



STEAM IN TRUST

The Friends of Vintage Trains Magazine

ISSUE 49 – AUTUMN 2021

Friends of Vintage Trains

Membership is open to all.

Details and application form:

<https://www.friendsofvt.org.uk>

or from: The Membership Secretary, Friends of Vintage Trains, 670 Warwick Road, Tyseley, Birmingham B11 2HL

Benefits of membership

Receiving our magazine 'Steam In Trust' and occasional newsletters, reduced admission fee for Tyseley Open Days and free entry to social events organised by the Friends.

Subscription rates

	<i>1 Year</i>	<i>5 Year</i>
Junior (5 - 18)	£8	£35
Adult (19 - 59)	£20	£90
Partners (2 adults)	£32	£145
Family (2+2)	£36	£157
Senior (60+)	£15	£52
Senior partners (2)	£26	£100

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If you no longer wish to receive any printed or email communication from the Friends, please contact us asking to be removed from the postal and email lists. We will update our records immediately. Please include your membership number with your request, if possible.

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Vintage Trains Ltd

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Autumn 2021

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Front cover image: from left to right, Fay Easton, Head of Stakeholder & Community at West Midlands Railway, with Robert Ferris, Paul Hatton, Christine Brown, Mary McCullough and Neil Ewart of the Friends of Vintage Trains, following a meeting to discuss progress on the Tyseley Station Adoption Project. Photo courtesy of David Wiseshall, WMR.

EDITORIAL

Thank you to the many members of the Friends of Vintage Trains (FoVT) who completed the survey enclosed with the last issue. As promised, I have published a table summarising the results, a commentary upon them and lists of members' comments and suggestions on pages 10 to 13 of this issue.

Those of you who read my article 'What's In A Name?' in last summer's 50th anniversary edition will have some idea of how FoVT came into being and how the organisation's role has changed in the ensuing five decades. Briefly, back in 1970, Tyseley was staffed entirely by volunteers and SG Steam, as it was then named, was the body that represented them. The depot was, first and foremost, a museum, and the idea of running steam trains on the mainline was purely an aspiration.

Over the next 25 years, the museum's collection and facilities grew to include a visitor centre with exhibitions, shop, restaurant and model railway club – all staffed by volunteers and open 7 days a week at one stage. There was also an education service that organised school visits to the site and community outreach. During this period, even the locomotive works would not have survived but for the labour freely given by our members.

However, the museum was never going to make any money, and with mainline steam a reality and Bob Meanley transforming the locomotive works, from a group of enthusiastic amateurs nursing the Tyseley collection, to a profitable, professional locomotive engineering business with paid staff, it was clear by the late 1990s where Tyseley's future lay. The presence of museum paraphernalia and regular visitors on the site of a busy heavy engineering workshop with hazards round every corner was unsustainable and, in any case, volunteer numbers were falling even then, making it impossible to maintain weekday opening.

Once the last surviving part of the museum, the visitor centre, closed in 2009, volunteering opportunities were far more limited than they had been in the 1970s and '80s, and the attraction of regular access to the site and the Tyseley collection was gone, so FoVT could no longer compete with the attractions offered by heritage railways, open for most of the year.

Furthermore, fewer and fewer volunteers were joining the Friends, since they were not obliged to

do so before offering their labour. The survey shows that only 20 of the 135 members who completed it are regular volunteers in 2021 – and 19 of them are over 65 years of age.

Of even greater concern is the fact that 84% of our members, whether volunteers or not, are aged over 65, and the under 55s are only a tiny fraction of the total.

A recent audit of subscription non-renewals suggests that there has been a significant decline in membership over the last two years. The pandemic and resulting 19-month hiatus in steam trips, site access and member events will surely have played a part here, but another reason is that some of our most aged members have sadly passed away. The brutal fact is that, in 10 years' time, there will be very few enthusiasts left with memories of BR steam.

The evidence is clear: if FoVT is to survive, it will have to attract younger people in large numbers, and to do that, it must change, since the world in which it originally set out its aims has changed out of all recognition. The organisation needs to re-evaluate those aims, decide what its purpose is now and persuade people – younger people – that it is something worth their time and money to support. And that may mean questioning whether it is sufficient for us to be supporters of the Tyseley charities and companies alone.

Accordingly, to ensure the growth and long-term survival of FoVT, we have set up a sub-committee to consider the results of the survey and draw up a plan of action, including a set of targets to achieve. We have already enlisted the help of an A-level student as an adviser to the group and will report back to you in the next issue.

Neil Ewart has indicated that he wishes to stand down as Chairman of FoVT at the 2022 AGM, because he feels the role should be taken on by someone with a fresh approach and new ideas. The main committee of FoVT would welcome applications from any members who believe they have such attributes and the determination to revitalise the organisation, securing its future for the 2020s and beyond. If you are interested, please contact secretary@friendsofvt.org.uk.



editor@friendsofvt.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

By the time this copy of 'Steam in Trust' lands on your doormats, Vintage Trains will have run the Shakespeare Express and several trips on the mainline after a very long break. Great credit must be given to all professional staff and volunteers who have worked incredibly hard to make this happen.

