



VALE OF BERKELEY RAILWAY NEWS

The Magazine of the Vale of Berkeley Railway Trust
No 34 Spring/Summer 2025



£3.00

Front Cover: Always a great performer that never disappoints, 7029 Clun Castle, seen here on Sapperton Bank, was in action at the end of May with 'The Whistling Ghost' on its way to Minehead on the West Somerset Railway. (Rail Advent)

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The Vale of Berkeley Railway Magazine is published four times a year. The deadline for the next edition is : **30 Sept. 2025**

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Don't Forget to Buy Us a Coffee this year!



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Editorial

Welcome to a significantly enlarged magazine that combines the Spring and Summer. I hope you enjoy it. There were far too many things going on to get one out in the Spring so we hope this one makes up for it.

As ever, my thanks go out to the regular contributors who have made it possible but it is your magazine so it's open to any and all of you to send in things that you think will be interesting to readers. We like letters, opinions, local history and heritage, train trips, members stories, photos etc. The next one will be for the autumn so please send me material by the end of September.

We are getting settled in and organised at the Sidings now and new challenges are emerging. We have wagons, locos and equipment to restore, there's still track to renovate, environmental projects, as well as publicising our railway to the outside world. The list is a long one! If you have been considering coming down and volunteering this autumn, please let us know so we can be ready for you.

The big issue is, of course, the new shed. With the planning application, the end is in sight now. The loose ends are mostly environmental items such as biodiversity and waste management and there have been no significant objections which shows how we are generally seen as a 'good thing' locally.

The moment the application is granted, we need money, lots of it! You can join the coffee club and donate a small manageable amount every month or you can make an equally welcome one-off donation. If you know someone who might leave us a legacy that is also a great way of helping us.

We do need more people quite urgently to help out our communications team by offering some hours to represent us on our sales stand at events such as the recent Cam and Dursley Model Railway show. This brings in a regular income and, more importantly, it keeps our profile out there in the local community. We get to chat to people about the VoBR and we always pick up a trickle of new members and volunteer each time.

When it comes to volunteering, I'd like to draw your attention to Logan Wilde's model railway project described in this issue. It just shows that there are myriad ways of volunteering, not just wielding an angle grinder! If you can spare us just a few hours each week, working at home, we can give you a simple job to do that eases the load on some of our overburdened trustees. For example, does anyone want to make sure our Portaloo's are regularly cleaned by the contract cleaners? It just needs an occasional monitoring visit and a phone call!

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Howard

News Update

Training for Operational Roles Begins

Once the Permanent Way at the sidings is ready to receive moving locomotives (not far off now), we have to make sure our drivers, shunters etc are competent. It's a big step forward and training courses have started, led by Operations Manager Mike Abbott.

We have a rulebook that has become essential reading and the first course was held in May. There will be several more to follow.

Pete Polizsewski, Keith Griffiths, Martin Allen and Andrew Woodhall all passed. Congratulations to them!

Dr. Andrew Woodhall, owner of the lovely Planet diesel, provided this bit of feedback:

"Please turn your papers over - you may begin....." Words I'd heard many times over the years, but instead of exam questions about anatomy or physiology, today was about signals and shunting.

Under the helpful supervision of Mike Abbott, in his role as Operations Manager, an eager group of putative drivers and shunters were about to prove their knowledge of the VoBR Rulebook - the first step on the road to establishing an individual's operational competence, to be followed by footplate and lineside training and assessment at Oldminster sidings.

The successful candidates will then comprise the VoBR cohort of said drivers and shunters - available to be rostered for duties at the sidings, when we have, finally, completion of all the requirements in place to run our railway.

These requirements involve certifying the locos (in the first instance the Ruston and the Planet) as fit to run, and the permanent way as fit to be run on ! Not long now.

Oh, and how did I do in the exam? - you'll know if you see me driving Planet 3947 in earnest!

These courses are open to any volunteer who has ambitions to drive or shunt on the operational sections of the sidings. Once we are 'up and running' the roles will involve driving locomotives safely up and down Road I with one or more brake vans for the public to experience, shunting wagons about that are being used to move materials around the site.

One day, you will be able to venture beyond the boundary fence that separates us from Network Rail and venture up the line to Berkeley.

Our new Member of Parliament Visits the VoBR

We first met **Simon Opher MP** at one of the Sharpness 150 gatherings at the Dockers' Club and he promised to come and see us at the sidings. He was true to his word and we gave him the grand tour of the site on 23rd May, accompanied by Lois Hinder, his senior executive officer for the constituency.



LEFT (left to right): Mike Abbott, Simon Opher MP, Howard Parker, Carolyn Jones.

Mike Abbott was on hand to explain how steam engines work although Simon, like a lot of people, did seem a little perplexed by the Fireless loco!

Carolyn and Howard talked to him about our aims to develop the VoBR as a strong industrial heritage presence and asked him if he could hasten some of the conversations we need to have with some senior Network Rail managers about things like getting access to the branch line, signal boxes and beginning a conversation about the future of the whole dock area with the Canal and River Trust.

BELOW: a drones eye view of the sidings site in May.



Oldminster Update

Now that the move from the shed is 99.9% complete, there is a lot to do to get things neat and tidy and making the site attractive both to the volunteers who work there and also to visitors. Volunteer accommodation is very important so a lot of work has been done to get staff accommodation up and running.

BELOW: The patio has been laid and the Hawaiian ambience is clearly in evidence. Suggestions regarding provision for beach volleyball have been gently but firmly turned down.



Water, Water, Everywhere and Nowhere!

The recent good weather has consigned the winter flooding to a distant memory and plans are progressing to build up the surface of the roadway that will go south to north alongside the track towards the planned shed. Deliveries of hardcore are expected within the month.

We are, though, still without a water supply although the good news is that CRT have just granted us a licence to run a water main from Oldminster Road, down through the woods that have grown up on the old track-bed onto the sidings. A big thanks go to Jeremy Harrison and his CRT colleagues for their cooperation in this. This work will probably not be cheap to provide since it involves getting a contractor to tunnel into the ground and across the tracks to lay the pipe but it's essential work and should be completed by the end of the summer. An electricity supply would be even more expensive, we think, so it's solar panels and generators for the moment.



Fencing Completed!!

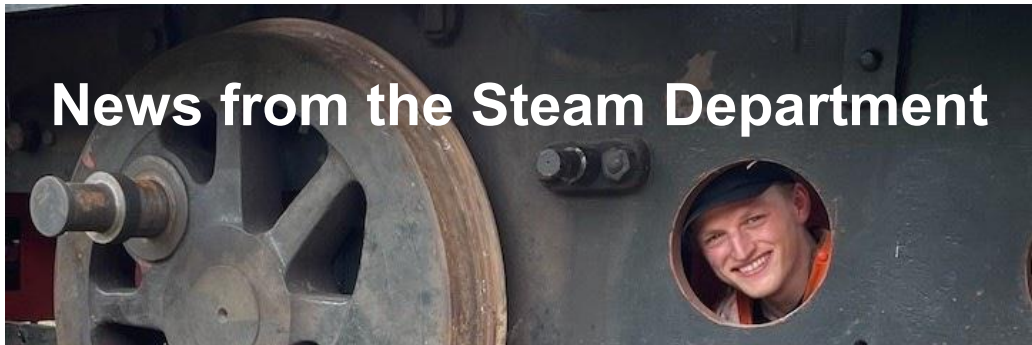
This is such a magnificent achievement. Ok, so it's not going to make the front page of Steam Railway magazine but the sheer commitment of our volunteers in erecting the new fence line the full length of the site in May is a testament to their commitment and tenacity.

