

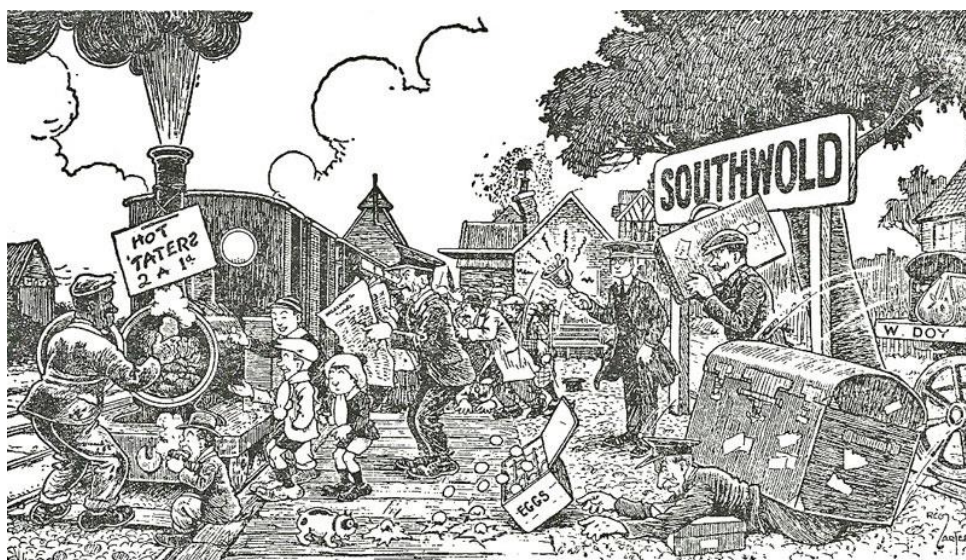


East Somerset Railway

# BETWEEN THE LINES...

*The Newsletter for the East Somerset Railway*

**Issue No. 3 April 2021**



THE SOUTHWOLD EXPRESS: THE DRIVER DOES A ROARING TRADE OWING TO A DELAY CAUSED BY THE PORTER - OVERESTIMATING HIS STRENGTH - THE GUARD MAKES THE MOST OF THIS, AND TRIES TO SPOT A WINNER - THE STATIONMASTER DOES ALL IN HIS POWER TO GET THE TRAIN AWAY.

*Thank you to the Southwold Museum for permission to use the above image*

***The days are getting longer and thankfully the dark days of this winter are behind us. Never have we looked forward to Spring so much... Here's to a fabulously busy and enjoyable 2021 season at the ESR.***

# Spotlight on Nigel Lavender



Compared with a lot of our volunteers, I have never really had a significant interest in railways, more so in engineering. So, it may sound strange that I became a volunteer!

I suggested to Elaine (my wife) that for my 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday I would like to have a footplate experience but did not think that I would do so at Cranmore nor become a volunteer.

I was brought up in Bath although our family background was very much entrenched in Portsmouth Dockyard. My Father was a shipwright, Grandfather an engine fitter in the days of steam powered ships and my Great Uncle a boiler maker.

My father owned motorbikes and cars from an early age so doing his own maintenance was a must. When I was a young lad, I spent many a happy hour with him in the garage stripping down and decarbonising engines.

I always enjoyed messing about with my bicycle so when I became old enough I naturally progressed to motor bikes and I'm still riding them after all these years.

I went to a Secondary Modern school, so I had a very practical education with technical drawing, woodwork and metalwork being core subjects but unlike most schools we also studied Motor Engineering – yet more stripping down of engines.