At the start of the season the Friends took over running the buffet on the trains. Our team, led by Brian Miles, is responsible for ensuring that adequate stock is purchased and loaded up, as well as all aspects of running the facility. Monies collected are used to purchase further consumables and any profit is placed in our account, eventually funding projects upon request from Tyseley Locomotive Works. The Constitution of the Friends says we are here to "support the collection", and the more successful the buffet is, the more money there will be to help ensure our trains are able to run for many years to come. So if you're travelling on an excursion, be sure to visit the buffet and spend freely!

During the summer we donated £10,000, which was split between the renovation of 'Eagle' and another Pullman car. In addition, we donated £500 given in memory of Henry Pinchin to the Pacer Fund (see Jake Orros's message about this on page 30). We only fund such specific projects, ensuring that your money really does make a difference to mainline steam and diesel operations, and it's thanks to you alone, our members, that we can do this. Your membership fees are extremely important and highly valued – thank you.

Thank you also to all those members who completed the survey in the last issue, either on paper or online. This was a very valuable and informative exercise, as Mark Smees explains in his analysis of the results on page 10.

You will find full details of our first post-lockdown social event on 16th October on page 6. We look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible on that occasion, and to future events which we intend to organise for 2022. Details of these will follow in the winter issue of the magazine.

In conclusion, it certainly feels great to be back in business after such a long break. Many railway projects around the UK are having a struggle and we wish them all well. Like them, we are heavily dependent upon volunteers and the generosity of donors to keep our trains running. So please do continue to support us, and encourage like-minded friends and family members to do the same by signing up for membership of the Friends.

The committee and I look forward very much to meeting you at a future social event or Open Day.

Best wishes,

Neil Ewart

Chairman, Friends of Vintage Trains

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Membership Renewals

All members should receive a postal reminder of the renewal date for their subscriptions and a renewal form – particularly important for those signed up for five years. However, our Membership Secretary, Christine Brown, suspects that a few reminders have been lost in the post.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD AND LET US KNOW IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION HAS LAPSED WITHOUT A RENEWAL REMINDER.

Contact membership@friendsofvt.org.uk or write to the Membership Secretary, Friends of Vintage Trains, at the address given on page 2. Renewal forms can be downloaded from the Friends' website at www.friendsofvt.org.uk

Thank you for your help.

Cancellation of the Tyseley Open Weekend and Warley National Model Railway Show

The Open Weekend scheduled for 23rd and 24th October has regrettably had to be cancelled, owing to the fact that the site will not be ready in time to welcome large numbers of visitors.

External areas of the depot inevitably suffered during the extended closures last year. Staff and volunteers have been heavily committed to the onerous business of organising, preparing and running mainline excursions and the Shakespeare Express, leaving insufficient time to bring the depot environment up to an acceptable standard. We apologise for the disappointment this will cause and hope to reinstate Open Days as soon as possible in 2022.

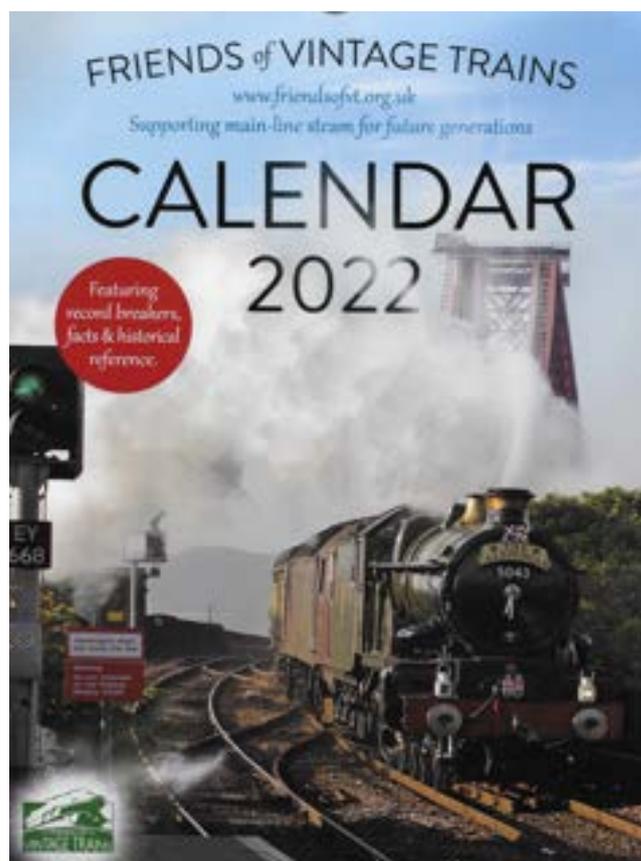
The Warley National Model Railway Show, scheduled to take place at the NEC in November, has also been cancelled. The organisers say that continuing uncertainty about the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic makes it too risky for them to commit to running the show this year, but dates in November 2022 have already been booked. Visit www.thewarleyshow.co.uk for more information.

