment is about one Sunday a month.

Opening hours are normally between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm (depending on the number of visitors around).

If anyone is interested in helping at Blue Anchor, please contact David Baker on davidbaker687@btinternet.com or 07776 388 744.

(Geoff Evens and David Baker)

Specialist Library at Bishops Lydeard

A fine collection of books on the Great Western and on Brunel has been assembled in the Gauge Museum from the collection of Dr Anthony Dickens, a WSR supporter from Bristol who died earlier this year. These are part of a generous gift by Sandi Stuckey, Dr Dickens daughter and include a complete set of the many books by Somerset railway author Colin Maggs along with an extensive collection about Brunel. There is also a fine collection of GWR books from the 1920s and 1930s, including GWR tourist publications and a first edition *History of the Great Western Railway* by E.T. MacDermott. Around 400 books are now collected in the Gauge Museum office and will be made available to *bona fide* students for reference next year. To enable this to happen, we are looking for a volunteer to catalogue the books and put them on a database, so do contact Geoff Evens by e-mailing info@wssrt.co.uk or telephoning 07742 655 339 if you would like to help with this. Further donations of books on these specialist subjects would be welcome, particularly GWR publications.

Outreach

This year, the Trust has extended its reach well beyond the museums at Bishops Lydeard and Blue Anchor, and beyond the yard at Williton to take our work out to a wider audience.

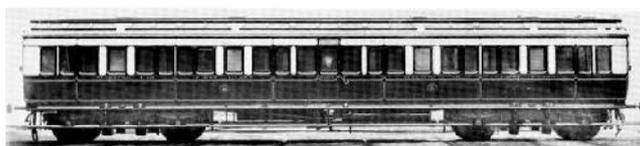
In July, the Trust had a stand at Dunkirk House as part of their commemoration event for the end of the First World War. The dementia friendly display featured memories invoked by the railway, and a display on ambulance trains and the work of the trust, particularly on restoring TK 3639.



WSSRT Display at Dunkirk House

In August, both the Sleeping Car and coach BCK 6705 were taken to Norton Fitzwarren and opened for inspection as part of the Association's excellent rally. This year, for the first time, access could be provided to both coaches from the platform at Norton's station and this worked well. Indeed, along with the Hawksworth saloon, and the S&D Trusts' coaches, the railway put on a good display of heritage carriages for the first time.

In early October, Geoff Evens along with Robin Wichard, from the Living History Mobile Museum, hosted a visit by Norton Fitzwarren Primary School to the Gauge Museum as part of a visit to the railway which included a trip on the train and time with our colleagues at the S&D Trust at Washford as well. Some useful points were noted for when this becomes a regular occurrence next year.



Christmas and New Year

For the first time, both Gauge Museum and Gauge Junction are being staffed for the Santa Specials from BL and for the Winter Stream Festival on the 29th and 30th December.

The railway closes from January 2nd to the 30th March and during this period, we shall be preparing for the 2019 season. Work will continue on BCK 6705 to ensure its completion by June, and both museums will be given a spring clean. At the Gauge Museum, a heavy clean will take place, along with some improvement to the displays and interpretation. The main changes of the HLF project though will be during the winter 2019/20 closed period. Track renewal on the model railway will be undertaken over the closed period.

Also, during the winter period, an overhaul of safety arrangements will take place, to meet the requirements of the railway's Safety Management System and to ensure that routine tasks are properly risk assessed.

We need to be ready for a press visit at the end of March, prior to re-opening. Details of working parties will be advertised on the Trust Website, Facebook page and circulated by e-mail. Help would be welcomed for the safety management improvements and we will need to increase the number of our museum guides at Bishops Lydeard and at Blue Anchor, while we can always do with additional volunteers to help with carriage restoration. Please contact Chris Austin by e-mail on austinca2@googlemail.com if you are interested in any of these areas.

