

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST



Welcome to issue No. 13 of the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust Newsletter.

The Board Minutes of the latest West Somerset Steam Railway Trust maybe found on the WSSRT Web site <http://www.wssrt.co.uk/> along with information relating to the Latest News, Membership, Projects and Learning.

If you are unable to access the WSSRT Web site either e-mail the WSSRT via info@wssrt.co.uk or write to:

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

In this Edition:

Infrastructure Appeal (*Don Fraser*)
Proposed Changes to Steam Trust Name, Objects and Powers; 2020 AGM; Blue Anchor Museum-External Structural Repairs; PLC Shareholding – Legacies; Fundraising for TK 3639; National Heritage Lottery Fund-Second Phase of Funding; New Leaflet for the Model Railway; General Data Protection Regulations-Consent to Share Contact Information Form (*Steve Williams, WSSRT Company Secretary*)
Redesigning the Gauge Museum (*Helen Anson and Steve Williams*)
Historic Coaches (*Chris Austin*)
Special Events (*Chris Austin*)
Taunton Shuttles (*Chris Austin*)
Award presentation (*West Somerset Steam Railway Trust*)
James Pearson Nominated for HRA Award (*Alan Meade*)
Special Events (*Chris Austin and Geoff Evens*)

The Gauge Museum Refurbishment; Working Parties; Goods Shed Doors; GWR Letter Rack; Gauge Museum Launch Event; January 2020; February 2020; March 2020 (*Geoff Evens, Chris Austin and Alan Meade*)
WSSRT Web Site, Facebook Page and Social Media (*Geoff Evens*)

WSR Infrastructure Appeal

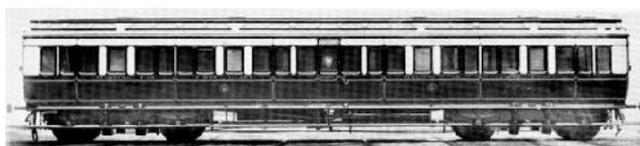
The Trust, alongside the WSRA, are as you will be aware aiming to raise £250,000 towards funding the first phase of Infrastructure improvements on the WSR.

To date the Trust has received donations of £28,517 which will be increased by a further £5,701 of Gift Aid by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The overall total for WSRA and Steam Trust together is now just over £135,000 before any Gift Aid claims. The donations received by the Trust will be going towards works on the Blue Anchor relay for heritage track next to the BA museum.

Anybody wishing to make a donation towards this Appeal can do so by Cheque, Standing Order or Bank Transfer. Please complete a Gift Aid form if you are a Taxpayer to enable us to boost the donation by 25%.

Forms are available on our Website
<http://wssrt.co.uk>

If anybody makes a donation by Bank Transfer can you please advise me by e-mail, don.fraser@wssrt.co.uk, as Bank Statements do not always show enough detail. Another way to donate is via Just Giving using our website.



You can also write to the Treasurer at:

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

Clearly mark the envelope 'For the Attention of the WSSRT Treasurer'.

(Don Fraser, Treasurer)

Proposed Changes to Steam Trust Name, Objects and Powers

At their Board meeting in November, Trustees approved proposals to put to Members that the name of the charity should be changed to the **West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust** to bring the name of the Trust more in line with its current role.

In addition, Trustees endorsed proposed changes to objects and powers which seek to bring these up-to-date with the current role and functions of the Trust, support our application for accreditation of the Gauge Museum (and eventually Blue Anchor as well) and simplify the language so as to enable the Trust to more easily support the wider purpose of sustaining the WSR. They will also clearly differentiate our role from that of the WSRA.

These proposals will be put to Members at the 2020 AGM for consideration and, if agreed, adoption.

2020 AGM

The proposed date for the 2020 AGM is **Saturday 23rd May 2020**. This is a bit later than previous years and reflects the fact that we extended the 2019 financial reporting year to December to better align with the calendar year. This provides time to finalise the annual accounts and reports for Members. The venue will be the Committee Room behind Bishops Lydeard Station.