On leaving school I did an Engineering apprenticeship at Hygate Gears in Bath specialising in Milling and Turning. On reflection I had a great practical education with an excellent apprenticeship. I then

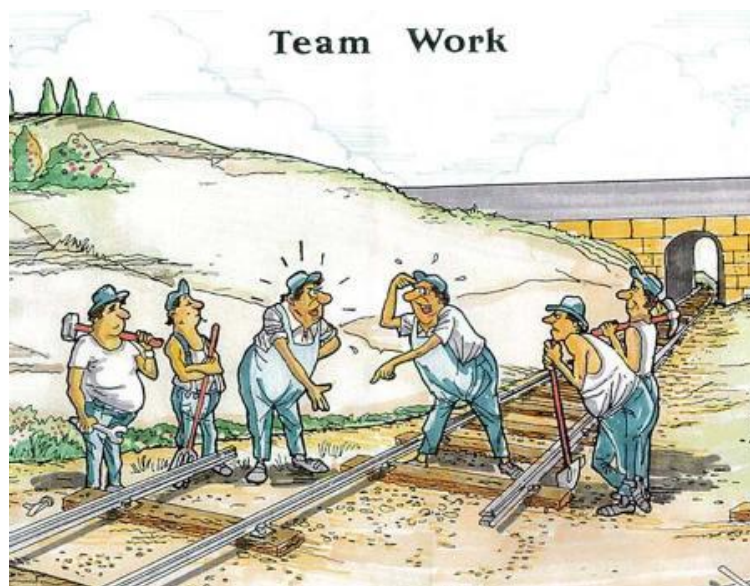
progressed through various office-based Engineering roles and then moved into computer systems for Engineering production.

Following my footplate experience I decided to start volunteering in the engine shed and although I had a small lathe at home had not done any serious machining for 40 years.

Steve Masters soon got me on the lathe and I started doing some basic machining, that very quickly escalated to working to tight tolerances making new bearings and other important components on the restoration projects. Most weekends I can be found in the machine shop enjoying myself.

*Q. What's the difference between a teacher and a railway guard?*

*A. One guides the mind the other minds the train.*





Take a look at these splendid photographs sent in by new ESR member Martin Nicholls. They show the wedding party of Martin's grandparents, Arthur Charles Nicholls and Ethel Mary Lintern, taken on April 18<sup>th</sup> 1907. Arthur came to Cranmore in 1902 and worked as Signal Porter, Signaller and finally Station Master 1905-7. The wedding took place at West Cranmore Church and, for any locals reading this, your 'starter for 10' is... any idea of the location in the photos? Martin tells us that Arthur's family hailed from Dorset and Bristol and that Ethel, according to the Census, was born in Doultong in 1881 and was living in Dean in 1891 and 1901. Sadly, Arthur died on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1918 and Ethel on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1918, victims of the Spanish 'flu epidemic.



# STEVE'S UPDATES

## 4110 PROGRESS REPORT



*Photo 1*



*Photo 2*



*Photo 3*

I'm pleased to report that the very labour intensive task of renewing the crown stays in the boiler has now been completed with all 160 of them fitted (photo 3).

With these in, we were then ready to turn the boiler over to allow work to continue replacing the platework around the foundation ring. (photo1) With the boiler now sitting on a purpose made trolley, we have gained a bit more workshop floor space which has been used to start assembling the new bunker. (photo2)

The bunker panels have been laser cut and folded and so are a nice kit of parts ready to rivet and weld together.

We have also received several castings which are in the process of being machined. These include a set of new valve heads and a pair of rocker covers.



## ***RUNNING SHED NEWS***

Chris and his team have succeeded in getting both 46447 and 1719 through their annual insurance inspections and other than a spring change on 46447, they are both ready for service.

4555 has now returned from Tyseley having had the firebox cracks welded up. On its return to Cranmore, the boiler was unboxed and washed out and has now had its cold insurance examination. The steam test is still to follow.



*Photo credit: Mike Jeffries*

***We're on! The Way We Were is confirmed to be going ahead at August Bank Holiday, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> August. We have had a huge response to the announcement with many re-enactors from previous year's returning and new groups getting in touch. Please email [info@eastsomersetrailway.com](mailto:info@eastsomersetrailway.com) for more information.***

## SPRINGS HAVE COME, THE VARNISHED TRUTH

### *Tales of a Midland Coach by Steve Ehrlicher*

The enforced hiatus in our restoration of the Midland Coach has not been wasted. Two examples of work continuing follow.