(Chris Austin)

Progress with the Heritage Carriage Project by Claire Sheppy

Recently my role with the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust seems to have evolved into one of publicity. I would imagine that many members of the Trust are also members

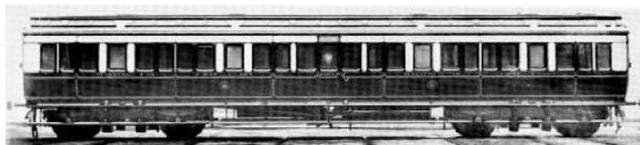
of the West Somerset Railway Association and will have seen my various articles concerning the heritage carriages fleet in the last few issues of the journal.

For those who may not have, here is a summary of the story so far as published in the journals. In the winter 2017 journal (159) I started off the series by explaining how I go about stewarding BCK 7538. That article was followed by TK 3639 in the Spring 2018 journal (160) and in the summer 2018 journal (161) I dealt with BCK 6705, our coach which is furthest forward with regard to restoration. It was then followed in the Autumn Journal (162) by TK 4546, one of our two bow ended corridor coaches.

This series will be followed in due course by the rest of the coaches which we have awaiting restoration.

On July 2, having liaised with him on and off in the previous months, I arranged to meet up with Simon Parkin of BBC Somerset, travelling down on the train with him from Bishops Lydeard to Williton in order to show him around the work that we are currently carrying out on the coaches, showing him three coaches, namely the yet to be started BCK 7538, the very nearly complete BCK 6705 and the Sleeping Car 9038, which vehicle, as with so many people, impressed him greatly. My resulting interview with him was broadcast on Wednesday 8th August 2018. This particular interview was one of several that Simon recorded on the afternoon of Monday 2nd July, and which were broadcast as a series dealing with different aspects of life as a volunteer on the West Somerset Railway on Monday 6th August, Tuesday 7th August, Wednesday 8th August, Thursday 9th August, Friday 10th August and Saturday 11th August.

Also, I currently have a nearly completed drawing for use with the restoration of TK 4546 on my drawing board in my drawing studio. Work on this has slowed considerably recently due to other commitments.



Now that the work on BCK 6705 is getting very close to being complete, Greg McNelly has turned his thoughts to the resumption of the work on TK 3639. I myself was involved in this coach as far back as 2008, and it was at this point that I realised that I should really be using my expertise and drawing skills and interest in drawings generally to produce a set of drawings for assisting with the renovation of TK 3639. As a result of this, I set about measuring this particular coach and drawing up the results. Subsequently I was offered some blueprints relating to various Great Western Railway vehicles, they were in a very tatty condition, so I have spent quite a bit of the summer repairing and strengthening these drawings, some of which, along with the drawings that I have prepared for TK 3639, Greg has arranged to copy for use with the restoration of TK 3639.

So, you can see that although it does not look as if much progress is being made very often, in actual fact a great deal of progress is steadily being made with regard to various aspects of the restoration of the coaches that we do actually now own, and often quietly behind the scenes.

(Claire Sheppy, MRICS)

Finishing BCK 6705

Internally, the compartments are almost complete, and work is currently taking place on the corridor with painting and varnishing taking place prior to replacement of the bodyside panelling which has to be in position before the window surrounds can be replaced.

Externally, some of the screws securing the bodyside panels to the wooden frame have had to be replaced as they had moved and damaged the exterior paintwork. These screws had been used during the replacement of the galvanised steel panels at Crewe and are being replaced by those of the pattern used by the GWR, straight not tapered and slotted rather than crosshead. This is quite time consuming as several hundred screws are involved.