Blue Anchor Museum-External Structural Repairs

Trustees have agreed to fund external structural repairs to the Museum building over the winter period. This includes replacing timber barges and capping them, some external redecoration and some pointing work. Whilst a PLC responsibility, this will help in providing the funding required before further deterioration takes place and is offset by temporary suspension of rent for the building.

PLC Shareholding – Legacies

Over 2019, the Trust has continued to receive significant numbers of additional shares in the PLC as a result of legacies and estates bequests.

Fundraising for TK 3639

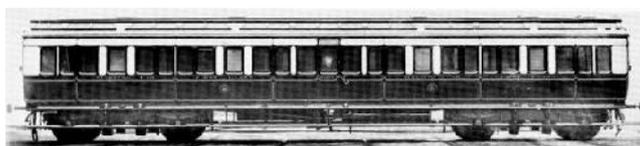
In addition to informal donations, work will begin shortly on making formal applications to charitable funds and other sources to raise money towards the restoration of coach TK 3639. Members will be kept up-to-date with progress over the next few months.

National Heritage Lottery Fund-Second Phase of Funding

Following successful submission of our first progress report and financial report, NHLF have now released a further £16,000 towards the Gauge Museum Project. This leaves £4000 to be requested on completion. The Trust will be committing its share of £20,400 over the next 12 months.

New Leaflet for the Model Railway

Matt Sutton has led the work on production of a new leaflet about Gauge Junction and how to express interest in joining as a volunteer operator. The leaflet will be printed shortly and distributed across the WSR and



more widely across the local tourism and leisure sector and heritage museums network.

Model Railway Visitors During 2019

Gauge Junction opened 122 days during 2019 with a total number of visitors being 10, 036.

General Data Protection Regulations-Consent to Share Contact Information Form

Your privacy is important to us, but we want to be able to communicate with every member of the WSSRT as and when necessary. In line with UK Law on Data Protection (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR 2018) we need to ask for your consent on how we contact you

On the Trust Web site <http://www.wssrt.co.uk> under the heading ‘About’ and then ‘Documents’ you will find a new form headed ‘GDPR Consent Form’. We do urge all volunteers to fill in the form so that the Trust can use your contact details in the case of an emergency.

You can grant consent to all the purposes; one of the purposes or none of the purposes. Where you do not grant consent the Trust will not be able to use your personal data; (so for example we may not be able to phone you if there is an emergency or add you to the mailing list for the Weekly Updates); except in certain limited situations, such as where required to do so by law or to protect members of the public from serious harm.

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the WSSRT Company Secretary by emailing info@wssrt.co.uk or in writing to:

West Somerset Steam Railway Trust
 The Railway Station
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 Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3BX

(Steve Williams, WSSRT Company Secretary)

Reinterpreting and Redesigning the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard Station – An Update

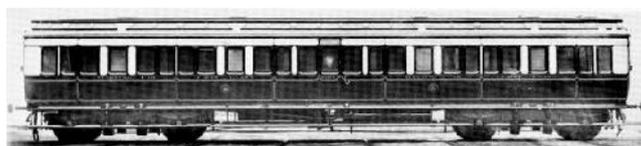
As Members know, in July 2018, we were successful in obtaining a grant of £40,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund towards the reinterpretation and redesign of the Gauge Museum together with the establishment of a Learning and Education Programme directed towards primary schools, families and other community groups. The Steam Trust is contributing just over £20,000 of its own resources together with volunteer time. The project is due for completion by February 2021.

Following the recruitment of our Learning Officer, Helen Anson in December 2018, we have made substantial progress in developing and implementing the programme. Our new schools offer includes five new learning sessions, with an additional three STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) projects based on the 2014 National Curriculum and ranging in age focus from Early Years to Key stage Two. These are now fully resourced, using a mixture of original and replica objects, carefully, and often creatively sourced, in order to bring the history of the railway to life for children.