We have researched and successfully sourced a supply of springs for the roller blinds in each compartment, 20 in total. The original profile of the spring was rectangular and it would have cost about £3500 to replicate those, so one of the team, Les Rodway, analysed the tensile strength and recommended a round wire equivalent. The new springs were obtained for a lot less than replicated ones and, when tested, performed well. We now need to find someone to make up the blinds themselves.



*The new spring attached to the mechanism, which is housed in the tube. The original spring sits below. (photo L. Rodway)*

A lot of work continues to be focussed on the doors, of which there are ten. Victorian carriages did not have air conditioning plants included, they had Hit & Miss ventilators, at the top of each door. These comprised two vented panels, one sliding over the other fixed one. This either allowed air in or kept it out. Unlike much of the coach interior and exterior which was painted, these were varnished and Nigel Dickinson has been beavering away at home bringing these, and other varnished items, up to scratch.

*Varnished door parts; the Hit & Miss panels are at the top. At the bottom are NOT chocolate fingers, but are the wooden grips to assist in sliding the panel. (photo N. Dickinson)*



By the time you read this we are all hoping to be back in action on site, starting from the 31<sup>st</sup> March, with renewed vigour and a spring in our step.

## ***Inch by Inch Art Exhibition***

A travelling art exhibition showcasing the work of eleven artists from the south west is coming to Cranmore Station this summer. Art work of differing forms will be presented in portable 'travel cases' which can easily be moved between locations such as libraries, village halls and museums across the region. The sites will be plotted as an outwardly mobile spiral across the South West – a metaphor for the migration of ideas, connections, hope. Cranmore resident and IN:CH artist Fiona Campbell moved to Cranmore 22 years ago and, coincidentally, won a David Shepherd Wildlife 3d prize in 2009. Fiona commented, '*Our aim is to bring art to people who don't normally experience art. The locations we've chosen are unexpected venues for art. We plan to offer a unique, intriguing exhibition. As a Cranmore resident, I'm keen for the project to benefit locals as well as visitors from afar.*' The tour begins at Fringe Arts, Bath 21<sup>st</sup> May to 6<sup>th</sup> June and ends at Somerset Open Studios, 18<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October.



## *Some national exposure for the ESR this month -*



*Steam Railway - Credit: Robin Boyle*



*Daily Telegraph & The Times Credit: Russell Sach*



*Steam Railway. Credit: Alice Dempsey*

## *Sentinel Diesel Report from Colin Girle*

More progress has been made on PBA42 though not as noticeable as January's efforts which saw the cab structure rebuilt. Work has continued on the control desk fitting the cab heater unit and its two fibreglass ducts, then fitting and connecting the pipework through to the engine bay. The flashing beacon for the cab roof has been stripped down and its printed circuit board flasher unit tested and found to work perfectly. Its orange dome and rubber base were both refurbished and the beacon then reassembled. The wire protection cage to go over the beacon was also worked into a more even shape and just requires the new legs welding on. At the rear of the loco the air tank has been disconnected and raised off its saddles to allow the mounting plate to be

dropped down, the tank can then be removed and attended to - this job will be tackled later next month when a bit more work on DH16 is completed.

As is often the way of things, what started out as routine servicing on DH16 has thrown up a few more problems that need fixing too. A cracked exhaust manifold is away being repaired and while this is off the flexible exhaust section can be replaced. The compressor belts were found to be in poor condition as were its oil feed and drain pipes, all of which have now been renewed. At present a fluid leak from the torque converter will necessitate removal of the transmission and this work is well under way, with substitution of one of the spare units in its place later next month. While this unit is out of the loco the leaking gearbox input bearing seal can also be replaced curing an annoyingly messy oil leak. While the loco is out of service it may be time to look at some other long standing jobs such as removal and refurbishing of the air tank and replacement of the cab flooring. Undoubtedly this list will expand as the more you look the more you find needs doing!