BCK 6705 3rd Class Compartment

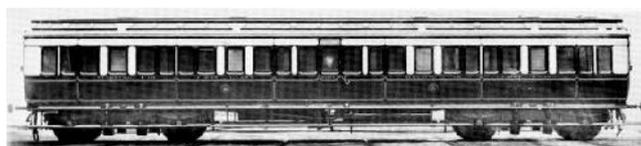
The coach has now gone back into the Tarmac shed for repairs to the external paintwork and re-varnishing, and the roof will be repainted to ensure that a couple of minor leaks are sealed. Pipes have been installed to allow the lavatory tanks to be filled from the platform rather than the roof, as designed, although the steps on the coach ends will remain so that it looks right.

Internally, rewiring took place at an early stage, while the ceiling panels had been removed. Now the external wiring runs beneath the coach connecting the battery box, dynamo and electrical switchgear are being replaced.

In the guard's compartment, some repainting is under way, although it will be possible to retain some of the original scumbling and protect it with a layer of varnish. Door fittings remain to be fitted for the luggage compartment.



BCK 6705 1st Class Compartment



About £5,000 remains between us and completion, so donations to complete the work would be most welcome. We are working hard to finish it to a suitable standard for passenger use by June 2019, although reconnection of steam heating may take a little longer and gangway connections may have to follow once we have sourced a supplier for the bellows.

Work continues every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at Williton, and new volunteers are welcome for any or all of those days. Contact Chris Austin on austinca2@googlemail.com.

Coach TK 3639

The story of the ambulance trains is told elsewhere, but work has started on preparing former ambulance coach TK 3639 for restoration at Williton. Whilst the bodywork is in poor condition, many components may be useable, or will act as patterns for replacement parts. Clearing and sorting the inside of the coach has revealed many components from coach 9039, a former sleeping car similar to the one on display at the Gauge Museum (9038), a useful source of spare parts for the maintenance of this vehicle for the future. Now that this has been done, a plan can be prepared for restoration and estimates produced for start of work once BCK 6705 has been substantially completed.

Other Coaches

These continue to deteriorate in their exposed conditions open to the elements. In the absence of covered accommodation, the only alternative protection is using tarpaulins, but the ones we have deployed so far have proved to be short lived in the extreme weather conditions experienced over the last few years. The plastic breaks down under prolonged exposure to the sun, and the wind rips them to shreds in a depressingly short space of time. Those at Williton are less exposed, but those at Dunster West are in the teeth of the gales, and

heavier duty covers will be required here, but are much more expensive. Again, donations for replacement covers would be most welcome so that we can try to stem the deterioration pending the restoration of these venerable old vehicles.

(Chris Austin)

The Use of Ambulance Trains During the First World War

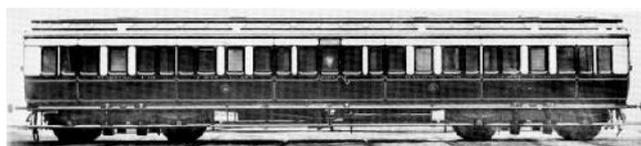
This year marked the 100 Anniversary of the end of the First World War. There have been a number of commemorations locally and nationally, and we wanted to give small flavour of the contribution made by the National Railway Companies towards the evacuation and care given to wounded and injured soldiers and other personnel during the First World War.

Ambulance trains were part of the war planning before the First World War broke out. The managers of Britain's railways were gathered to form the Railway Executive Committee (REC) in 1912 where it was agreed the formation of 12 ambulance trains to be used in Britain.



Ambulance Coach Interior Built GWR Swindon 1915

Initially these trains were used for collecting casualties from ships and transporting them to hospital in Great Britain. French railway companies were to provide overseas ambulance trains for use in France, but with the country experiencing heavy casualties and serious losses in rolling stock it quickly became



clear that it simply could not supply adequate transport for both French and British casualties. In December 1914, the REC was ordered to build Continental Ambulance Trains to be used in France. As the war progressed so did ambulance train design, and each train was better than the last. By 1918, the railway companies had built 20 ambulance trains for use in Britain, and 31 for use in France.