(Learning for Children in the Gauge Museum, Early Years to Key stage Two)

In addition to the school’s programme, we have also developed a highly successful families offer, with two new museum trails



and five different family fun activities, all designed to enhance the experience of family visitors, raising their awareness of the collection and challenging them to try out their engineering skills!

We have successfully built volunteer capacity through the recruitment of five new Learning Assistants, whose support has proven invaluable in delivering both the school and family offer this year. We also work in close partnership with the Hinkley Project, through the Community Engagement Officer, Catherine Dance, a collaboration that will continue into 2020 through a range of new outreach offers, designed to take the railway beyond its borders and out into the community.

In terms of reinterpretation, we are now on the 6th iteration of the design concept and are close to finalising our preferred layout, artefact displays, audio visual inputs and photographic presentations.

Continuing to focus on the model railway, the top floor will now include improved narrative and photographs together with interactive opportunities for children. The ground floor will tell the story of the railway from its opening to the present day; using artefacts such as the sleeping car, along with timelines and graphic panels, while the lower floor, in addition to continuing these themes, will in future act as a multimedia/multifunction space for presentations, groups and use of audio-visual options.

The Trust will be seeking feedback on the proposed reinterpretation between now and early 2020 and so do please have a look at our website for details. We are hoping that this stage of the project will be completed by the spring, allowing our newly cleaned, decorated and re-interpreted museum to be opened alongside the railway for the 2020 season.

(Helen Anson and Steve Williams)

Historic Coaches

It was good to have both the sleeping car and our completed Collett brake composite coach on show at Norton Fitzwarren in August, along with the Association’s Hawksworth saloon and the Somerset & Dorset Trust’s ancient and elegant six wheel first class compartment coach.

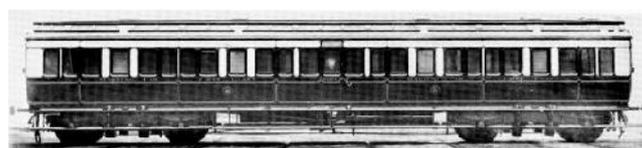
It has been frustrating that it has taken so long to organise the fitness to run exam for Collett BCK 6705, and I hope that next year we shall see it in service carrying passengers and giving them their only genuine experience of travelling in a genuine GWR coach on the railway.

Meanwhile, the Honourable Company of Williton Carriage Builders and Restorers has made a good start on refurbishing components for the next one, former Ambulance coach 3639. The team has done a great job in terms of reorganising and tidying up after completing 6705. The container and the lock-up have been sorted and tidied and we have rediscovered tools and components previously lost. The ‘Tintern’ coach 5856 has been made watertight and converted to a workshop for restoring the components of 3639.



(John Waters (above) and Ronnie Wainhouse working on the new entrance steps to the Tintern coach.)

A new and magnificent flight of steps have been built to allow us to get stuff in and out safely and we are in the process of laying on an



electrical supply. The old woodwork shop in Sherrings Yard is no longer safe to use, so there is an urgent need to complete this task now that the shorter days are here.

We have been able to afford three new covers for the coaches and have put those on two of the Toplight's to give added protection over the winter.

(Chris Austin)

Taunton Shuttles

Whilst this is not strictly Trust business, I have been closely involved in planning and managing the service shuttles that ran on eight Saturdays this year. Gauge clearance issues meant that I failed in my primary objective of getting them to bring passengers to the door of the Gauge Museum on Platform 1! However, there is no doubt that they have brought many new visitors to the railway, and quite a few have come to see us in the museum or on the model railway.

The trains ran five return trips each day on selected Saturdays between July 27 and October 26, providing convenient connections from main line trains and into the steam trains from BL to MD. Like all railway projects, this one involved a lot of teamwork and I estimate that around 100 staff and volunteers from GWR and WSR played a part in the success of these trains. We carried some 1800 passengers over the eight days and generated a lot of new business for WSR and for GWR and Cross Country as well, as so many passengers came from places well beyond Taunton.