Pete Poliszewski writes, *"Hooray. On Friday the fencing team erected the last panel for the Eastern boundary which is now complete. The last post proved to be the most difficult of all. We hit solid clay and rock only 6 inches below the surface, and it took 3 of us nearly 3 hours with iron bars to make the hole deep enough."*

The northern boundary borders onto a field owned by CRT so is much less prone to invasion by potential vandals etc. As can be seen, it also very much more overgrown than it was so poses less of a risk.

Is the old buffer stop seen here a heritage item worth renovating? It would certainly look nice to see it... Back in the day, if a train ran away coming down from Berkley this is where it would have come to a halt!

News from the Steam Department



ABOVE: Henry Biggin posing from the inside (while helping remove the brake rigging from the chassis of 2157). Removing the brake gear was trickier than expected (BELOW)

Sam White writes: “Most of the brake gear has been removed and cleaned up. This now needs inspecting for wear. The expansion links and eccentric straps are away and we await a quote for their renovation as are the motion bearings.

The chassis is waiting to move under cover into the temporary tent/shed so that work can continue in a dry space.

There is a multitude of small parts that need cleaning up and/or repairing so let us know if you can help. The team is on site at the sidings every weekend.



How much does it cost to buy a steam engine? Surprisingly, not all that much. You can buy a small industrial tank engine for under £20,000 but that's when your problems start! Many people have banded together to buy locos with worthy ambitions but little cash. 2157 was a manageable purchase by Sam White and Mike Abbott but it is going to cost them at least £30,000 to get it steaming again.

Many parts can be refurbished by volunteers dismantling them off the engine and cleaning them up. Other parts are worn and need replacing. The metal tank on 2157 has holes in it where it has rusted through—it's completely life expired. The side has been completely cut away so a whole new tank will need to be fabricated and welded (another reason why we need to build our new machine shop asap).

A generous donation of £6000 would pay for the tank!

It is when you get to examining the boiler and firebox that the costs start to mount. Water and air are very corrosive indeed and almost all steam engines require repeated maintenance to these parts. Boiler 'tickets' issued by the boiler inspector only last about 10 years so this is a major on-going expense for owners. A large loco like Flying Scotsman can go from being worth millions with a full 10 year boiler ticket to being nothing but a costly liability when the ticket runs out and the maintenance bill comes to upwards of half a million pounds!



Newly restored to a superb standard by the DFR, 'Uskmouth' gets stuck into brake van rides at Norchard. This is exactly the scenario we have for Sharpness, using the Severnside Loco group's Andrew Barclay No 2157. Come and help make it happen. While we wait, we might just borrow Uskmouth...

Pacer Update

by Andy Thompson

Andy seems very keen on these ageing second generation DMUs! As well as being our Pacer supremo, he has just been to Cornwall on holiday to ride on any class 158s he can find!

(RIGHT: the Class 150 train to Looe at Liskeard. A Cornish Cream Tea was the lure!)



Pacer Update June 2025

What with all the activity on moving from the Old Shed to Oldminster sidings, the Pacer has been short of attention from volunteers recently, although

one determined individual did manage to get on-site without permission and force entry to the Pacer. At first we thought they hadn't done anything but we did notice that one of the seat cushions has been cut open with a sharp knife or similar. Thankfully that seems to be the only damage, and the fencing has been repaired and reinforced against further trespassers.

143603 - Steve Owen and I did have a go at starting up the DMS (Driving Motor Standard) one week but despite our best efforts, we couldn't get it going. A week or two later, Steve had charged up enough batteries to have another try, and this time we had specialist help from Mike Speck and Brent Carter (both mainline qualified drivers) and they found that several controls on the outside of the unit had been "tinkered" with. After some attention both cars fired up and Mike even got the doors working again. The correct coupling bolts were then fitted between the cars with the help from my son Rob, who is a fitter in the RAF, and was glad to get involved.

Now things have calmed down again after the rush to get the shed cleared, and the volunteers are getting settled into their containers at Oldminster, so there is starting to be more time to clean up the Pacers both inside and out. One area that is badly in need of attention is the area of floor by the doors where rusting is very noticeable. The last week of May saw the plating being removed so that the area can be treated.

Of course another useful thing to have would be a water supply – and thanks to a little joy from CRT we now have the licence from them to install a water supply across their land onto ours. This will improve things no end: we will be able to use a pressure washer and some TFR (Traffic Film Remover) on the unit to get the green algae off – which is not enhancing the green livery at all! There are some body work issues which we can also start to look at when we get the unit cleaned up.

143612 – Our other unit is still in service with the L&MMR at Cynheidre near Llanelli, and was running this weekend carrying passengers. They have opened up a new café at Cynheidre, in the grounded body of a class 153 single car DMU – I must pop up there to see it and give you a first hand report on what kind of cakes are available!



A nice end of winter view looking north. It shows all the various areas we need to improve in the next period. To the left of the Pacer the land needs flattening and tidying. We still have hopes of putting a signal box there. The light grey area is the unloading location, big enough to enable the largest locos and carriages to arrive and depart.

Behind the camera, the boundary fence will acquire some gates soon so that we can access the head shunt on Network Rail beyond. On the right hand side the grass strip has been mown and now looks better. The Pacer is on Road 6, while on Road 5, the Ruston, Planet, Andrew Barclay and Fireless locos all await their mega shunting move so that they can arrive at their final positions, closer to the containers.

The big temporary tent, which can be seen in the distance, will house 3 of them. Once all that has been achieved, the real restoration work can restart. The track that the Pacer is on is connected to the national rail network.—one day perhaps! ...



The two cars of Pacer 143603 finally got attached to each other by the fitting of the correct coupling on 24th May.

Trustee in the Spotlight!

We thought we'd kick off this new feature with someone who currently our ONLY female Trustee, Carolyn Jones. Carolyn now has the role of General Secretary to the Board.

(We need more women on the Board because mixed gender teams are proven to lead to better decision making! Other trustees will come under the Spotlight in later magazines...)

Where do you live?

I live in Dursley, so about 10 mins away – very handy for arriving at the last minute before board meetings!

When did you start as a Trustee/ Volunteer?

I'd been a member and helping at the sidings for around 5 months when Howard asked me to become a Trustee. I was voted in on my birthday at the AGM in 2023. I'm still teased about giving up my birthday to the railway.



How did you initially get involved with VoBR?

We moved to the area in late 2015 and were aware of something going on down at Sharpness. I recall Richard (my son) reading an article in Heritage Railway magazine. Richard has a great love of trains and as he got older we were looking for things of interest for him so we decided to join and see where it went. So in 2022 we became members and volunteered as a family.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with us?