Working on an ambulance train was difficult, dirty and dangerous. Staff regularly worked through the night to make sure their patients were given adequate care and ran the constant risk of catching lice or infectious diseases, and of being bombed. During very busy times staff would often stay awake for 24 hours straight, and work in terribly overcrowded trains. Wounded men regularly filled the staff quarters due to the busy, congested wards, and trains were damaged not only by shellfire and aerial bombardment, but through collisions on the war-ravaged network.



A typical scene in an ambulance train

Rail networks were constantly threatened in the first few years of First World War and doggedly defended. Ambulance trains were targets of enemy fire and research has uncovered stories of staff and patients hiding underneath their trains when they were targeted. One nurse reported every single window being blown out of her 16-carriage train during a raid. Despite the dangers of ambulance train life, nursing positions were highly sought after and attracted many applicants even though ambulance trains often

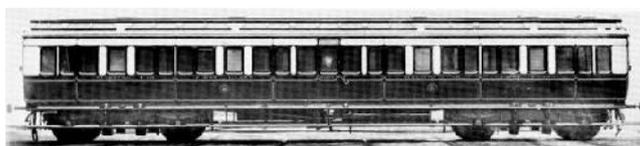
operated within ten miles of the front-line fighting.

The trains were a key part of the chain which started with the field dressing stations on the front line. Movement by narrow gauge train, lorry, bus or even mule was the link to the field hospitals set up further back. From the nearest point to the field hospitals, and sometimes under enemy shell fire, the ambulance trains then took wounded soldiers back to the larger hospitals in towns such as Amiens, Abbeville, Boulogne or Rouen, or direct to the ships at Boulogne or Le Havre. From there, hospital ships linked the French ports with Dover, Folkestone and Southampton and the British based ambulance trains took their patients to inland hospitals and recuperation centres.

The Friends Ambulance Unit

The Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) was established by British Quakers at the outset of the war. By autumn 1914, everyone in the country was faced with what their attitude was towards war and their personal position. The vast majority felt strongly patriotic and large numbers joined the military. Only a small minority took a different stance. The Quakers were divided at the outset of the war between those who felt it a just cause and those who took the long-established pacifist position. Working with the FAU was an acceptable alternative for some of these and others without breaking pacifist principles. In undertaking some form of work or service which aimed at lessening suffering and benefiting humanity, in some form which did not result in actively furthering war aims gave the opportunity of sharing in some way in the hardships and risks of the soldier.

The earliest ambulance trains used by the FAU teams in co-operation with the Red Cross were composed of assorted French rollingstock, varying from covered goods wagons fitted with Iron frameworks on which stretchers could be rested, to first-class corridor coaches of the best type. Trains Nos. 5 and 11 belonged to this early class, a medley of green painted wagons



and coaches of the various French railway groups, some linked up with corridors, others unconnected, well-sprung and ill-sprung, but forming on the whole, with all their improvisations, an efficient if not luxurious type of ambulance train. In addition, there were coaches fitted up as kitchens, a dispensary, an office, store rooms, and living quarters.



Ambulance Train No. 11

The insurmountable difficulty with these early trains was the lack of any corridor or communication whatsoever between the coaches. It was necessary for nursing staff to pass from coach to coach whether the train was in motion or not, and usually carrying a load on their backs. Though it was known to be against the express wish of the Train Commanders that nursing staff should change coaches while the train was in motion, under the circumstances, it was not possible for them to do otherwise, knowing as they did that men in each coach might perhaps be dying for want of attention.

Eventually members of the FAU staffed four trains (Nos. 5, 11, 16 and 17) until the end of the war.



