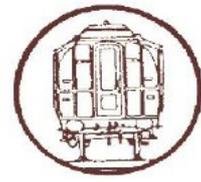


WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LIMITED

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President: Lady Elizabeth Gass



WSSRT Education: Teachers' Information Pack

General Information

Planned by Isambard Kingdom Brunel as a branch line of the Bristol and Exeter Railway and opened in 1862, the West Somerset Railway is the longest standard gauge independent heritage railway in the UK.

Beginning at Bishop's Lydeard, the line stretches across the Somerset countryside for 22 miles and passes through 8 other stations before terminating at the seaside town of Minehead.

The line covers a 100 year period of railway history from the 1860s to 1960s, giving a unique insight into the important role that the railways played during a time of massive industrial and social change for Great Britain.

The Gauge Museum at Bishop's Lydeard offers educational sessions and loans boxes to suit a range of topics and Key Stages as well as museum trails to support teacher-led visits.

Based on the 2014 National Curriculum, museum sessions offer an opportunity not only to explore our local and national history, but also provide links to the STEM subjects if desired.

Learning Sessions:

EYFS/KS1: 'A trip to the Seaside'

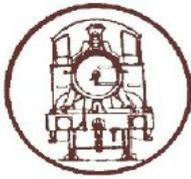
Focus: Exploring and comparing how seaside holidays have changed over time with optional links to local history through the development of Minehead from small town to big attraction (KS1).

Overview: The session takes the form of an imaginary seaside holiday; with opportunities for dressing up and role play. It explores how the railways made seaside holidays possible and invites children to compare the differences between past and present holidays using local photographs and handling objects.

- Topic links to Seaside, Holidays and Transport

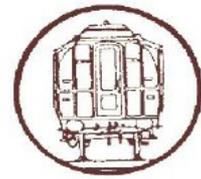
Curriculum Links 2014:

- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally



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KS1: 'Who was Isambard Kingdom Brunel?'

Focus: Exploring the life and achievements of Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the changes that his GWR and branch lines brought to our local area.

Overview: The session explores Brunel's life and achievements within the context of the Industrial Revolution; with opportunities for dressing up and role play. It uses object sorting and handling to investigate the impact that Brunel's railways had both nationally and locally on the everyday lives of people and encourages children to consider why we remember people like Brunel.

Optional STEM Extension Activities: Learning sessions can be extended with the addition of a STEM-related investigation. Brunel inspired sessions include:

- The Gauge investigation – exploring the differences between Brunel's broad gauge and the standard gauge. A maths problem solving activity using standard and non-standard measures.
- Brunel's Great Bridge Challenge – exploring different types of bridge design and encouraging children to select and shape different materials in order to design and build a bridge sturdy enough to hold a model train.

Further details on request.

Curriculum Links 2014:

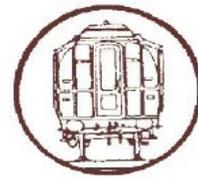
- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally
- The lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements
- Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality





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KS2: Victorian Britain: ‘How did the railways change people’s lives in our locality?’

Focus: Setting the scene by exploring aspects of pre-railway life such as transport, communication, diet and politics, the session explores how the railways became a defining part of Britain’s Industrial Revolution, changing people’s lives throughout the Victorian period and establishing the framework of the modern world.

Overview: Using object handling, picture analysis, discussion and role play, children will be encouraged to explore how the GWR and its branchlines changed the life of ordinary people in the South West. Investigating the views of different groups of people in character, children are invited to consider whether they would be ‘for’ or ‘against’ the building of the railway.

Curriculum Links 2014:

- A study of an aspect of British History beyond 1066: A significant turning point in British History: The First Railways
- A local history study

Visits with Train Travel

Your visit to the Gauge Museum can be combined with the experience of travelling through the Somerset countryside behind a restored steam locomotive.

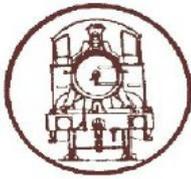
The WSR offers a range of possible routes on our line, allowing you to tailor your visit in terms of time and expense.

For more information and a list of potential options and prices, please go to the **Planning your Educational Visit** section of our website.

Facilities for School visits

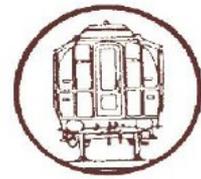
The Gauge museum is happy to host school visits and has a small learning space where children can store their belongings for the duration of their visit and take part in Learning Sessions. Due to size restrictions in the museum, it will be necessary to divide classes into smaller groups for each activity.