Probably the variety. I can use my brain and deal with board matters and learn new skills, it can be really empowering to problem solve as a team. In addition you can also find me wielding a mattock or other tools and having a go down at the Sidings. I also enjoy this aspect of the physical graft and again learning new skills. I can now identify chairs, fishplates and keys (if you know, you know!). The guys are all really helpful and don't patronise me. I get stuck in where I can but also know when to leave it to those who can.

What's the worst bit about volunteering or being a Trustee?

I'm not sure I should answer that! Probably the weather and the mud. There's about 4 maybe 5 months when the sidings are absolutely lovely otherwise its way too hot and sunny or wet, cold and muddy. But whatever the weather we will be there.

What do you enjoy doing when you are not down the sidings?

I work part time and we have a large garden which keeps me busy but I like walking or getting out on my bike especially if it involves a stop at a good pub.

If money was no object what engine would you like to see running on the branch line?

A green one!

And finally..... Coffee or Tea: Both but depends on the time of day.

10 Years at the Old Engine Shed: 2015-2025

On 15th August 2015, the Canal and River Trust handed over the keys to the shed (LEFT) and it all began!



Now, almost exactly 10 years later, the VoBR is moving on and we move another step towards that coveted moment when we gain access to the branch line and become a full heritage railway. The photos that follow illustrate the progress we made while at the shed. It was not without what we can call diplomatically 'challenges' but let's just say we have learnt a lot!

Looking back, we were a bit naïve. There was an awful lot of wishful thinking about what can be achieved and how long things would take. The whole site was piled high with items donated from different places. I think we all felt that running trains up the branch line was just round the corner. It has turned out to be a lot more difficult than that.

So we got involved in restoring some of the items available. Most of us were new to this and it was a case of learning our trade bit by bit. Small projects proved very do-able such as the Geismar motorised trolley. (RIGHT)

The DFR became informal partners and found a 'Jacker-packer' in the undergrowth at Norchard and this was successfully rebuilt, led by Robin Payne and Ken Bailey. (MIDDLE)

We turned out to be pretty good with diesel engines and the Vanguard diesel and 03 No D2069 were successfully brought back to life before they were moved on by their owner.

The class 14 D9553, expected to become part of our collection, also departed as did the frames and wheels (and not a lot else) of Black 5 No 44901.

The National Railway Museum's 4F 44027 remained but for all sorts of reasons is very little further advanced than the day it left Toddington 10 years ago and will be leaving soon, probably to the Churnet Valley Railway in Staffordshire.

The first vehicle to be donated to us was the BR Brake van, a dilapidated and rotten edifice indeed (RIGHT) when it arrived but is now as pristine as the day it rolled out of Darlington Works in 1959.



Life at 'The Shed' - 2015-2015



ABOVE: Our first Stroud M.P. visit—Neil Carmichael. We are now on our fourth, two Labour and Two Conservative. All have assisted us in their own way.



Two volunteers still active with the VoBR in 2025:

LEFT: Derek Hore gets to grips with the undergrowth on the Dock line outside the shed.

BELOW: Andrew Woodhall rides the Wickham after its restoration.

The Dock line was considered for a time as something we could renovate to become a short operating line.



After examination, though, it became clear that the track was in a very poor condition indeed and it would have been very expensive to do.

Shortly afterwards we turned our attention to the sidings which were obviously much more suitable for us.

The shed site very quickly filled up with items donated to the railway project in the expectation that we would very soon be able to access the branch line.

An arrangement was made to use the car park at Berkeley Green college for more storage and VoBR laid track for that purpose.



This almost immediately became a massive headache as items stored there like this GWR parcels van, a wooden sided vehicle already turning rapidly to compost started to disintegrate.

This became a serious safety risk to anyone passing too close and the entire sides collapsed in on themselves one stormy night and that was that.

BELOW: Meanwhile back at the shed, our BR brake van has fared rather better despite needing an almost complete rebuild. It is one of our best success stories and will, we hope, soon be seen operating on the sidings, giving rides to visitors.





The sad remains of Black 5 No 44901 was always a challenge too far. We helped conserve the frames, wheels and cylinder block but it would have been a massively expensive project and it is now said to be on a private site in the Herefordshire countryside where progress is no doubt slow.



The Vanguard diesel owned by Andrew Goodman (LEFT) was the first loco project to be brought to completion by VoBR volunteers. It's seen here in the early days before restoration to working order and later after work had been carried out to an excellent standard by the VoBR volunteers.

It was removed by the owner to a site in the Midlands and was last seen looking rather abandoned on a siding at Brush locomotive works in Loughborough.



BELOW LEFT: Pete White, seen here in the erecting at the shed, used to work at the shed in British Waterway days when it was where the dock shunters were kept—a valued connection to the days when Sharpness had a working dock railway system.





Our first meetings were held at the shed and were always very well attended. Later we moved to the Berkeley Arms where the lure of beer proved an incentive. Covid put an end to these but we hope to bring them back just as soon as we can find an organiser.



LEFT: Winter was always cold inside the machine shop. This little stove, a relic of the Somerset and Dorset Railway was never up to the job!



ABOVE RIGHT: The 03 side by side with the LMS shunter in the erecting shop. It was hoped that both would be used on the VoBR as it developed. The LMS shunter is now on a private site while the 03 is on a siding at Princes Risborough.



VoBR Member's Walk for Prostate Cancer

As this edition of the magazine closed for printing, we saw on the BBC an item about GWR's incredible 114 mile walk from Gloucester to Paddington to raise awareness about prostate cancer and raise funds for Prostate Cancer UK.

One of those taking part was GWR driver and VoBR member Mike Speck. What an amazing achievement! The following article comes from the RailUK website.

In an inspiring show of unity and determination, colleagues from Great Western Railway (GWR) walked an astonishing 114 miles overnight to raise vital funds for Prostate Cancer UK.

The heartfelt 'Walk to Paddington' event transformed Gloucester Station into a beacon of hope, as GWR staff took turns walking in pairs along the UK's longest continuous rail platform. Over 19 hours, they covered the symbolic distance from Gloucester to London Paddington, step by step, to honour team members affected by, and raise awareness of prostate cancer.



Among the emotional highlights of the night was GWR Driver Mike Speck (LEFT) – who recently completed treatment for the disease – crossing the finish line hand-in-hand with Tracy Bannon, an administrator at Gloucester depot.

Tracy's father-in-law passed away from prostate cancer, making the moment deeply personal and powerful.



Mike, who was diagnosed in February of 2024 said: "I had no symptoms to indicate I was unwell, however after my annual physical, which is arranged through GWR, I decided to get the PSA blood test. This led to a scan, which confirmed I had prostate cancer. If I hadn't had this routine test, I wouldn't have been any the wiser that something was wrong.

"My colleagues were incredibly supportive during my treatment. They visited me in hospital and kept me updated on daily life at work. I'm never happy doing nothing, so I even brought my tablet to hospital to complete my online training courses!

"My grandfather was a steam locomotive driver, and my granddaughter Holly is also a driver. The railway is in my blood and my colleagues are my extended family; I want to share my story to give men like me the courage to get checked."