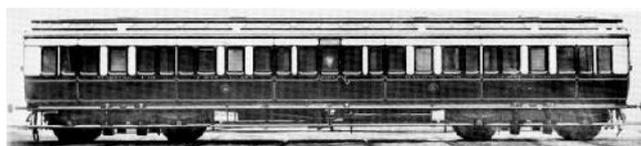
Ambulance Train No. 17

TK 3639

Toplight coach TK 3639 was built in 1908 and converted to an ambulance coach at Swindon in 1915. It formed part of one of thirty-one ambulance trains provided by British railway companies that were shipped to France. They were procured by the War Office, but some were sponsored by philanthropists such as Princess Christian, commercial interests such as the UK Flour Millers' Association or the FAU's sponsored by British Quakers.

The standard formation (whichever company built the trains) was 16 cars, weighing 440 tons and measuring 920 feet overall, excluding the locomotive. Each train was numbered, and each coach was lettered according to its function. They contained 342 cots for patients as well as seats for the wounded soldiers who could sit up, and separate 'isolation' seating and cots for infectious cases. The standard formation included ward cars, a car for treatment, a pharmacy car, seated and saloon cars as well as catering vehicles and accommodation for staff. Long bogies were specified to give patients a more comfortable ride.

The trains were electrically lit, steam heated and fitted with the Westinghouse brake. The trains spent long periods stabled in sidings without a locomotive, and so were equipped with a static heating system to keep the crew warm. For the same reason, flush toilets were not used, but were replaced by field latrines. The range in the kitchen car was capable of producing 60 gallons of hot water on demand.



The crew numbered between 50 and 61, most of whom were personnel from the Royal Army Medical Corps. In addition, each train carried three medical officers, four nursing sisters and one or two servants.

During World War One, the Government took control of the railways, working through the REC. An Ambulance Trains Advisory Committee, formed of army officers, met regularly in Amiens or Abbeville, while a sub-committee formed of railway engineers met in the REC's offices in Westminster. Churchward attended the first meetings but passed the responsibility to his carriage Works Manager F W Marillier, who took a leading role in the group and designed a lighter and cheaper cot to fit into the trains.

After the war, TK 3639 was repatriated and after conversion at Swindon, was taken back into the GW fleet in 1921 as a third compartment (TK) coach. Tracing individual coaches is quite difficult, we have not been able to find any official record of the allocation of coaches to the individual ambulance trains once they were in army ownership. Based on the dates of conversion, we think it is quite likely that TK 3639 was allocated to Train 19, and probably as a ward car, but this is only an educated guess.

Ambulance Train No 19

This was ordered by the Government from the GWR in May 1915 and was constructed at Swindon. Four coaches for the train were on board the *SS Africa*, chartered by the Admiralty to move supplies across to France. The regular route for railway rolling stock was from Tilbury to Boulogne. The ship struck a mine off Ramsgate in September 1915 and sank, with the coaches on board. The GWR staff travelling with the coaches escaped, but the coaches were never recovered and were replaced with four new ones.

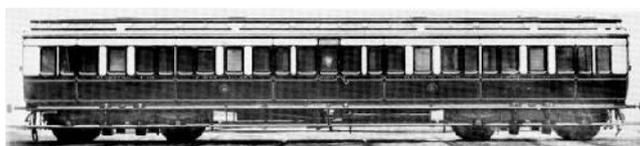
Commissioned at the beginning of 1916, the Officer Commanding Train no 19 was Major J P

Brown, DSO, RAMC. He remained in command until 21 September 1917 when he handed over to Surgeon-Major H A Ahrens, TF until the train was decommissioned in 1919.

Its first trip was to carry 96 soldiers from Bailleul (close to the front on the Lille line) back to Hazebrouck. On June 10, 1916, Train 19 carried 230 German prisoners from the quay at Le Havre across to Lyons, a journey that took 33hrs 40 min. The prisoners were well behaved, Major Brown reported, and after arrival at Lyons "on leaving they thanked Colonel Ward and myself for the attention they had received." They were transferred to a Swiss train, and the crew of Train no 19, ambulance train enjoyed the hospitality of their French medical colleagues. "The train was visited by French medical and other officials, including M. le President de Lyons, and was a source of great admiration," he reported.

