

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST

Welcome to issue 5

Welcome to newsletter number 5. It is being issued a little later than usual in order to include matters discussed by the Trustees at a Board meeting on 10 February.

As before, any feedback would be welcome.

Financial results for 2014-15

The Trust's financial year ends on 30 September, and draft accounts for last year were sent to our reporting accountants in November, after adoption by the Board. They were formally approved at the Board meeting on 10 February.

Key highlights in the draft accounts (with figures for 2013-14 in brackets) are:

Income £16,368 (£15,409)

Revenue expenditure £9,553 (£4,461)

Net income £6,825 (£10,948)

Capital expenditure on carriage restoration charged to reserves £3,133 (£13,108)

Cash at bank £45,393 (£43,285).

S&D closure: 50 years on

It was on March 6th 1966 that the last passenger trains ran over the surviving lines of the one-time Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway, between Bath (Green Park) and Bournemouth (West) and the along the branch line between Evercreech Junction and Highbridge. This anniversary is being marked as the theme of the WSR Spring Gala 2016, running over two weekends.

The Trust will be playing a significant part in the Gala. We will be once again opening up the sleeping car at Bishops Lydeard for as many of the days of the Gala as possible, and additionally we are bringing in a representative model of the Gala theme, this year being an N-Gauge model of Burnham on Sea terminus station (built by Alastair Knox).



Bishops Lydeard Plans

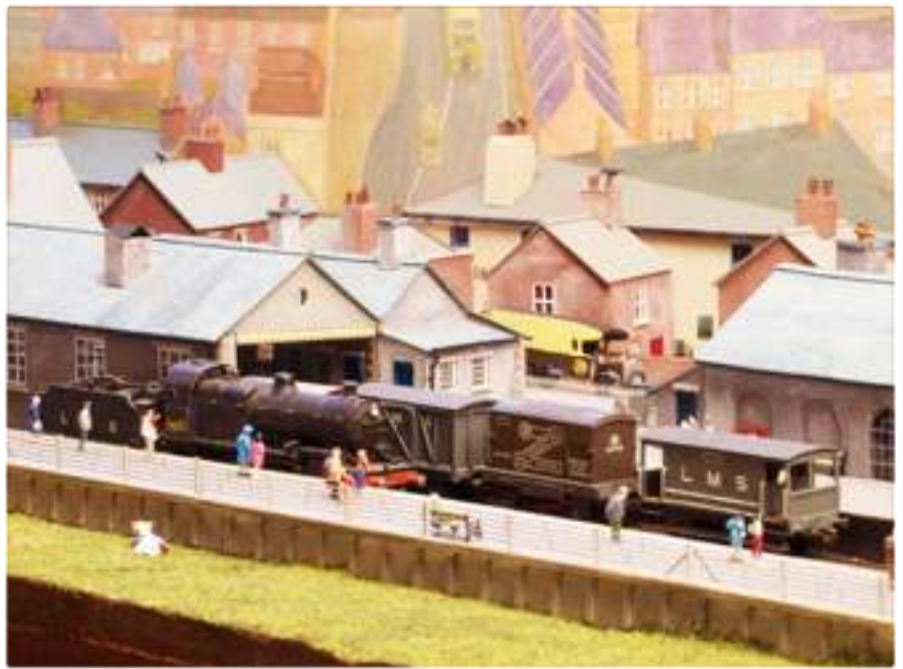
Regular meetings of what is now called the “Southern Gateway Development Group” has seen agreement over the outline specification between us, the Association and the PLC, and this will now form part of the planning brief which will form the basis of an outline planning application to Taunton Deane BC later in the year. Minutes of the meeting are posted on the PLC website. We have also met the Parish Council and the local residents to take them through the plans, as part of the process of stakeholder engagement.

For the Trust, these outline proposals would offer us the chance to display the coaches and many of our other precious artefacts much more effectively and to interpret them properly. It will also, in the first instance, allow us to provide some cover for the unrestored coaches which is so desperately needed. The covered display area and museum will be on the downside of the line, just south of the Station House, and linked by footbridge to the up platform and car park.

A great deal remains to be done in terms of planning before detailed proposals and drawings can be produced, and this is a major project that will take five years or more to implement, but a good start has been made, with the whole railway behind it.

This model which will be on display in the conference room area of the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard on the Friday and Saturday of the second weekend of the Gala, 11 and 12 March.

It will be available to view in operation for a minimum donation of 50 pence, with a suggested figure of £1. Photos of this particular layout can be seen on the previous page and below.



Additionally, we shall be holding a small railway themed bric-a-brac stall at the entrance to the Gauge Museum conference room area, for which donations would be much appreciated, suggested items are railway books to sell, model railway equipment, tools suitable for railway restoration or model railway work, small railway artefacts etc. All proceeds from this stall will be donated to the Trust, whereas proceeds from bringing in the model will go towards the cost of bringing in the model of Burnham on Sea.