Editor's note: Mike is one of our Pacer team who are in the process of refurbishing 143603 to running order.

Scenes from a Trip to Didcot Railway Centre



FROM ABOVE CLOCKWISE : GWR 1338, similar to one of the Sharpness dock shunters; 7808, a Manor class loco seen on Sharpness freights in BR days; an example of new plastic sleepers in use on the permanent way at Didcot.



Statfold Barn Railway's Spectacle of Steam, sat 8th March 2025

Words and Pics by Rich Kelsey

Behold! A sunny day in early March 2025, and a visit to Tamworth to the Statfold Barn Railway's Spectacle of Steam, held on the 2nd weekend of March 2025. The visit was Organized by Mike Smith of and for SVTEC (Stroud Vintage Transport and Engine Club) members, using KB coaches. The mega day out picked up SVTEC members at Cainscross and Stonehouse before making our way north up the M5 and M42.

This was a very busy steam gala seeing 13 steam railway locomotives in steam for the gala including the 12¼ inch locomotive Carol Ann. Also, a Steam roller and stationary steam (road) engines were in action, thus making anyone's visit a great day out, especially for vintage transport enthusiasts. A group of very young midlands police cadets were also volunteering practicing their crowd control skills.

The locos in steam at the event ranged from the Victorian to Modern eras, with some being constructed in more recent years at Statfold Barn's impressive engineering workshop. Statfold Barn owner Graham Lee acquired what remained of the Hunslet Engine Company in 2005 and in doing so, Graham retained the rights to build steam locomotives under the Hunslet name. He produced a new steam powered Hunslet in 2006 and restored several locomotives in the collection.

In 2017, Graham and Carol Lee gave the collection of over 100 locomotives and associated vehicles, equipment and ephemera to the newly formed Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust, to ensure the collection was retained and maintained at its current site. The Statfold Barn Railway began as a 2ft gauge railway around a lake in Graham and Carol Lee's rather large garden near Tamworth! and it just grew into what you see today.

The railway and its museum have approximately 50 steam narrow gauge locomotives on many different gauges, about 26 diesel and 10 petrol locomotives, also some battery electric locomotives, railcars and a tram from the Burton and Ashby Light Railway. The impressive Roundhouse Museum is home to over 20 historic steam and diesel engines and is on two levels where you will find a selection of locomotives from different manufacturers from around the world. Locomotives are displayed around the turntable with railway memorabilia and information boards that explain the story behind this fantastic collection.

The main railway is 2-foot gauge and consists of 4 stations starting, at Statfold Junction, then moving on to Strawberry Park Platform, Oak Tree Halt and Cogan Halt before circling the Balloon Loop back to Oak Tree Halt. In 2022 the team at Statfold Country Park began working on a new line to add to Statfold Barn Railway known as Mease Valley Light Railway (MVLRL). This light railway runs on 12¼ inch gauge track and consists of 4 further stations in addition to the 2-foot gauge railway including Mease Valley Light Railway, Mallard Halt, Oak Tree Halt and finally Warren Hill.

It was a mega enjoyable day out – something quite different., with cracking company, brilliant weather, and lots of steam action! Rob, Dr Bill, Pete, Terry, Ian, Jill and I would like to thank Mike Smith and SVTEC for organising a thoroughly enjoyable day out to remember. Also, we would like to thank KB Coaches and the Statfold Barn railway staff and volunteers and exhibitors, visiting loco owners for also making the day out a friendly and enjoyable event.

Three Cheers to you all!

1. Admissions & Entrance
2. Roundhouse Museum
3. Felllumpa Mini Golf
4. Strawberry Play Park
5. Agricultural Museum - Road Steam
6. Zipwire & Outdoor Play Area

7. Mease Valley Light Railway
8. Mease Valley Woodland Walk
9. The Foden Suite - 20 years of Statfold!
10. The Statfold Shop
11. Education Suite - Arts & Crafts

ENTHUSIAST WEEKEND
SBR STATFOLD COUNTRY PARK
SPECTACLE OF STEAM
 ESTABLISHED 2005

2-Foot Railway
 Enjoy unbridled rides on our 2-foot gauge railway with frequent train services every 20-30 minutes from Statfold Junction stopping at Old Tree Hall.

Mease Valley Light Railway
 Enjoy unbridled rides on our 2-foot gauge railway with frequent train services every 20-30 minutes from Statfold Junction stopping at Mallow Hill and Warner Hill. The Mease Valley Woodland Walk is adjacent to the railway.

Food & Refreshment
 Breakfast Service 8.30am - 10.30am - Diane's Diner
 Street Coffee 10.30am - 4.00pm - Diane's Diner
 Pizza (Cheese / Margherita) - Chickens in a Bag
 Light Bites & Snacks - Peeler's Bar & Cafe

INSIDE THE ROUNDHOUSE
 Museum Hall - Traders
 Roundhouse Museum - Loco Display
 Toby's Barn Play & Climb
 Diane's Diner Hot Food & Refreshment
 Peeler's Bar & Cafe

THE STATFOLD SHOP!

TOILETS & FACILITIES
 First Aid | Help Point
 Food & Refreshment
 Vintage Bus Shuttle Pick Up & Drop Off Point

PLUS YOUR FUN!

FACEBOOK **INSTAGRAM** **LINKEDIN** **TIKTOK**



**Statfold Barn
 Scenes—a
 marvellous
 mecca for
 narrow gauge
 fans**



Miscellany I



LEFT: Oldminster volunteer Richard Jones looks pretty pleased with his chance to ride behind Flying Scotsman at Minehead. The fireman looks a bit less happy in the heat, though!

BELOW: Not to be outdone, Richard's mum, VoBR trustee Carolyn Jones gets a chance to ride in the cab of a class 37 from Gotherington to Toddington during the recent trustees visit to the GWSR.



Monthly Talks with Beer at the Berkeley Arms?

These were very popular before Covid and we would dearly love to bring these back. Unfortunately it does need either a coordinator (or a small team of 2-3) to organise it. It mostly involves working from home arranging speakers and the BA has always given us the room for free (so long as we drink their beer, of course!).

If this sounds like something you would like to do, please do let us know. It means that you can be involved in the VoBR even if you are not an active volunteer.



Here's a nice little project for someone to take on! We were donated these scales (LEFT) that came from the GWR weighbridge at Usk. On the right is what Bryan and Savita Nicholls they have done with their similar scales at the beautifully restored GWR station at Gotherington on the GWSR.

The Signal Box Saga

Readers of this magazine will be aware that we have been working for several years to acquire a Midland Railway signal box for Sharpness. Unfortunately we have been thwarted at every turn by the logistics of moving it and the sheer costs involved so I think we have (almost) reached the end of the line on this project, short of a miracle occurring in the shape of finding someone who's just won the lottery.