Although there were periods on inactivity waiting for orders, the train was generally kept very busy and on occasions was overwhelmed by the number of troops to be moved. On 21 April 1916, Major Brown reports "Total on board 377 including the large proportion of 212 lying cases, or 50 more than the number of beds on the train, the extra cases being accommodated on the seats of sitting compartments and on stretchers."

In the course of its three years in France, the train was badly damaged on a number of occasions. It was attacked by enemy aircraft on 17 November 1916, when one coach was derailed, two were severely damaged, and several had broken windows. Again, on 23 March 1918, bombs dropped in the vicinity of the train and at Calais on the 8 May that year, the train was attacked at night, although fortunately, the bombs missed it. Ten days later, though, at Aigues, there were intermittent air raids all day, and an ammunition dump near the line exploded and the train was peppered with fragments of shells.

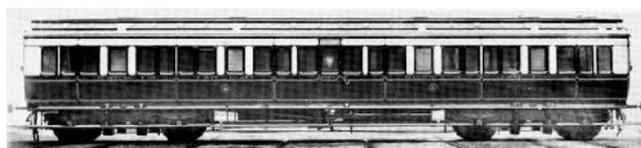


The train worked close to the front line in Flanders, within range of the German guns. On 8 June 1917, Major Brown reports that at 11.30 “outside of Bailleul, were detained for about an hour on account of shelling of the railway in front.” On 22 March 1918, Surgeon-Major Ahrens writes that 438 men had been loaded and then “Train was ordered to leave Bailleul before completion of loading owing to hostile shelling in vicinity of train. Thence to Wimereux and unloaded.”

More serious than the enemy action, though, was the result of a number of serious collisions. The worst was at Bacouel just south of Amiens on the line to Rouen, on 27 December 1916, when Train no 19 was hit by a Belgian troop train. This badly damaged coach S which had to be left behind, but also broke 46 windows and buckled the headstocks of the coaches. Soldiers on the other train had been injured and were treated on Train no 19 and then moved to Amiens. The train then went to Audruicq for repairs which took five weeks in early 1917.

There had been a shunting accident involving the train on 1 June 1916, and within a couple of months of the major repairs after the Bacouel accident, Train no 19 was hit by a goods train at Rouen as it was backing into a platform to unload. Two weeks later it was hit by a goods train at Warlincourt where coach S was again derailed and coach H badly damaged. Another troop train hit Train no 19 on 24 March 1918 on the line to Doullens, and three officers and eight other ranks on the other train were injured. Finally, on 3 February 1919, another goods train hit Train no 19, but with less damage this time.

During its three years of front-line service, Train no 19 visited over 100 stations, collecting or setting down soldiers. Early in 1919, it got as far as Cologne but was finally returned to Audruicq where all the continental ambulance trains were collected for disposal. Surgeon – Major Ahrens relinquished command on the 16 April and the train was decommissioned the following day.



(Geoff Evens, Chris Austin and Chris Lawson, The Friends Ambulance Unit)

WSSRT Web Site

There have been a few changes made to the WSSRT Web site over the past few months (<http://www.wssrt.co.uk>) the most useful being the addition of a Search function which should make finding various topics a lot easier for the site visitor. We have also updated some of the text and reformatted the header tabs into (hopefully) a more logical order.

This is an ongoing process and we would welcome any suggestions relating to Web site and improvements you would wish to make please email info@wssrt.co.uk.

(Geoff Evens)

Mystery Items displayed in the Swanage Railway Museum at Corfe

It is not unknown for sister museums to call upon the Trust for advice. The items shown in the next 3 photographs were discovered on the site of the new signal box at Swanage, but the Museum Curator at Corfe found that identifying them was proving to be a mystery.

Initially it was thought they could be the tops of old point drive rodding cranks. We had a number of Trust members look at the pictures and they agreed that they had not seen anything like these artefacts before. It was also agreed that they were not big enough for crank covers or anything to do with signalling.

