

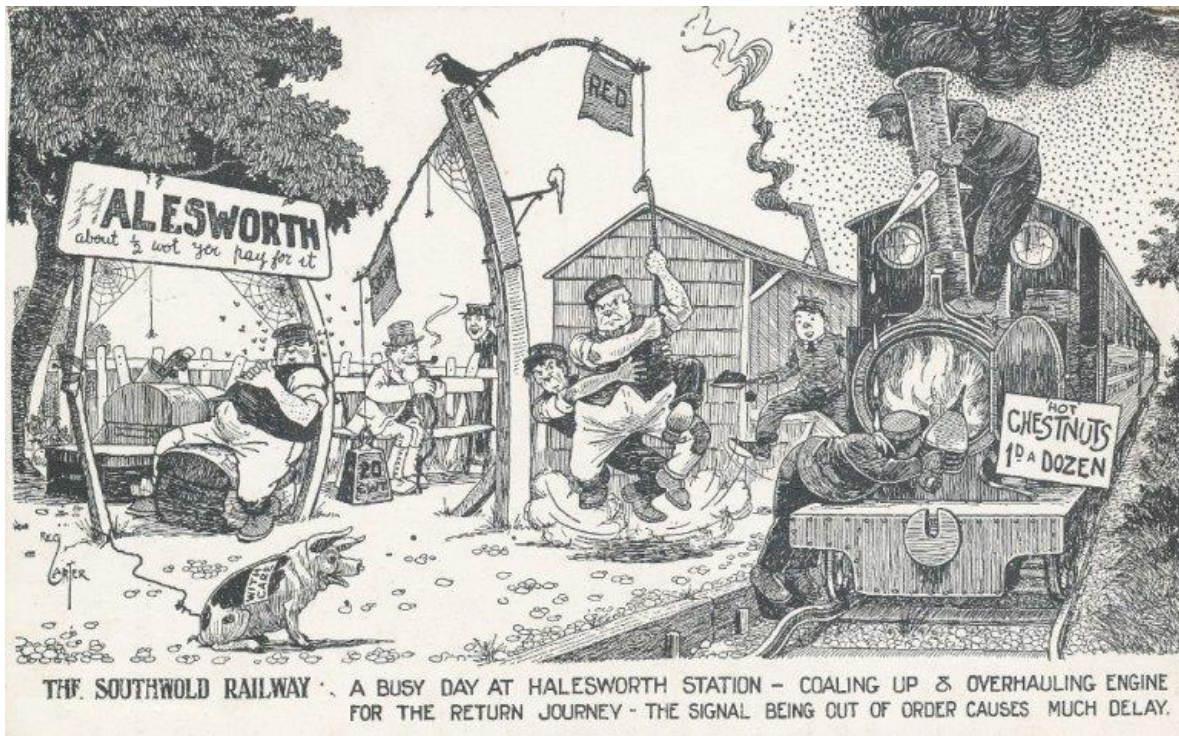


East Somerset Railway

BETWEEN THE LINES...

The Newsletter for the East Somerset Railway

Issue No. 2 February 2021



Thanks to Southwold Museum for supplying the above image

Thank you for all the kind words about our first issue. We've made a few tweaks here and there this time to improve it further. Lots to enjoy this issue including a piece by our Guest Contributors, Steve and Victoria Friedrich, who many of you know as great friends of the ESR and stalwarts of The Way We Were for many years. Thank you, Steve and Victoria.

Anyone is welcome to send in entries for the Newsletter, it doesn't have to be in report form, let us know any news you have that might be of interest to your fellow ESR enthusiasts. We hope this edition provides some positivity during these uncertain times.

The Other Side of the Tracks by School History Workshops

The Way We Were 2019



Regular visitors to “The Way We Were” Event at the East Somerset Railway will remember us from our display in the Old Ticket Office, although last time we relocated our display to the Discovery Centre on the newly reinstated down platform. We like our new home because we can now say that our

reconstruction of a railway station in occupied Europe is quite literally, as well as metaphorically, on ‘the other side of the tracks’! We also have more room in there, so watch out for a more comprehensive display in 2021.