It has been good to see this historic link restored and the old and new Great Western Railway (GWR) coming face to face at Bishops Lydeard. I still find it amazing that the GWR name, dating from 1835 should still be a sought-after brand name at a time when so much resource is devoted to developing logos and 'image' in the social media-savvy 21st century. Not just GWR, but Southern, London North Western and, of course, LNER have

proved enduring names too – an example of the thread of heritage running through from earlier days to today, a theme we are reflecting in our plans for the Gauge Museum.

(Chris Austin)

Award presentation

On 19 November 2019, during a meeting of the Museum HLF Project Group, our Trust Chairman Chris Austin presented a certificate awarded by the British Museum, Marsh Award to Trust member Matthew Sutton for his 'highly commended voluntary contribution to 'Museum Learning'.



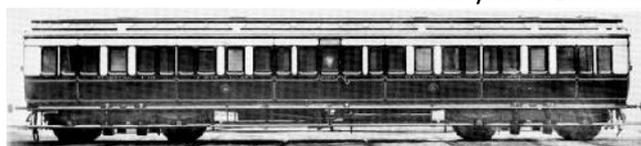
(West Somerset Steam Railway Trust)

Matthew is a Senior operator and Training Officer at Gauge Junction as well as being a member of the HLF Project Group and serving on the Volunteer Steering Committee. A great deal of his work is on the administration side of the operation which does not attract public attention but is a very vital part of our activities. Well done Matthew in obtaining a National Award and also to the Trust for the efforts made to encourage and support young volunteers within our activities.

(West Somerset Steam Railway Trust)

James Pearson Nominated for HRA Award

James Pearson has been nominated by the Steam Trust Board as our young representative for this year's Lord Faulkner Award hosted by



the HRA for 'significant achievement' to Heritage Railways by a young person under the age of 26. Joining the Gauge Junction team in January 2016, James quickly discovered his talent for scenic creation and has completed much of the current scenery enjoyed on our model layout.



(Alan Meade)

During the operating season James works hard as a senior operator and has proved to be a talented instructor in sharing our hobby with our young trainees and many of our visitors.



(Alan Meade)

Working with trainees, James has been particularly supportive and shows great empathy towards those of our team who perhaps are less fortunate in life and who are struggling with personal issues, a very valuable contribution to our efforts as a team. In the Autumn of 2017 James was awarded the Young Tracker of the Year Award by the WSR. Our best wishes to James and hope that you make

it through to win at the finals held in Birmingham February 2020.

(Alan Meade)

Special Events

This year has seen the Trust support and enhance the railway's gala events and run its own as well.

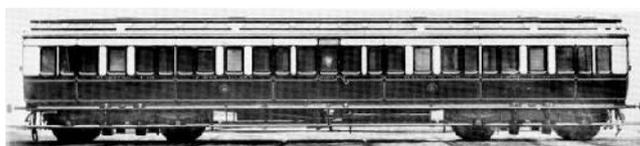
The Gauge Museum was used as the venue for the launch of the June event marking the 40th anniversary of the WSR from Minehead reaching Lydeard. It also marked the successful launch of the book published by the Steam Trust to mark the anniversary, *Tales of the WSR*. The Blue Anchor and Bishops Lydeard museums still have a few copies left as have the Minehead and Bishops Lydeard shops. If you have somehow escaped buying one so far it is a great read at only £8.99.

Then in June we marked the diesel gala, took some coaches and volunteers to the fantastic Steam Rally at Norton Fitzwarren in August, and marked the Forties Weekend with a special display in September and joined in the Autumn Steam Gala in October.



(The magnificent spread of homemade cakes provided by Helen Anson and her mother and sold to support the Trust's Education and Learning Project during the Autumn Steam Gala.)

The model railway replicated the galas with a fine collection of heritage diesels operating in



June, a forties theme in September and a Western theme in October, with plenty of pannier tanks, matching the motive power running outside! For the October half term, a popular S&D day was run, recreating the days before 1962 when the *Pines* was still running over the line.