Because of the artefacts measurements it is suggested they may have come from some item of rolling stock.

Have you any ideas as to what they could be? Please get in touch by emailing Info@wssrt.co.uk or call Geoff Evens on 07742 655 339.



Swanage Railway Museum at Corfe



5 New Posters waiting for their frames



Swanage Railway Museum at Corfe

News from Gauge Junction, Autumn 2018

As we moved into Summer, the experience of extreme weather which affected our winter works in March, followed us into our summer operations with extreme heat causing damage to our track, and making extremely difficult conditions in which to operate. During the first week of sustained hot weather, a vital section of track rose vertically as it expanded, and the retaining glue melted requiring a very careful application of very delicate surgical skills to restore it to avoid a major track relaying operation, would be inconvenient in the middle of the operating season. Fortunately, the remedial work proved satisfactory, thus avoiding any delays to operating.



Swanage Railway Museum at Corfe

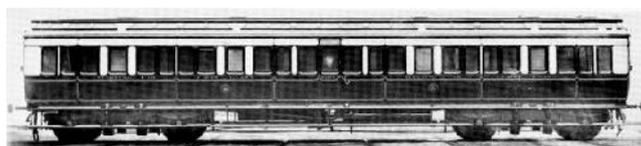


James Pearson and Matt Sutton operating

New Posters for the Gauge Museum in 2019

As the HLF Project in the Gauge Museum starts to gain momentum the Trust have commissioned a number of new notice boards inviting visitors to come to the museum whilst they are visiting the railway.

Another problem faced during the summer was the movement of three of our senior operators away to other departments on the railway which would leave us very short of senior operators as we approached the peak of



the operating season. The result of this placed a lot more pressure on those of us remaining. Gauge Junction throughout its history has always been a recruiting ground for younger people who later move on to other departments as they get older and so this was not a new problem, it did affect the number of days we were able to open during the long summer period.

The number of new recruits continued to rise during the season, and, it became very apparent that there was a need to build a proper induction and training system to deal with new trainees, especially as it would be their introduction into training as volunteer railwaymen. Fortunately, it was a case of, 'cometh the hour, cometh the man' as we had Matthew Sutton, one of our senior operators who was ideal to take up the challenge and as Matthew explains in his own words;

'We have been tremendously busy from the Summer onwards, largely due to biggest influx of trackers that have joined us in the whole of Gauge Junction's recent times. As appointed as Training Co-ordinator in August, I oversee the training side at Gauge Junction and we have been busy in creating newly designed training syllabus's that our trainer operators can train the new with when they join us. I began my volunteer service at Gauge Junction in late 2015 and have been an operator since joining the team. Currently I am studying a L3 course in' L3 Early Years 'course at Taunton College, as my ambitions are to become a teacher. Writing this in late November; we have successfully welcomed nine mixed aged Trackers to our team during the operating season. Now we are at the end of the 2018 season, and we have started a waiting list for potential Trackers to join us in the 2019 season, in cooperation with Catherine Hurd who is the company's Tracker Co-ordinator. We look forward to welcoming more trackers in the New Year, also we are constantly improving and updating relevant training syllabus's, and techniques to aim for the highest standard of exhibition operating. During the winter, we will be updating the relevant training syllabus's and techniques in

the light of experiences of this year during 2019, to enhance our exhibition standards, particularly in the areas relative to our visitors.'
(Matt Sutton)

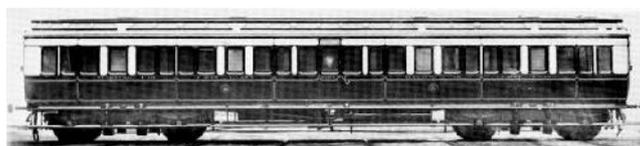


Matt Sutton instructing trainee Paddy Lockyer

Visitor numbers fell below our numbers of last season due to different timetables which did not allow much time during 'turn around' for visitors to enjoy a visit over to us on Platform 1. A slight reduction in operating days and less visitors to the railway also added to our lower visitor records. By the end of October, we had received 9,345 visitors compared to 11,275 at the end of October last year. Many favourable and encouraging comments on Gauge Junction and our exhibition standard production was a source of pride to those of us who work through the long, cold and dark winter months to upgrade the layout.