We very much enjoy supporting heritage attractions with their events, and especially enjoy our visits to the East Somerset Railway every year because we receive such a lovely welcome. We have been coming to “The Way We Were” for a number of years. Some of you may have

witnessed the skirmish on the tracks, which we organise, or been dragged off the train by the Feldjäger. Maybe you have been deloused by the Deutsches Rotes Kreuz! Or maybe you have made use of the Feldpost system and sent a letter.

We were delighted a few years ago to be able to give something back to the East Somerset Railway when our years of working in the heritage education sector meant that we were able to contribute a detailed report and feasibility study to support their successful bid for Heritage Lottery Funding, another reason to like the new home for our display.



We travel to the East Somerset Railway from our home in Kent, where we also support other heritage attractions with their events and education provision. We work closely with Folkestone Museum throughout the year and we return annually to the Royal Engineer's Museum in Kent for their Wartime Christmas Event.

However, as our name suggests, our main occupation is to provide a wide range of interactive workshops in schools. We don't just do WWII; we cover most time periods from prehistoric to the space race, and a range of subjects including history, science and geography. We are fortunate indeed to be able to use our passion, knowledge and talents to educate and entertain others. We are very much looking forward to returning to the East Somerset Railway in 2021!

Vicky and Steve Friedrich, School History Workshops.



TICKET TO RIDE...

Thank you to Nick Waton for uncovering these tickets from way back. They are all from prior to 1985. Nick commented 'They show the development of the ESR with simple tickets for entry to the railway (before we offered train rides) and then (from between about 1979 and the end of 1985) the cost of travel "to Merryfield Lane and back" prior to opening fully to Mendip Vale.'

If anyone has any information or photos of other ESR items from Days Gone By we would love to hear about them.



Blasts from the Past and other Museum Musings from Lisa Pool

February 1856 – the East Somerset Railway Bill was launched in Parliament, which would authorise the building of the line if passed. It was submitted to the Committee on Standing Orders (and passed its second reading in the first week of March 1856).

Tuesday 8th February, 1887 Poor Fireman Reed! - after having a bit of a turn on duty on the 4.24pm Wells-Witham train, Fireman Reed's train "proceeded as far as the first wooden bridge in Park Wood, when he fell off and was rendered insensible". He was later "progressing favourably". A lucky escape for the

fireman but we hope no reader finds themselves 'rendered insensible' in February!! (Wells Journal)

I never knew that...

The camber of a railway track is called a 'cant'! On display soon – two examples of collected cant identification plaques that showed the different elevations between tracks on a curve, allowing for better stability. Thanks, Tom Dalton, for the Railway Intelligence!

***Announcement:** if anyone has any children's railway - or Victorian- suitable dressing up clothes they are willing to donate, please let Elaine know. They will be – when restrictions are lifted - an engagement activity for children in the Discovery Centre. (Caps, dark boiler suits, shawls, waistcoats etc...)*

Ian Stoate gives us an update on the Mendip T&RS Group



Work to rebuild 51909 and to further upgrade both vehicles has continued at a steady pace over the last few months since the cab structural repairs and repaint by CTMS during 2020.

We have reassembled all the cab controls after each had been stripped, cleaned and repainted. A new desk top has been manufactured and fitted along with new panelling around the cab. Heater hoses have been replaced and new electric wiper mechanisms installed which are a huge improvement over the original erratic air versions.

Lots of rewiring has taken place with redundant wiring removed and a new low voltage protection module installed along with some other modifications

including a start on our own design sanding system to help traction away from Mendip Vale on wet days - only having two very lightweight driven axles sometimes tests the adhesion characteristics somewhat!

Despite not running at all in 2020 our rebuild and ongoing 'sympathetic refurbishment' (not a restoration as we're incorporating lots of upgrades while keeping the feeling of a 1960s unit) earned us a nomination for the Railcar Association 'Railcar of the Year' award – some very close voting followed but we're very proud to say we won!

We still have lots to do to the unit but it is once again fully functional and will hopefully be back in service during 2021 subject to government restrictions.

Plans for the year include the final finishing of our converted brakevan area featuring full wheelchair access which will see a second coat of paint applied, specialist floor coverings laid and the installation of tip-up attendant's seats. This will finish the work we started a couple of years ago which saw a full strip to the chassis and a total rebuild of the area with a new bulkhead, lighting modifications and a completely new ceiling. Underframe component upgrades and further repainting are scheduled as is application of all logos and numbers etc which have recently arrived.



