



West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust
Registered Charity No. 265564



Museums and Collections Overview

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Introduction.

- 1) The West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust (WSRHT) aims to promote education and outreach by furthering interest and appreciation of railway lines, equipment, buildings and their construction, steam or other traction engines of historical, engineering or scientific importance. Since 1984 the Trust has made financial contributions to the restoration of GWR steam locomotives, rescued a unique GWR sleeping car, established a GWR Museum, registering system and archive, published information leaflets, and advised on historical matters. The newsletter, Trust News, is sent to members and associate members occasionally and contains news, information, comment, and historical articles.

Great Western Railway (GWR) Sleeping Car No 9038.

- 1) The GWR Sleeping Car, No 9038 is one of three introduced by the GWR in 1897 to carry First Class passengers between Paddington and the port of Fishguard and the Irish ferry service.

The coach was in service until 1931.

Modelling and Model Railways.

- 1) The Gauge Museum Model Railway, Gauge Junction is a fixed '00'-gauge analogue controlled steam and diesel era model railway depicting a railway scene somewhere in rural England. The railway is built, maintained and operated by the younger members of the Trust, ages ranging from 14 to pensioner. The Model Railway is generally managed by a WSRHT Trustee.

The Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard.

- 1) The Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard aims promote education by furthering interest in and appreciation of railway lines, equipment, buildings, and construction and steam or other traction engines of historical engineering or scientific importance. Bishops Lydeard Station Goods Shed, originally built in 1862, has impacted historically on the economic and social developments locally in promoting the speedy transportation and delivery of goods by rail.
- 2) The museum is financed mainly by donations from visitors, the WSRHT and the WSR PLC, admission is free.

The Blue Anchor Museum.

- 1) In 1985, the Great Western Railway's 150th anniversary year, the Trust opened a small museum in the downside Waiting Room at Blue Anchor Station. Mainly WSR, GWR or artifacts from railways with a West Country bias, are displayed. The museum is normally open on Sundays, Bank Holidays and Gala days from Easter to October, although this is a flexible arrangement. A refurbished programme is planned, and material can be displayed as dual focus boards which are capable of being used for different purposes when the topic focus within the Museum needs to change. They are also looking at how material is going to be attached to walls learning from the experience at the Gauge Museum.
- 2) It is sometimes possible to make special opening arrangements.
- 3) The museum is financed mainly by donations from visitors, the WSRHT and the WSR PLC, admission is free.

One Museum on Two Sites.

- 1) The West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust manages both of the collections and museums at Bishops Lydeard and Blue Anchor. Between the two museums is only one collection of artifacts, in fact the Trust views the set up as being '*one museum on two sites.*' The museum tells the story of the Bristol and Exeter Railway, the GWR, the WSR and railways in the Southwest of England (British Rail Western Region).

West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust Articles of Association.

- 1) This is the overarching governing document that sets out the aims and objectives of the Trust and how things are to be achieved.

Governance and Management.

- 1) To meet the Accreditation standard, the Trust must have a clear statement of purpose and a satisfactory structure of Governance and Management documentation. The Trust plans ahead and has the resources to deliver the plan, assesses and manage the risk to the organisation and the Trust.

Planning and Resources.

- 1) To meet the Accreditation standard, the Trust has a business plan which covers the current and subsequent planning year and has financial sustainability.

Museum Collections and Management Policy.

- 1) All acquisitions and disposals are carried out openly and transparently. (To access the WSRHT Artifact Entry and Disposal Policy see the Artifact Entry form and Appendix 1).
- 2) The Trust has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust in relation to its stated objectives. There must be sound curatorial reasons for the acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items.
- 3) Acquisitions outside the policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

Museum Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.

- 1) The WSRHT operates the museums at Blue Anchor and Bishops Lydeard railway stations. Within these museums are collections of railway artefacts that are owned either by Trust or are currently on loan from other bodies or individuals.

See the Museum Collection Development Policy 2020-2025, for Acquisitions and Disposal Procedures.

Museum Artefact Receipt and Exit Forms.

- 1) The Trust responds to the collection of railway artefacts that are owned either by Trust or are on loan from Accredited Museums or recognised Heritage Sites. In the document, the term 'the collection' refers to the totality of these artefacts. Acquisitions outside the policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances. These forms are used to provide a control standard for artifacts received or withdrawn from the museum.

Museum Condition Report Forms.

- 1) Receipt: The form sets out to identify and quantify the condition of an artifact when it has been identified for the collection.

- 2) Exit: The form sets out to identify and quantify the condition of an artifact when it has been identified for the loan.
- 3) These forms form a cornerstone part of the Museum Collections Care and Conservation Plan.

Managing Collections.

- 1) To meet the Accreditation standard, the Trust takes responsibility for all the collections it manages and owns a policy for developing collections, including acquisitions and disposals.

Collections Care Monitoring.

- 1) The Trust has robust plans in place to deliver and maintain a high level of care to its collections through regular a monitoring programme which is essential as a means of identifying and reporting potential threats to the collection.

Holding and Developing Collections.

- 1) To meet the Accreditation standard, the Trust takes responsibility for all the collections it manages. The Trust has a policy, approved by the governing body, for developing collections, including acquisitions and disposals.

Museum Emergency Plan.

- 1) This is the assessment of a potential hazards that could threaten the museum and the actions that could be taken should one occur. It considers the safety of everyone who works in the building, visitors, objects, and the building itself. The plan is designed to identify all of the potential risks to the museum and to make plans to minimise the possible damage. To collate all key information in one location, allowing swift and easy access in case of an emergency and to provide support in essential decision making during a crisis.

Museum Management Plan.

- 1) The purpose of the Plan is to set out how the museum, in its reinterpreted and reorganised form, will be managed as part of the heritage responsibilities of the West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust. The Plan also summarises how the Trust will fulfil its obligations in relation to the artefacts and archive material located within the Museum and those items which are stored for historical research and future use.

Museum Response Team.

- 1) In an emergency situation involving immediate danger e.g., a fire, it is expected that all WSRHT staff and volunteers follow West Somerset Railway/Site Guidance and requirements to ensure their personal safety and the safety of visitors. It is vital that volunteers and staff take appropriate instructions from expert organisations such as the Fire Service, Ambulance Service or Police until the risk to life has been removed. It is the immediate aftermath, and the impact that the emergency has (potentially) had on buildings and collections, that the WSRHT takes responsibility for, and this is the core purpose of the Emergency Plan and the Response Team.

Assessing and Managing Risk.

- 1) To meet the standard, the Trust has secure occupancy of all premises containing collections. It has developed a Risk Assessment of Security Arrangements and has a clear and workable Emergency Plan. The Museum's Emergency Plan is an assessment of the potential hazards that could threaten the museums and the actions that could be taken should one occur.

Organisational Health.

- 1) The Trust has appropriate Governance and Management documentation. The Trust plans ahead and has the resources to deliver the plan, assesses and manage the risk to the organisation and the Trust.

Users and Their Experiences.

- 1) The Trust has made its collections and artifacts accessible to the public. The Trust accommodates, understands, and develops its audiences by engaging with users and improving the visitor experience.

Public Access.

- 1) To meet the Accreditation Standard, the Trust collections are open and free to all visitors and professional bodies wishing to access the artifacts, books and papers.

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Date Approved	Revision
0.1	November 2021	First Draft of document - November 2021.
0.2	October 2022	Draft Amended – Out for Approval
0.3	December 2022	WSRHT Board Approved. Next Revision due December 2025.

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