At the time of writing we are once again into the first phase of our winter work programme which Matthew Jackson. another one of our senior operators is co-ordinating this winter. Matt writes;

'My Name is Matt Jackson and I have been involved with operating the model railway in the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard station for 5 years. I have also been involved with maintenance for the past 3 years. Working on the model railway has been a fantastic experience and is a great way of getting into the WSR and it can expand your railway knowledge to learn new things and to connect with other volunteers who share our great



hobby. I have learned so much in the time I have been involved. But above all it's lovely to see our visitors enjoying the displays we provide.'

Matt has also taken over the role of electrician from Kris Harding to deal with the low voltage wiring at Gauge Junction.



Matt Jackson (Rt) with Tom Donnolly wiring layout

So far during November we have completed essential maintenance with replacement of some track which caused problems and continued scenic enhancement around the layout. The Autumn work is a prelude to much greater works to begin in January 2019 and which will be reported in the next edition of the newsletter. Work will shortly cease to make way for December which will be our final month of operating for the 2018 season and is usually very intensive with the seasonal trains and the steam gala after Christmas. Plans have also been prepared to maintain the interest and contact with our new trainees throughout the extended period of closure after the New Year.

2018 has proved to be a very intensive year for Gauge Junction in many different ways, some of the old faces have departed, but we have several new faces and new talents to take over once they have been trained. We also have been making plans to place Gauge Junction very firmly into the plans for the expansion of the Gauge Museum as an educational resource

as the development plans for the museum upgrade get underway.

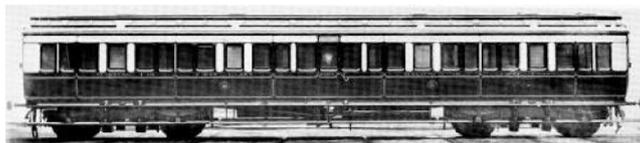
Finally, on behalf of the operating team I would like to thank all Steam Trust members who have visited us during the season and have shown a supportive interest in what we are doing in our displays. Some days also it has been a pleasure to join with colleagues on the ground floor showing visitors around the sleeping coach and to join forces as a team to make the Gauge Museum a more interesting place for visitors. Our thanks also to Kate and her assistants in the shop over on the other platform who regularly support us with station announcements and with a refuge to escape to for our lunch breaks. My personal thanks also recorded for the tremendous enthusiasm and loyal support shown by our young team through all the extreme weather and other challenges and we can be justly proud of what we have achieved. Now we look forward to a great finish to the season in December and then to be ready once again for a renewed challenge in 2019.

(Alan Meade)

Remember to follow the Trust on our Facebook page. If you would like to post a contribution on Facebook, please do not hesitate to send it to Info@wssrt.co.uk or call Geoff Evens on 07742 655 339.



(Geoff Evens)



Join the Trust: You can now become a member of the Trust for a minimum donation of £1 per month, although most members contribute more than this, thereby helping fund the work of the Trust. Membership forms are on the website <http://www.wssrt.co.uk>

Carriage restoration volunteers are welcome at the regular weekday sessions at Williton – Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. New volunteers for carriage restoration or the museums can contact Chris Austin for further details e-mail austinca2@googlemail.com

To make sure that the information we hold on members is 'up to date' if you have moved-house, changed your email address, are no longer eligible for Gift Aid, please let us know at info@wssrt.co.uk.

If you want to check what information we hold, please use the same address.