If anyone wants to get involved with the unit we're always in need of a hand to do anything from cleaning to underframe exams if you're mechanically minded – do please introduce yourself if you see us working in the tanker sidings.

Ian Stoate

Mendip Traction & Rolling Stock Group.

OFFICE NEWS

The phones are silent and the offices quiet but never fear, we are able to prepare the Annual Journal, deal with regular admin and emails from the public and continue with preparations for the opening of our restored Museum and Waiting Room sometime in the Spring.

**A reminder of our trained First Aiders
(as @ November 2020)**

Gary Amos (volunteer)
Nick Waton (volunteer)
Tyrone Paul (CTMS)
Alistair Caldwell (volunteer)
Elaine Lavender (Office)

Phil Hamerton reports on a busy Civ Week

We had a very productive Civ Week this month, from 7 to 17 January, with Steve, Alex, Tom and me, plus Adam (our regular Tom Yeoman digger driver, with Jason & Matt for a few days). There was a varied selection of weather from very cold to just cold and wet.

The first task was to tackle the digging of a 700ft ditch from near Maesdown Road bridge to ensure that any run-off from the farmers field would be safely taken away from the track, following the flooding at the end of 2020. That was Jason & Matt's job for three days, and a very neat one it was too.

While they were doing that, Adam continued flailing back the vegetation along the line, from Merryfield Lane through the cutting to Mendip Vale. We:

- removed the ground frame and associated linkages, at Merryfield Lane, securing the points, as this will give access for the digger when we come to relay the section immediately to the west of those points with concrete;
- recovered the other two of the three Dogfish ballast wagons to the depot for some work to get them back into service;
- repositioned rail chairs on the entrance to the Cripple Siding to correct the gauge so that it could be brought back into use, whereupon all the stock that had been at Cranmore was safely berthed there;
- laid out sleepers between the Mendip distant to the west where a gauging issue requires attention;
- dismantled 6 panels of track to the west of the cattle crossing to begin the completion of the run of concrete sleepers from the Cranmore distant, and began reinstatement;
- undertook the final task of vegetation clearance around the Tanker Sidings, including tidying up rubble/rubbish, and moving all the junk on

the stone dock, which Adam levelled off very nicely so that it can be used for ballast deliveries yet again.

Next sessions are 4 to 14 February & 4 to 14 March.

Phil Hamerton - OAP-Way Gang





Gary Amos talks about a twin '50 Year Anniversary'

2021 marks 50 years since David Shepherd first came to Cranmore to find a home for his two locomotives and 2020 has given those of us of a certain age time to reflect on a number of things. Whilst tidying up my bookshelves I came across a 1971 copy of "the Farmers' Line" – the journal of what is now the Kent and East Sussex Railway and realised that 2021 marks 50 years since I first started volunteering on a Heritage Railway aged 16. I was determined to be part of the then "preservation" movement and the KESR was, apart from the Bluebell, closest to my home near Southampton. So in 1971 after completing my "O" levels I joined the KESR preservation group. It was not too long before I took the south coast line via Portsmouth and Brighton to Hastings with sleeping bag and backpack finally arriving at Tenterden by bus and then trying to find someone to let me into the dormitory coach. I wanted to join Derek Dunlaveys' track gang and spent my first volunteering weekend somewhat bemused trying to find out who was who and to whom I should talk to in order to do some tracklaying. Various characters arrived in the dormitory coach on the Friday night and clearly the priority was to get a pie and an (underage) pint at the Vine Inn! It all seemed rather cliquey, and there seemed to be no arrangements for dealing with a rooky teenage volunteer. Eventually I met

Derek and his motley gang and started to learn how to relay track and change rotten sleepers. Organised chaos was my best description of what I saw around the track, engines and rolling stock as it was not obvious who was in charge of anything or indeed how anything at all got done!

I spent 5 years as a volunteer at the KESR followed by a spell at the Mid Hants, then 40 years as a customer of heritage railways (which in the early days often looked like outposts of Barry Scrapyard) and latterly 5 years as an ESR volunteer. What is worth reflecting on is that the camaraderie and sense of purpose I experienced 50 years ago is still alive at the ESR but the organised chaos has by necessity disappeared to be replaced by a professional and far more business-like approach to running and maintaining our heritage railways. I could have never imagined that one day I would be part of a team contributing to rapidly getting an ex Barry loco operational, working on a project to reinstate a platform or working on the footplate.