In addition to our learning sessions, we also offer the opportunity for a ‘self-guided’ or ‘teacher led’ visit with full access to the museum space, signal box, Victorian sleeper carriage



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and model railway. We can offer museum trails which allow children to interact more fully with the museum and its collection. We also have costumed volunteer guides on hand on certain days who offer additional information and insights into life on the WSR – please contact us for more information about this.

Accessibility

The Gauge Museum is housed in a grade II listed building and as such has some access limitations. The ground floor exhibition space is fully accessible to wheelchair users and the lower floor education space can be reached via a rear entrance. Unfortunately, there is currently no access to the model railway exhibition on the mezzanine floor.

Our Victorian sleeper carriage has extremely narrow corridors and unfortunately does not offer a wide enough turning circle for wheel chairs.

Please always make us aware of any wheelchair users at the time of booking or before the day of your visit.

Parking

Parking facilities for the museum are at the far end of the industrial estate, next to the picnic area. There is a short walk from the car park to the station platform past the engine sheds, though if preferred, there is a drop off point for coaches outside the station entrance (missing out the engine sheds).

Toilet Facilities

Teachers should please note that unfortunately the Gauge Museum does not have toilet facilities on site, but that toilets are available on the other side of the platform with disabled access. Additionally, there are toilet facilities on board all of our trains and at the following stations:

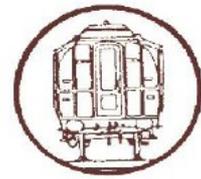
- Crowcombe Heathfield *
- Stogumber*
- Williton
- Watchet*
- Blue Anchor
- Dunster
- Minehead*

* Toilets with disabled access



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Lunchtime Arrangements

The picnic area is a short walk from the station next to the main car park. It is equipped with picnic benches and play equipment. If the weather is poor, children may eat their lunches in the learning space in the museum or in the station waiting room. Lunches may also be consumed on the trains. There is a café on the station opposite the museum that serves drinks and light bites.

Please Note: The behaviour of pupils during lunchtime is the responsibility of the teacher. Please clear up any litter before leaving the area. If any cleaning materials or extra bin bags are needed, please ask.

Shop

Children are welcome to visit the Bishops Lydeard Station shop which sells a selection of railway related souvenirs. Please be aware that standard conditions still apply during a shop visit i.e. minimum supervision ratios need to be adhered to and behaviour of pupils closely monitored.

Safeguarding

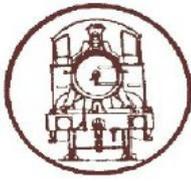
The West Somerset Railway is strongly committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to embrace this commitment.

Please contact us if you would like a copy of our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

Photography and Filming

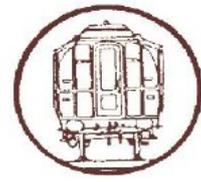
The WSSRT follow a policy whereby the photography and filming of school children on organised school visits by general visitors are not permitted in the Museum. Visitors and other members of the public who appear to be taking photographs in inappropriate circumstances should be challenged.

Teachers are otherwise welcome to take photographs of the children while in the museum or on the platform.



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Risk Assessments

We can provide Risk Assessments for all educational activities within the Gauge Museum. Please note that these are written from the Museum's perspective and we recommend that all potential Group Leaders also conduct their own risk assessments during your familiarisation visit.

Please ensure you read our Risk Assessments for school visitors before your visit and brief all accompanying adults and, where appropriate, the children.

Supervision of Groups

We require that schools observe a minimum supervision ratio of 1 to 6 at KS1, 1 to 8 at KS2 and 1 to 12 at KS3 and above. This is also the maximum group walkabout number. Classes are to be divided into small groups (as above) with a competent/trained/qualified adult responsible for the supervision and behavior of each group at all times. The behaviour and supervision of the pupils on the West Somerset Railway is the responsibility of the teacher.

Adults are to remain with their designated group at ALL times.

Familiarisation Visits

We encourage all teachers who are planning a visit to the WSR to attend a familiarisation visit. Entry to the museum is free, but please check the opening times on our website to avoid disappointment. If you wish to speak with our Learning Officer regarding your visit, please let us know in advance.

We are happy for any school staff that will be accompanying the children on the day of the actual visit to attend the familiarisation visit, so that everyone feels fully confident on the day.

Though Risk Assessments are provided, we strongly recommend that you conduct your own assessment to complement ours. Museum Trails are available, but you may also wish to develop your own learning resources to enhance the visit.