It would be a very 'nice to have' but with a healthy dose of realism creeping into our thinking as we count the funds needed more urgently for other purposes, we will in all likelihood settle for something more like this arrangement (RIGHT). This is a Hull and Barnsley Railway box that has been re-erected at the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway. And very nice it looks too. We have a lever frame, we have the box so it is just the volunteer labour required. **Are there any budding S&T volunteers out there who would like to be involved in this?**



Miscellany 2

RIGHT: The reopening of the Portishead branch has been a long time coming but with the lost bit of funding now secured, it looks as if work will actually start ... soon? (Edgar Craggs)



ABOVE: The West Somerset Railway beat us to it! Here is their fireless loco in action at Williton at their recent gala. It seems to have attracted a lot of interest: "so how does it work if there's no fire, then?" Our own fireless loco needs its own support group now.



LEFT: Our fabulous grass mowing team hard at work! Gem and Matt have made a real difference to the look of the sidings site, keeping the grassed areas neat and tidy.



Caption Competition?

I think Mike Abbott is explaining to Stroud M.P. Simon Opher how steam engines work but I might be wrong.

Mike and Sam are always looking for help to restore their lovely Andrew Barclay steam engine to working order.

Simon visited us in May and has agreed to do all he can to help us with our aims, particularly with accessing the mainline. Interestingly his assistant Lois's grandfather was a GWR driver at Swindon—something she is very proud of!

Who says we're not running passenger trains yet? We are still pushing trolleys up and down but we hope to get our motorised transport (the Geismar) up and running soon.

We have started training potential crews in shunting, driving skills as well so it may not be too long before our little diesels can be seen trundling up and down the tracks.





D 1015



WESTERN RAILWAY

Meeting the Ecological Challenge

We always knew that putting in a planning application to build a shed and workshop would be complex and time consuming, so we recruited a planning consultant, Dan Chalk of Urban Vista, to assist us. Dan has been invaluable to us and, despite his fees, has saved us many thousands of pounds in the process through his expertise, knowledge and contacts.

The area that has brought the biggest challenge is the new legislation created to enhance the ecological diversity of the UK—the requirement for any developer of land to produce plans to show how the ecological diversity of any development site will be enhanced over the course of the next 30 years. We have always recognised that what we do with our land has an ecological impact and that we have a responsibility to behave in a way that does not damage natural habitats.

Graham Sturgess and Howard Parker explain what we have learnt and the challenge this is presenting for the VoBR.

The new eco buzz acronym is BNG or Biodiversity Net Gain. This legislation came into effect in April 2024 for smaller projects such as ours (the date for larger projects was March 2024) and was a step change in planning law.

All local authorities now have a ‘BNG Officer’ who is tasked with ensuring that the issue is dealt with satisfactorily in the case of all planning applications. Early in the process of preparing our Planning Application for the shed we engaged a number of ecology groups to undertake surveys into things like rare species e.g. horseshoe bats, great crested newts etc. However, since our application was submitted, the local BNG officer has declared that these surveys were now inadequate in light of the very latest legislation.

(If only we had done our planning application as soon as we got the lease to OS, none of this would have applied as the BNG legislation isn't retrospective! To read the BNG officer's report, go onto the Planning Portal: publicaccess.stroud.gov.uk and search for our submission there. Ed.)

What has changed is that because our site is a ‘brown field’ site that has, in the past, been altered by industrial use but which has now returned to nature. - think of the poppy fields after WWI. Ironically, the habitats of these sites tend to have a higher diversity of species in them than green field sites due to the fact that they have been abandoned for so long and have become a refuge for species displaced by green field sites. This means that ecologically they have a ‘higher value’ in terms of their diversity. Developers like us are required to show how they will achieve an increase in biodiversity over a period of time. This can be challenging because increasing diversity in a brown field site is harder to achieve because there is already a higher diversity present!





Clever (cynical?) developers get round this problem by off-setting—buying land elsewhere in order to get their BNG done there. We certainly can't afford to do that. We asked Dan whether there were any other ways round this problem.

Does the planning case officer have any latitude to ignore the BNG officer's input on the basis that he is the only statutory consultee (at least so far - they had until 10th June to respond) to have raised significant objections? The answer was no: the case officer would not be able to override the objection as BNG is enshrined in law and the BNG officer is SDC's designated expert.

Could we turn up at the planning committee meeting and argue our poverty and the worthiness of our project? Again, no—our application is unlikely to go to the planning committee i.e. it will be the planning case officer who decides. If we can't address the BNG officer's concerns we won't get planning consent. It really is as black and white as that.

In light of all this, trustees reluctantly agreed to pay for a new habitat survey and associated costs. This has now taken place and went well. The botanist who conducted it was extremely agreeable and said that he would do his best to be supportive of our project in his report. He did not think that the actions we would have to take would be too onerous—good news indeed—and we now await the response to his report by Stroud DC.

So, what are the implications for what we do at the sidings going forward? We have already produced a draft Biodiversity policy that needs discussing. From that we will have to produce a BNG plan so we will need to recruit some people to help us do this.

It is fortunate that the north west of our site lends itself well to this side of our development. We can create better habitats for flora and fauna there and we can gain assistance from, for example, local primary schools to do planting, putting up bird boxes etc. So, ultimately, this could all work to our advantage.

Can you help?

**Do you know any local community ecology groups who would like to come and assist in developing our BNG plan?
Please Let us know!**

The 2nd Cam & Dursley Model Railway Exhibition

The VoBR was very pleased to be invited again to attend this show and our thanks go to all the Wings and Wheels folk who made it such a great success and also to our valiant sales team for staffing the VoBR sales stand. Report and Photos by **Rich Kelsey**.

The 2nd Cam & Dursley Model Railway Exhibition run by Wings & Wheels Society in conjunction with the Gloucester O Gauge Group, was held at Dursley Community Centre on Sunday 8th June 2025. This show was a resounding success and was very busy, seeing approximately 250 public visitors from families to enthusiasts attending throughout the day. All profits from this 2nd show will be going to the Blood Bikes and the Dursley Community Centre charity trust.

This year's show remit was the same as our previous 2024 show: Working with local charities in and for the community, it is worth noting that due to the success of the first show in 2024 the charity donation was used to install a Defibrillator unit on the side of Dursley Community Centre & Redock School Sports Hall.



The 2025 exhibition was held across 3 rooms and a bar area, showcasing working model railway layouts & dioramas in N/O/OO/16mm gauges, and a rather large 3.5inch scale LNER Class N2 steam locomotive (LEFT), along with trade stands and a 3D printing demonstration.

The Avon Valley Railway (based at Bitton) and the Vale of Berkeley Railway (BELOW RIGHT) also had stalls that proved popular with the visiting public. Outside, the Blood Bikes had a

stall with an NHS blood bike and car on display (BELOW LEFT) and this also proved to be very popular.



The show had a part emphasis on local railways and featured a 7mm (O gauge) fine scale model diorama of Dursley and Berkeley Station circa 1960. Also, a stand with local Dursley Branch Line photos and memorabilia was on show along with local rail historian Ian Thomas on hand answering questions about the history of the area's local railways.