At Williton, 6705 will be available to be seen on the two Saturdays and Sundays of the Gala, when the Swindon shed is open, and it is intended that a steward will be on hand to show interested people around the coach.

Claire Sheppey



This picture was taken on 5th November showing the coach being varnished by Duncan Hensley and Chris Walters. It is lettered and lined out, using the exact livery she carried when she rolled out from Swindon works in 1938.

Progress on 6705 - three steps forward, two steps back!

With the external painting and lettering complete, the coach has moved out of the shed, and despite all the work on roof and gutter repairs, the winter storms have found a leak! There were no visible signs of entry for the rain and it has taken us a few weeks to identify the problem, and thanks are due to Tim Randle, Greg Mc Nelly and Roger Legg for finding the source and also providing the solution. A couple of unfilled screw holes behind the guttering (quite invisible until the guttering was removed) was one cause and a secondary one was penetration of wind driven rain via a screw thread, where the sealant used had proved inadequate. These problems are being corrected as I write, and should finally produce a weatherproof coach.

The floor of the passenger compartments is formed of longitudinal timbers supporting a compound of brickdust, cement and sawdust, the compound used by the GWR which, when set was overlaid by a linoleum covering. The compound was partly removed at Crewe when the timber soleplate was replaced and following the experience of the Severn Valley Railway, from whom we took advice, the plan is to replace this with a tough, fire resistant multi-ply board. Having removed the

compound from compartment F, we found that the underlying timbers were bowed in the centre of the compartment, which produced a see-saw effect when the board was laid on it. So, the timbers have come up as well, and the bowing was caused by the thickness of the packing pieces used to support them. The packing pieces are there to keep the boards clear of the steel girders of the main frame supporting them, to avoid corrosion arising from the chemical reaction between oak and steel. These packing pieces have now been replaced by a plastic membrane and the floor is level again.

The original picture frames are starting to go back into the compartments, although some of the replacements made at Crewe are of the wrong thickness and are being replaced using a higher quality ply to match the originals. Thanks to Derek Blazdell for working on these, and to Ray Clack for all the work on fitting the window surrounds and other finishes. The compartment doors are being cleaned and revarnished by RAMS at Bishops Lydeard.

Many months of work remain, and while the setbacks are frustrating, we do have the confidence of knowing that all the remedial work is going to give us a coach that will not only look right, but perform reliably as well. Thanks go to the regular members of the team who have helped to get us this far, including Peter Sennett, John Crocker, John Peach and Peter Thompson. Add to this the help we get from Mike and Jennie Dunse, Claire Sheppey and Peter Gill, who, amazingly manages to get to Williton regularly from his home in Dundee, and we have a good team who are now making a lot of progress.

Chris Austin

Other coaches

A working party has replaced the decayed tarpaulin from Toplight 7740 in its blustery berth at Dunster West, which was done under possession. Because of the increasing wind speed, a second visit was needed to complete the task.



Now you see it ...
now you don't!



The plastic sheeting on some of the coaches at Williton is not standing up well to the wind either, and quickly deteriorates because of the UV rays from the sun (when we see it). What the wind doesn't damage, the

seagulls do, and for some reason, Toplight 3665 is a favourite perch for those razor sharp claws!

Work on 6705 frequently has to take second place to emergency repairs to maintain the limited protection the sheeting affords. We do desperately need to get the coaches under cover, but that is still some way off.

Chris Austin

Volunteers are welcome, either at the regular weekday sessions – Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays – or at our Sunday working parties between 10.00 and 16.00: see website for details. New volunteers can contact Chris Austin for further details: .

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.

Other news

Model of 5131 now on sale

The model of 5131 - the coach owned by the Trust, dating from 1928, and currently stored at Dunster - is now on sale.

The Trust and the Coombs report

The Trust's Chairman, Chris Austin, was one of the members of the team reviewing the West Somerset Railway Association, chaired by Robin Coombs. The Trust has supported the recommendations of the review. In a statement issued on 29 January, Chris Austin said "The report touches on the future of the whole railway and the Steam Trust therefore has no hesitation in commending it to all involved in supporting the West Somerset Railway. The Trust looks forward to working constructively with the Association, the Restorations team at Williton, the PLC and the other support groups on the railway to achieve its objectives of promoting the heritage of the West Somerset Railway."

Policy on reserves

In line with the requirements of the Charity Commission, the Trustees adopted a new policy on reserves at its meeting on 10 February. This is published on the website.

Further information about the work of the Trust, in particular regular updates on progress with restoration of 6705, can be found on the Trust's website www.wssrt.co.uk.