What I did not fully appreciate as a teenager was the sheer amount of work and dogged determination by a small group of people that was necessary to get the KESR to the point of being an operational railway. It took over 11 years from 1961 to get the light railway order and restart operations, and for David Shepherd some 9 years before services ran up to Merryfield Lane. The KESR were in fact the first preservation group to establish a heritage railway as a charity and in so doing formed a “one railway” constitution which avoided the all too familiar problems with conflicts between different factions and groups. Thankfully, the ESR has followed this constitutional model pioneered by the KESR. So in this 50th anniversary year it is worth remembering the pioneers of Heritage Railways who battled with bureaucracy, funding and legal minefields to get things established – we all owe them (and Dai Woodham!) a lot for establishing a nationwide industry on a scale which could never have been envisaged in 1971 – not least David Shepherd.

Sentinel Diesel Report for January 2021

This month good progress has been made with the rebuilding of PBA42's cab. The cab sides, fronts and cab top had all been prepared and the rubber sealing strips for the joints cut and punched for the bolt holes. The four smaller cab front/bonnet side panels were put up first, followed by the two cab sides. The control desk and the locker were lifted in next; these were taken out in pieces

through the cab door when the loco was dismantled but being rebuilt into complete units they required lifting in before the roof went on. Once roughly in place the locker, the front panel of which also forms the bulkhead to the engine compartment, could be lined up with the cab fronts and bonnet sides, and bolted up through all four items each side. With this lined up the locker was bolted down to the cab floor and the control desk moved up to meet it before it too was fixed into place. The many pneumatic connections were then made between desk, locker and final drive gearbox.



With this task completed the single piece cab top half was craned into place, each bolthole individually lined up and bolts fitted, and when all was satisfactory it was bolted down tight.

New hinge panels were next fabricated which fit inside each cab front and carry the hinges for the battery boxes. The frames and panels for these were brought out of the store and everything trial fitted. All the panels have now been filled, sanded and primed ready for painting.

The next big task will be to remove the main air tank which is carried behind the rear buffer beam, hopefully more on this next time. – *Colin Girle*

WORK ON 4110 CONTINUES IN THE WORKSHOP

In the workshop we have continued to make progress even with our greatly reduced numbers of staff currently. We have finished tapping all of the crown stay holes in the boiler and we have fitted the first sample ones before giving the go ahead to the supplier to finish machining the rest of the batch. Once these have arrived and are fitted in the next couple of weeks we should be

ready to roll the boiler over and resume work cutting away the wasted platework around the foundation ring.

All of the side stays in the throat plate and side plates are now fitted where the plate work is still sound.

Edd has made a very nice job of restoring the front tubeplate to a serviceable condition where many of the tubeholes were damaged when the tubes were removed many years ago.

We have at last received the axlebox pads which will mean that we can finally fit the springs and horn ties.

All of the bunker parts have now arrived and have been folded and pressed ready for riveting together. This will be done once the boiler is turned and there will be room at the front of the workshop.

The brake rigging has now been assembled with all new hardened pins.

- Steve Masters



It may be old and in black and white (and they talk incredibly fast) but in the words of one of our younger firemen it's 'One of the funniest films ever!' Check it out on You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uantiflhRDU>

Bruce Buswell from our P Way Gang recalls a chance encounter...

I turned up for PW duties and walked along the path from the workshop towards the station. There was a steam crane gradually rusting away next to the path. Coming the other way, Mum, Dad and small boy (6-8, I guess) stopped to look. The boy was getting 'hands on'. So I said to the three 'the thing you need to know about railway grease is that it's specially formulated to resist steam and diesel, sunshine and rain, and all known detergents'. Small boy looked uncertain at this, then mum laughed and he relaxed. I said 'You won't get too dirty, will you?' He laughed and waved both grubby hands at me.

Then I crossed the fence to join two others working on the adjacent siding. Shortly afterwards the three returned along the path and the boy smiled and proudly waved his grubby hands at me. I waved back.

Ten minutes or so later, the outbound train passed me. At a window was a smiling face and two grubby hands, waving enthusiastically. We waved back. I wondered after if he told the story back at Primary School, for it seems to me that it featured significantly in his day. As he did in mine.



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Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Deadline for April edition: 27th March mail: info@eastsomersetrailway.com