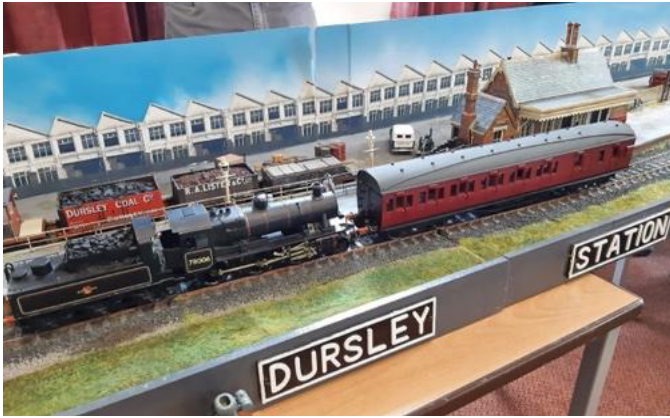


The exhibition hall upstairs had a very large O gauge test track layout (owned and operated by the Gloucester O Gauge Group) that is 28ft x 18ft. A large scenic N gauge model railway on show (among other layouts) in the downstairs main hall named Bridgebury Gate from Taunton, 15ft x 1.5ft in size attracted much public attention. In fact there was a total of 15 model railway layouts and dioramas of outstanding quality operating throughout the day across the 3 rooms, made by clubs and individuals from Somerset, Bristol, Thornbury, Cheltenham, Cirencester, Swindon, Dorset and the Forest of Dean. There was also a Hornby Dublo layout named 'Memory Lane' that could be operated by children and parents on the day, proving to be much fun!



Wings and Wheels Society Dursley and the Gloucester O Gauge Group would like to thank all the Exhibitors, Local WI Ladies, Blood Bike volunteers, Community Centre, Trade and Society stands along with their enthusiasm for the show for making our second show possible, as well the families, public, enthusiasts that visited the show supporting us for making this a highly enjoyable and successful community event.

Photo Gallery: The Cam and Dursley Model Railway Show



TOP:

Memories of the Lister's works at Dursley



MIDDLE: The 3-rail Hornby layout, bringing back nostalgic memories of the 1950s train sets (for some people at least!)

BOTTOM: The enduring attraction of model railways for people of all ages



Ian and Jill Thomas with some of their fascinating collection of railwayana items

Diesel Contrasts



ABOVE: Stobart Rail class 66 'Eddie the Engine' helping out DRS on a flask train at Berkeley in 1989 (Stella Weston from Facebook)

BELOW: During the BR 'blue era, Class 31 No 31414 shunts a mixed freight at Oldminster Sidings. The loading gauge is the clue to the exact location. (coloured)



Easy Money for the VoBR!

The VoBR is in a new phase now. Over the last few years we built up a nice 'nest egg' for the railway infrastructure we are now actively developing. We are now spending the money donated so far and as everyone knows, railways are expensive! The trustees are trying hard to access as many sources of funding as possible.

Here Mike Studden explains how you can donate money to the VoBR cause without it costing you anything at all!

Sadly, everything we do nowadays has a price attached and that price is increasing all the time. The work required to establish our new base at Oldminster Sidings is no exception. Whilst we already personally contribute through our subscriptions and the Just Giving scheme, more is needed to keep the ball rolling. We're already signed up to a web-based scheme which will give donations on online purchases both large and small.

For example, a recent single donation of £17.00 came from one of our subscribing members paying for a short break holiday through Booking.com and while this may not sound like a lot, multiplied by the purchasing power of our whole membership, it can add up to quite a regular income and the great thing is that it doesn't cost you a penny!

To raise funds through Easyfundraising you simply need to search Easyfundraising.org.uk and set up an account, log in, then you can register the charity you wish to support, in this case Vale of Berkeley Railway.

Every time you choose to purchase something which offers a donation (which you can check by manually searching their site) you will need to log in to Easyfundraising and find the site you want to purchase from through their Web page or simply download their app from App Store on Apple or Play Store on Android devices.

Easyfundraising.org.uk can also flag donation-raising sites from your browser, using their Donation Reminder browser extension. This tool automatically pops up on retailer websites where donations are available, reminding you to activate the donation before you make a purchase.

You can install this extension for browsers like Chrome, and it's designed to ensure you don't miss out on donations to your chosen cause.

Examples of donation raising sites are: Booking.com M&S, EBay, Amazon, Tesco, Argos, Dunelm, Pets At Home, Curry's, Moonpig, Trainline, plus 7000+ more brands!

If we all did this, it would raise a noticeable sum and help get that shed built a lot quicker!

Please help us by acting the moment you read this !!

The Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Railway

Cotswold Festival of Steam

Saturday Bank Holiday Monday 24-26 June 2025

Pics by Rich Kelsey & Ian Thomas & Words by R.Kelsey

In this special year celebrating 200 years of passenger rail travel, this year's GWSR Cotswold Festival of steam running over 3 days (24/5/25 to 27/5/25), saw the festival celebrate everything great about the railways with an exciting line up of guest locomotives alongside the home fleet.

These included GWSR's latest resident, new-build 6880 Betton Grange. Guest locos (after a couple of alterations near to the gala date) were: GWR 0-6-0 Pannier Tank No. 7714, Borrowas 0-4-0WT (Well Tank), 'The King' from 1906, Kerr-Stuart 0-4-0WT works no. 3063 from 1918, Andrew Barclay Austerity 0-6-0ST No15 Earl David from 1959, BR standard 4 No 75069 and our favourite, Stirling "O" class No. 65 Built in 1896 at Ashford. This venerable loco received a rebuild to class "O1" as long ago as 1908, and ran until finally withdrawn in 1961—a long life!

An intensive timetable was operated with goods trains, local stopping services which included Hayles Abbey Halt, alongside non-stop expresses, providing continuous action all day for enthusiasts and families alike. Many of our Wings and Wheels Society members attended the event with some attending all 3 days, and there was also a Friday photo shoot on Toddington loco depot.

At Toddington there was also narrow-gauge steam and traction engines, steam rollers in action – making this a true festival of all things steam! Including smaller scale road locomotives also in steam. At Winchcombe the Well tanks were doing freight train demonstrations in between timetabled trains, WWII re-enactors and a large display of 0-gauge model locomotives were on show in glass cases, alongside other operating model railways and dioramas.

At Gotherington the private station grounds were open courtesy of the owners Bryan & Savita with lots of interesting railway items and vehicles on view. On Saturday at about 4pm an Avro Lancaster from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight did a fly past, at quite some distance from where I viewed it.

All days were very busy showing mega support from the public and enthusiasts alike. Ian, Jill, Debs and I had a brilliant full day on the line on the Sunday meeting many friends, volunteers and Wings members in the process.

On behalf of all who visited the Festival of Steam our thanks go to all volunteers and staff, engine owners and exhibitors for making the bank holiday weekend a mega one, from Rich, friends and Wings Society members and all...three cheers to you all!

GWSR Cotswold Festival of Steam





The VoBR in 'N' Gauge!

By Logan Wilde

There are all sorts of ways of helping the VoBR!

Logan lives in Cornwall and is a volunteer with the Plym Valley Railway. He contacted us to say that he had found us on social media and would like to construct a model of Oldminster Sidings in N gauge. This is a great idea and it gives those of us thinking about how the site will look like in 2-3 years time some ideas to work with.



I am currently Constructing an N gauge Micro Layout of my Vision of what Oldminster Sidings may look like when restoration is completed. The layout is going to be built over 2 separate boards with the first one being 50cm long and 20cm wide (this board is from my failed Year 11 GCSE DT Project!).