Parcels train

During the Autumn steam gala, WSSRT Gauge Museum Stewards went out as porters to load parcels, newspapers and luggage in advance into the guard’s vans to recreate the scenes we all remember from the 1960s and 1970s of parcels being transported around the network, rather more sustainably than white van man does it today!



(Greg McNelly, Carriage Restoration foreman at Williton wheels luggage and a parcel out of the museum to load on the train for Crowcombe Heathfield.)

(Chris Austin and Geoff Evens)

The Gauge Museum Refurbishment

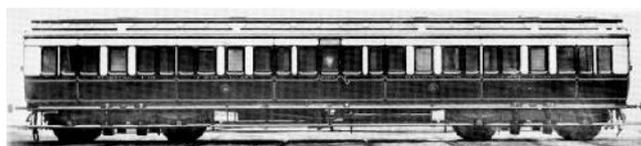
We started working towards the refurbishment of the Gauge Museum at the end of the WSR Autumn running season. Originally it had been intended to carry out some preliminary work then re-open the museum over the Christmas period but the decision has been made to keep the museum closed and carry on with all the preparation tasks so that we are ready to start work with the main refurbishment in the new year.

There is much work to do. Over the last 30 or so years artefacts have been displayed for all to see but there has been no central theme or story to tell that will carry the visitor through the museum. With the refurbishment we are hoping to change all of this.

The Trust has drawn up work programmes for the later part of 2019, which by the time you get to see this will already have passed; do not despair there will still be much to do in 2020.



(Leading Porter Blazdell takes a break from his duties as Museum Steward to load luggage in advance, newspapers and a parcel onto the 14.45 train from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead on 5 October)



Working Parties

The Trust have organised Working Parties in the Gauge Museum on a month by month basis; if you are interested in helping out please email info@wssrt.co.uk for more information. Here we see Trust colleagues involved with the HLF Museum upgrade programme busily removing and recording artefacts to prepare for the cleaning of the walls and the ultimate installation of the upgraded exhibition.



(Gauge Museum Refurbishment, Alan Meade)

The PLC has published the 2020 timetable and trains are planned to start running again on Saturday 21 March 2020. The Trust needs to plan for any unforeseen glitches in the refurbishment programme which means we should set a completion date a few days earlier to allow time to check everything is in order, when we can invite our stewards and operators in to see what it all looks like and give a briefing for the new season. The deadline for completion is **Tuesday 17 March 2020**.

Goods Shed Doors

Work on museum refurbishment has revealed the two goods shed doors at the Minehead end of the shed.



(Chris Austin)

These allowed unloaded wagons to be staged through to a short holding siding (where the Taunton Model Railway Group is today) to allow other wagons to be brought into the shed

The doors will be a feature of the new museum display, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and somewhere underneath the floor is the original track!

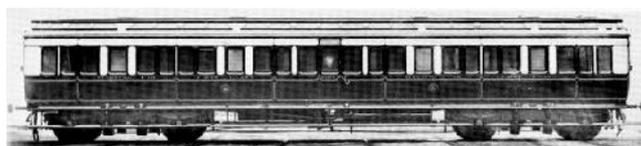
GWR Letter Rack

Another fascinating acquisition for the Gauge Museum, provided by our friends at Taunton station.



(Chris Austin)

A set of GWR letter boxes from Taunton station is now safely preserved in the Gauge Museum. Beautifully made, they were part of the internal mail system run by GWR and later BR, which closed on completion of privatisation in 1997.



The Gauge Museum Launch Event

The Gauge Museum is going through a big change that deserves a good launch event to show the world. The Trust plans to invite representatives from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Somerset Museums staff, local authority members and officers and local schoolteachers, as well as our colleagues from within the railway family.

If anyone has ideas for the nature of the launch, we would welcome suggestions, as long as it is not too costly!

January 2020

At the beginning of January the model railway will be protected by fitting a made to measure plywood cover. The planned removal of artefacts on the museum walls is to be completed and the walls cleaned and where necessary filled. It is proposed to store the Sleeping Car and BCK 6705 in the Ash Shelter at Bishops Lydeard (Yet to be Confirmed).