Joan has been out doing a few odd jobs recently while DH16 is undergoing maintenance, notably collecting 4555 from the Tanker Sidings after arrival by road and shunting 4110's boiler outside for turning over.



Joan hauling 4555 up from the Tanker Sidings. 2/3/21



*Above left:* work in progress stripping out DH16's engine bay ready for transmission removal. 19/3/21



*Above right:* PBA 42's control desk with the cab heater unit installed and pipe fitting under way. 12/2/21

## **ST ERTH FOOTBRIDGE by Gary Amos**

This project has moved on a little since we published the 2021 journal. A recent condition survey of the bridge conducted by Network Rail has highlighted the need for them to do some repairs in readiness for the upcoming Cornish tourist season before the bridge is replaced and dismantled. We now have had the detailed drawings of the bridge including the proposed repairs which is very helpful - and this could mean that the bridge is less likely to need repairs when installing at Cranmore (fingers crossed!). In addition, reflecting our financial difficulties with Covid19, the Railway Heritage Trust (RHT) have kindly made an exception to their normal policy and have awarded us a grant towards 50% of the circa £3000 costs to conduct a feasibility study on the installation and foundation design. We have also been notified that there is support in principle from the RHT for a grant to cover the cost of foundations in their 2022/3 budget which is good news. We are working with Cass Hayward Structural Engineers who work for both Network Rail and many other heritage railways on the structural design, assessment and replacement of bridges. We expect to start the consultancy work in April, initially with a topographical survey of the key Cranmore station areas where the bridge will be located. This will be the first stage in trying to establish the costs of foundations in preparation for applying for the next grant and to give the trustees an idea of what the costs could be for the ESR.

The RHT is partially funded by Network Rail, and awards grants to organisations preserving or re-purposing historic listed assets such as buildings and structures owned by Network Rail or Highways England (Historical Railways Estate) and is sponsored by these two organisations. A recent example of their support is the funding of the relocation of the former Maidenhead train shed to the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway.



*Harking back to our successful Santa's last year, some nice shots by  
James Green and Phil Wilson*



*Credit: James Green*



*Credit: Phil Wilson*



## **NATURE AT CRANMORE BY NICK WATON**

The new Down platform is a great asset and does so much to help Cranmore Station look the way it should: a real station again! However, when ascending the steps to the Up platform, I am reminded of the way things used to be in Spring. A grassy bank was all that remained of the old platform and lots of pale, yellow primroses grew there. It was a lovely way to welcome our visitors to this country scene. Sometimes, at this and other times of year, there would be the alarm call of a green woodpecker, scared away while searching for ants along that same bank.

This is rural Somerset, so the wildlife should be there. Quite often we see deer, usually near Mendip Vale, though trains have had to slow down to follow them out of the cutting too. There are badger setts, though we are unlikely to see the badgers themselves unless we become nocturnal. They raised a few concerns with the P-Way Gang years ago on the section from the cattle crossing towards Merryfield Lane but have moved elsewhere since. They must have decided that the rumbling of trains overhead was not conducive to a good day's sleep. I have seen the occasional fox and some rabbits.

Coming away from the workshop after 2100hrs one Wednesday night in high Summer, I found a slow worm alongside the path and moved it to a safer area.

There is plenty of birdlife and not just the robins that find their way into our coaches if we leave the sliding doors open! Blackbirds, wrens, crows, chaffinches and goldfinches, buzzards, a kestrel and in Winter the fieldfares and redwings come visiting. I had to apologise to the footplate crew last Summer for delaying the 'right-away' for a minute or two. I was watching a red kite glide around the Shepton end of Mendip Vale station. The most unusual sighting was at Cranmore, however. I was in the car just before going to the workshop one afternoon, when I heard a most distinctive call. It was back in the days when the lowest part of the car park flooded. Looking up, sure enough, two oystercatchers were strutting around, looking underwater for something to eat!