This will eventually be extended by using an IKEA Berhult Shelf, which will add 59cm in length to the layout. There will be a small Fiddle Yard which will come directly off of the front of the board pictured and will be a simple single track board. The Baseboard is built out of Plywood and there is plenty of space underneath it for wiring. There won't be any point motors as I need to keep it as Cost Effective as possible since I am currently in College.

Trackwork:

The underlay is the Woodland Scenics N Scale Track Bed as this is what I had on hand using leftovers from my other N gauge Project (also still under Construction), an N gauge Micro Layout of Norden Station on the Swanage Railway, which has not progressed as the track is not working properly. All trackwork will be Peco Code 80 Streamline, with SL-300 Flexi-Track used for the Sidings themselves and SL-396 and SL-395 Points used for the Pointwork.

There is still some underlay that needs putting down to the left of the board for putting the track that go on to the Docks. These won't be wired into the layout as the plan is to operate it as a Large Shunting Puzzle, with Brake Van Rides and DMUs (when I get some) offering Passenger Rides out of a small Platform that will be located on the 2nd Board on the far right hand siding. *(that's exactly what we shall be doing in 1:1 scale very soon!, Ed).*

Ballast will be completed using Woodland Scenics Ballast and scenery will be done by using a Variety of Products. Some Foam Board may be placed down on top of the baseboard as well in order to bring the base of the Scenery closer to the track height.

There will only be 2 main structures on the layout. This being the Locomotive Shed and the Small Platform. *(You might have to add some 20' containers to this! Could they be 3D printed? Ed).* The Shed will be a 3D Printed Structure of my design based on the plan that can be seen on the Website. It will be located on the 2 far left Sidings.

The platform will be constructed using Peco Platform Edging and more than likely using Foamboard or a form of wood for the main concourse. There will probably be a small Shelter on the Platform more than likely using my Graham Farish Scenecraft Station Café, with some Metcalfe Picnic Benches as Platform Seating. As previously mentioned this will be on the far right siding. PD Marsh Models Ground Signals will be used at the end of each siding as well.

Operation:

The layout is being constructed as a Shunting Puzzle with some Passenger Operation in the form of a DMU or Brake Van.

Locomotives and Rolling Stock:

Currently I don't have any stock suitable for the Railway so to start with I will be using my existing N gauge Stock, this being:

Dapol 57xx No.7754 in NCB Green, Dapol Terrier Stepney in LBSC Engine Green
Bachmann Thomas the Tank including Annie and Clarabel (can't not have them together)
Farish MkI BCK and TSO in BR Green
Farish Stanier 1st and Composite in BR Maroon
And a range of Peco and Farish Wagon

At least all the Engines are Preserved and the Pannier (despite Livery)/Stanier Coaches are region appropriate.



Howard Comments:

Logan's ideas are not far off what we are thinking of in terms of rolling stock. We don't have much at the moment and what we have needs work to restore.

We can see that we will need a couple of passenger coaches, more brake vans, a selection of wagons so that we can provide driving, shunting experiences for visitors.

We would like the collection to represent stock that operated on the railway at any historical time from Severn and Wye days up to the present.

We would like a few dock locos to accompany 2157 and wouldn't it be nice to see a GWR engine return to Sharpness?

Out and About



I suppose we could just work away at the sidings and wait for curious people to just turn up and see what's happening there but we have always thought it was vital to get 'out there' and take our message about how valuable our industrial heritage is to present and future generations to our local community and beyond.

We have done hundreds of talks to groups in a radius that takes in Gloucester, Bristol, Swindon, Cirencester, Trowbridge and even Newton Abbott and Wolverhampton! Back in 2017 we were at the last Old Oak Common Open Day before it succumbed to its new role as an HS2 site.

We had talks every month at the Berkeley Arms Hotel until Covid put a premature end to that and those used to attract speakers from all over the country.

The Sales stand is a great tool for engaging with people at events. Recently we have been at a number of local events such as the Cam and Dursley Model Railway show, the local Primary School and we always have the stand at the Dean Forest Railway's gala events. So that we can stay in touch with our sister railway across the Severn.

You never know who is going to turn up and often conversations are interesting, new volunteers are recruited and new members join. We sell Oldminster Bears, fridge magnets, badges etc and often receive donations as well. Bryan Whitfield's eye for designing engaging posters and branding is incredibly valuable and of course Richard Ellis's superb model of Berkeley station in the early 1900s always attracts attention and give a little glimpse of our future ambitions.





Bryan Whitfield and Dave Rowley staffing the VoBR sales stand.

Can you help them out at the next show?



Leave us a Legacy?

Many railways have benefitted hugely from the generosity of people writing them into their wills.

We would love you to leave us something so that we can steam on with the shed that we so desperately want to build next year. The GWSR, for example, could not have built their own 4 road steam shed at Toddington without an incredibly generous legacy from one individual.

It really does make a huge difference and it is a great source of satisfaction to know that you helped fund something substantial that will be there for future generations to enjoy. We will make sure your name is prominently displayed in the new building!

If you need help with thinking through this sensitive subject, please contact Eunice Nicholson at 'Asia Zen'. Her advert is at the back of this magazine.



Looking Beyond the Fence

A familiar question that is asked of trustees is “when are we going to get onto the branch line?” There is, of course, a good deal of frustration here because in the first flush of enthusiasm back in 2015 there were a lot of assumptions made about how easy this was going to be. The first board members told us all that it was all pretty much agreed by Network Rail and we could expect to be running trains, possibly in a matter of months. We heard that we were going to put in a loop line at Berkeley so that DRS flask trains could run round there and then we would get the rights to the line west of Berkeley down to Sharpness. Simple, as they say.

Those happy naïve days are well behind us now and we have learnt some hard and harsh lessons about the sobering realities of working with large and complex organisations such as Nuclear Transport Solutions, Network Rail and the Canal and River Trust, not to mention local authorities in these difficult times.

It has taken us no less than 10 years to escape from the shed onto the sidings as the first step in the direction of the branch line and now that we are there, we have to set up our base so that we have a working railway centre with rail vehicles that can operate to nationally recognised standards. With the limitations of volunteer labour and even more limited funds, there is a huge amount to do before we are in a position to venture further but that doesn't mean that Trustees have been ignoring the lure of the branch line. Far from it.

The next stage is gaining an agreement with NR to use the head-shunt that is beyond our current fence. This has been agreed informally but since we are now recognised officially as a railway operation by the government in the shape of the ORR, we need to have safe and secure procedures in place even for this relatively uncomplicated venture onto the national network. We hope to have that signed, sealed and delivered shortly which will mean that we can take down the palisade fencing and put in gates instead.

That seems a highly symbolic move in the right direction towards Berkeley and we can then start to discuss the step after that which is to investigate whether the point to the run round loop just beyond the head shunt can be reinstated. This would not of itself give us any rights to go up the branch line but we could then, for example, receive charter trains from the network. A step in the right direction, I'm sure you'd agree. It is unfortunate that this point was removed two or three years ago so there will be questions of cost here but we have

started the conversation with members of Gloucester P Way Department so we will see what can be achieved over the next few months.