Contractors will erect scaffolding to allow for the removal or covering of artefacts at higher levels. Volunteers will be checking records against the current catalogue, cleaning, sorting and storing all the artefacts being removed.

One of the major tasks will be to clean and paint the roof, while high level walls will be cleaned and areas where no graphics are displayed will be painted. WSR RAMS will carry out the majority of this work although there will be the need for volunteers to assist where it is safe to do so.

It is planned for a contractor to install extractor fans or air cooling equipment for the model railway; this has still to be finalised.

February 2020

The museum is to remain closed. During the first week in February all painting is to be

completed as required because from the second week onwards we are to begin installing the new displays, where appropriate new display cases are to be deployed and some artefacts returned for putting on show.

During this time we are looking for volunteers to clean and paint the interior of Powderham Signal Box.

March 2020

The Model railway working parties are to resume work on the model railway as soon as the scaffolding is removed from the museum, and it is safe for them to do so. The Sleeping Car will be returned before the Ash Shelter is required for steam locomotives again.

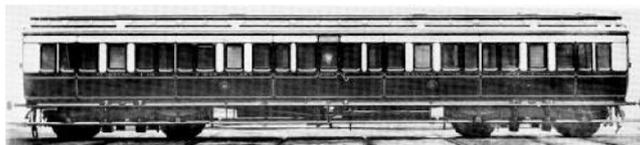
Volunteers are also sought to return the remainder of artefacts as required, populating the display cases and dressing the museum accordingly. Finally, we will make good any remaining changes, clean and prepare for re-opening the Gauge Museum on **17 March 2020**. The PLC will resume running trains on Saturday 21 March 2020.

The Trust would be very pleased to hear from anyone wishing to volunteer their services to help with this fantastic project. This is the first major refurbishment carried out by the Trust and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Trust wants the final result to be a showcase for what we can achieve utilising space and artefacts already in our care. By demonstrating that we can effectively manage a project of this complexity it is anticipated that further applications for major funding will be successful.

(Geoff Evens, Chris Austin and Alan Meade)

The West Somerset Steam Railway Trust

The Trust would always welcome suggestions or stories that could be published. We are also interested in any improvements you would wish to make – remember you are members and it is your Trust.



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

Top Social Media Sites



Facebook has up to 2.23 billion monthly active users, the biggest social media site available. The WSSRT uses Facebook to bring stories and activities to a much wider audience. Please have a look at our Facebook page, you do not have to join Facebook in order to view.

As we move forward it may well be worth extending our presence on social media. The following sites have significant followings and may well suit the Trust purposes in the future:

Instagram



Instagram was launched as a unique social networking platform that was completely based on sharing photos and videos. This photo sharing social networking app thus enables you to capture the best moments of your life, with your phone’s camera or any other camera, and convert them into works of art.

This is possible because Instagram allows you to apply multiple filters to your photos and you can easily post them to other popular social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. It is now part of the Facebook empire.

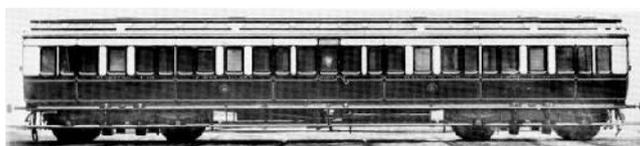
Twitter



This social networking site enables you to post short text messages (called tweets), containing a limited number of characters (up to 280), to convey your message to the world. With the growing craze for online shopping, Twitter also makes it possible to promote your our activities and even sell directly through tweets.

The Trust has already a Web site and Facebook page but could in the near future launch new Instagram and Twitter pages in order to raise the Trust profile.

(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 inform the Membership Secretary.

In order to continue to receive Trust Newsletters and other information relating to the Trust any changes can either be e-mailed to info@wssrt.co.uk or don.fraser@wssrt.co.uk (Membership Secretary), or sent by post to:

West Somerset Steam Railway Trust
 The Railway Station
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 Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3BX

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