You never know what you might spot, so keep looking!

## Miniature Railway Update

The concrete turntable base has now been laid on a day when the wind was indeed suitable for somewhere known as Siberia in BR days. The only person vaguely warm was the young gentleman bringing the concrete across from the platform entrance in a wheelbarrow. When it had all set, a trial fitting of our rolled ring of rail showed that we had managed to dig a pretty accurate circular trench.

In the following weeks when the weather was kinder we have been checking the sleepers and replacing many rotten ones. Some looked absolutely fine but finding that the rail fixing screws could be pulled out by hand proved that there wasn't much substance below the surface.

Our general purpose carry-anything wagon has always gone "clunk" and jumped a bit going over the points, but now developed a mind of its own and decided to derail. The Thin Controller (not as thin as he used to be!) got out a ruler and found that the wheels were not at the correct gauge and the weld on one was no longer securing it to the axle.

The way the bogies had been made meant that it was not possible to dismantle them, they were removed, thrown in the skip, and two others that we had under an abandoned coach project fitted instead. Subsequently we found out that the shed Wednesday gang had recovered them and were using them to move bits of 4110's motion around the workshop!

The middle of March saw Graham's steam loco pass it's cold hydraulic test, so that's one step closer to steam returning - just the lagging and cladding to refit and remembering which of the copper pipes can be fitted before the cab goes back on, and then a steam test.

Assuming that the weather is fine on the next Wednesdays (!) the coaches will come out from their winter slumber, have the running gear inspected and a wash and brush up ready for the running season. — *Graham Watters*





## ESR Permanent Way Department Report – Phil Hamerton

During the February and March 10-day Civ weeks, several projects were started and finished along the railway by the usual suspects – Steve, Phil, Tom, Alex, Chris, John & Matt, together with Adam, Jason & Chris from Tom Yeoman. The thrust of these works was to prepare the line for tamping in April during the 4<sup>th</sup> and final Civ Week of the early part of 2021.

During this time we:

1. Completed the January, 6 panel relay just to the Shepton side of the cattle Crossing.
2. Started and completed the ‘cutting and shutting’ of rail joints from the Merryfield Lane bridge on 17 panels of track towards Cranmore, including replacing all the wooden sleepers across the bridge. This involved cutting the ends off all the rails and drilling around 100 holes.
3. Re-laid with concrete sleepers 6 panels of track to the West of the Merryfield Lane siding and reinstated the ground frame, previously removed for digger access.
4. Replaced 31 wooden sleepers in three track panels around the Mendip Vale distant signal.

Apart from the ‘cut and shut’, all the other tasks involved lifting out rails and old sleepers, grading the track bed, laying in new sleepers to the correct spacings, replacing the rails, keying up and ballasting, followed by clearing away all scrap materials. Needless to say, Jeff has a great deal of sleepers in his ‘to do’ pile! He has been doing a fantastic job rounding up much scrap timber from around the railway and disposing of it.

In addition to the track work, more clearance has been undertaken to tidy up for the operating season, especially in the area to the south of the railway between the Cattle Crossing and the east end of Cranmore West.



## *View from the Office*

After three months of enforced closure due to lockdown, we are all looking forward to re-opening the office and manning the phone lines once again starting the week of 13<sup>th</sup> April. Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> April is our first day of opening to the public. Bookings are coming in thick and fast for train rides and cancelled customers of dining events and footplate experiences from last year have been offered dates in 2021. We have had many messages of delight that they are finally able to book in again and looking forward to spending the day with us. New customers and voucher holders will be able to book from mid-May onwards.

Our Steam Gala takes place the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> April, Peppa Pig Day is on 7<sup>th</sup> August and The Way We Were, August Bank Holiday weekend



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*Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.*

Deadline for June edition: Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May

Email: [info@eastsomersetrailway.com](mailto:info@eastsomersetrailway.com)