If you stand on the foot crossing at Sharpness and look at the rails, you will see very little sign that wheels have been along them for quite a while. There are very few flask trains indeed these days. We have managed to establish quite decent communications with DRS/NTS now so soon we can raise the question of what would be involved in sharing the line.

Rob Gerrard has just had a discussion the ORR about what is involved in venturing out onto the network. (They are pretty easy to talk to as well as helpful but they are also the voice of authority!).

First there is the insurance. The risks for the big railway of letting a bunch of amateurs out onto the main line would be potentially huge. But we are not going to be running commuter trains from Sharpness to Paddington so we won't need to have the full £155m third party liability in our insurance policy. It will still be a substantial sum, though. Supposing we have a loco failure that stops the DRS flask train from working? They might sue us through the Claims Allocation system so we need to show ORR that we have the insurance in place for that sort of eventuality.

A Passenger Train licence will cost only £250 and takes 12 weeks to issue; we need to be licensed under The Railway Act; we have to demonstrate financial fitness and probity, we have to have a much more robust business plan; be a company 'of good repute' and also be able to demonstrate a number of operational competences through a sound Safety Management System, after which the ORR will come and see us to assure themselves that we are a sound and safe operation.

Quite a daunting process but it is all doable even if it's going to be a lot of work and time. **(Anyone who would like to help us work through all this over the next few months and years is incredibly welcome!)**. Like the 'how do you eat an elephant' joke, we shall be doing it one purposeful bite at a time!

In the meantime, might we be able to use the run round loop at Sharpness? This would certainly extend our length of run and introduces the possibility of building a platform somewhere near the old temporary Midland station site. We don't know but you can rest assured that we will be working hard to push this discussion along as fast as we can.

Some aspects might be achievable by working with the local NR people on the ground, in our case building relationships with the Gloucester P-Way gang. Even that won't be quick either but we have a few local NR folk who are willing to help.

Holiday in Lodz: The Brutal Past lurking behind the modern Polish City

by Howard Parker

Poland is a great country to visit and my wife Jude and I have been a few times now. We have friends in Krakow, which is one of my all-time favourite cities.

In 2016 we went to Lodz (say it 'Wooch') - the Manchester (textile centre) of Poland- where we came across and enjoyed one of most fabulous tram systems. Tram Central where routes all meet has a beautiful atrium of stained glass. The city is a very cool place indeed. Where else have you seen people doing yoga and playing beach volley ball in a shopping mall?



Bristol could learn a thing or three here, I am sure. Mind you, the weather helps...

This was in The Manufaktura, previously a factory complex a bit like Cadbury's where a Mr Posnanski made his fortune making uniforms for the Russian army. His rather peculiar looking palace is architecturally a 'bit of everything' because he wasn't sure which styles were best so he had a bit of each!

While a lot of Poland is vibrant, exciting and modern, the darker past lurks in the shadows and we found ourselves almost unavoidably delving into the history of the Lodz Ghetto.

The main commemoration of the awful events of the destruction of the ghetto and the story of the removal of its inhabitants to places like Chelmo and Auschwitz is truly shocking and horrible even by the brutal and genocidal standards of the Nazi occupation.

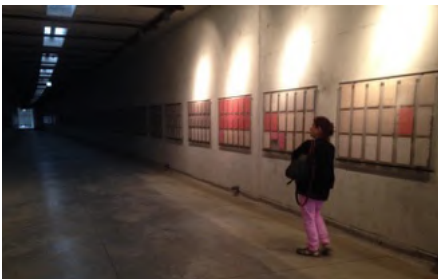


We learnt all about this at the preserved station at Radegast, a little way from the city centre.

When the Jewish community learnt by 1943 that people were going to their deaths in gas chambers, and that those who remained were being turned into a slave labour force in the factories, the ghetto leader Chaim Rumkowski came to the grim conclusion that the only way to survive was to let the (non productive) children and older people be deported to the camps. This horrific conclusion became enshrined in the infamous speech 'Give Me Your Children'.



20,000 children were transported to death camps from Radegast station and exhibits there are highly evocative. It did not even save Rumkowski, who was later taken to Auschwitz where he was beaten to death in revenge by Jewish Sondercommando inmates.



It is a hugely sobering experience being at the station. The meticulously typed sheets of the names of deportees line the walls of the tunnel just beyond the platform, a Polish version of a 2-10-0 class 52 'Kriegslok' sits in the platform, with a short train of box cars behind. Anaesthetised it may have been but the feeling when you sit on the floor of the wagon and imagine it filled to the brim with the terror-stricken, ill and starving children is something I don't think either of us will forget. The excellent museum

displays pull no punches. This was all made deeply personal for Jude because her family lost 35 members from the Lodz Ghetto in Auschwitz.





Castle Jubilee: The Whistling Ghost and Cathedrals Express

(Rich Kelsey)





Join the Pacer Team Today!



Support the restoration of 2157 by joining the BSLC!

We also have some merchandise you can buy!



And don't forget to visit our Facebook page to keep up to date with progress

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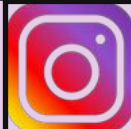
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Who Does What at the VoBR

The Trust's monthly meetings are on the third Saturday of the month. Trust Board business is concerned with charitable compliance issues, strategy, budgets etc. We are trying to set up different departments to manage their own budgets going forward.

VoBRCT Board & Areas of Responsibility

Howard Parker (Chair, magazine, community networks, members and volunteers, social media)

Frank Wooldridge (Restorations)

Bryan Whitfield (Publicity, Marketing, Heritage)

Carolyn Jones (Fundraising and Community)

Andrew Woodhall (Locomotives Manager)

Rob Gerrard (Health and Safety, Oldminster Steering Group)

Edgar Craggs (Permanent Way, Sidings Site Manager, Environment, Safeguarding, Harassment lead)

Andrew Goodman (Railway Support Services)

Advisers: Jane Stone (strategy), Paul Colechin (Civils); John Baker (Safety), Nicky Surridge and Gilles Moulec (Rail Infrastructure), Dave Collins (Signalling); Paul Hale (Ecology)

Heads of Departments

Roy Pressland (Machine Shop, Engineering)

Brian Pittaway (Woodwork Shop)

Julie Snell and Bryan Whitfield (Marketing & Comms)

Mike Abbott (Operations)

Loco Department

Frank Wooldridge (Diesel shunters)

Andy Thompson (Pacers)

Sam White (Steam)

Other Responsibilities/Roles

Peter Poliszewski (Oldminster, Permanent Way, local press relations)

Colin Fox (Infrastructure Design, Project Management)

Matt Simonds (Metal Recycling)

Ken Bailey (Equipment)

Alison Laity (Membership and Volunteering)

Julie Snell (Heritage and Learning)

Bryan Whitfield (Publicity)

Carole Mills (Heritage Archive)

Derek Studd, (Magazine Distribution)

Laurence Gulliford (HOPS & DMT)

Vacancy (Weed-killing)

Neil Moorhouse (Data Collection)

Dave Rowley (Document Management)

Sue and Mike Studden (eBay and shop sales)

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