SOCIAL EVENT Saturday 16th October

We are pleased to give full details of our first post-lockdown social event, as advertised in the last edition of the magazine. It will be held at the Tyseley Working Men's Club, opposite the locomotive works. The Club and its bar will be open from 1.30pm and the talk will start at 2pm, with a break around 2.45 for a finger buffet and raffle, the main prize being a full-sized replica nameplate for 5593 'Kolhapur'.

The guest speaker is John Perkin, well known in railway circles for his enlightening and enjoyable talks. The title of this one is 'Rails Through Birmingham', a photographic journey through the city in the days of steam along the former Midland, London and North Western and Great Western lines. Various sites of historic interest will be covered, including the Lickey Incline, Halesowen and Harborne branch lines, New Street, Moor Street and Snow Hill stations, Saltley and Tyseley sheds, Hockley Goods and many more. If time permits, John will also cover the GWR route from Birmingham to Knowle.

There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion during the afternoon. Entry and the finger buffet will be free, and you are welcome to bring one guest, also free of charge. Registration in advance is not compulsory, but to help with planning and catering we would be grateful if you could complete the brief Expression of Interest form which is available on the Friends website at www.friendsofvt.org.uk or phone 07384 471552 to let us know you're coming.



Encouraged by the success of the 2021 FoVT calendar, our first ever, the Committee made good use of the Covid break by designing and creating a new one for 2022. Each page has a VT-related image reflecting memorable moments and record-breaking achievements over the years, featuring not only Tyseley's own locomotives but some superb guest engines, too. The calendar is in A4 format, spiral bound along the top edge and month-to-a-page, with a description of each photo and two interesting historical facts per month, one relating to railways and the other to steam traction.

The calendar costs £6 plus p&p and can be ordered via www.friendsofvt.org.uk or with the order form enclosed with this issue. If you're travelling on a VT excursion, you can also buy one from the Friends' buffet on the train.

Greeting Cards are still available for purchase. They are postcard-sized and bear the greeting 'Best wishes' within. Each pack contains five different cards with envelopes and costs £4 plus p&p, again available via the website, by order form or from the on-train buffet.



HENRY PINCHIN MEMORIAL FUND



Following the passing in March 2020 of Henry Pinchin, our much-respected former Membership Officer and volunteer for more than a quarter of a century, we set up a fund in his honour to support a specific project at Tyseley. Members contributed £500 to the appeal and this money has been donated to the Pacer fund, as mentioned in the Chairman's report. Then, in July this year, we learned that Henry had generously bequeathed £5,000 to the Pullman Club, bringing the total donated by the Friends for the refurbishment of 'Eagle' and other Pullman cars to £15,000. This money has been of immediate benefit, helping to ensure that the Pullman rake was ready for the 2021 excursion and Shakespeare Express season.

Thank you, Henry, our dear friend.

ALAN PRICE MEMORIAL FUND

Another generous donation arrived in July from the colleagues of the late Alan Price at the West Midlands Signalling Centre. Alan joined British Railways in his 30s, having been a volunteer at what was then the Birmingham Railway Museum, Tyseley, working on locomotive restoration and, during the 1990s, mainline steam excursions. Lee Nash, one of his signalling team colleagues, remembers:

"I first met Alan when I joined the railway in 2001. He had started in 1989 as a member of station staff at Shirley, working his way into the signalling grade to become a relief signaller based at Coventry. He came across immediately as a very likeable person, always willing to share his knowledge and experience with me.

Alan was very proud of his position and it was a pleasure to be his relief at any of the manual signal boxes that we worked over the years. He would always make sure that everything was cleaned and polished to perfection, even bringing a piece of emery cloth to work to keep the levers shiny and rust-free: fingerprints were not allowed! His entries in the train register when things went wrong were legendary, more like works of literature than mere statements of fact.

When the 21st Century arrived and signalling modernisation meant that everything was centralised in the WMSC, Alan went from pulling levers and having a view out of the window to pushing buttons in front of a VDU screen. This brave new world was never his cup of tea, but despite everything, including

surviving a heart attack, he kept on coming to work. Somehow, the railway was in his blood.

Away from work, his many interests included restoring vintage British motorcycles, some of which he would ride to work in the warmer months. In winter he would turn up in his latest Rover, for Alan believed that British was best when it came to engineering. And as for railway engineering, the Great Western way was, for Alan, the only way.

A few years ago, he surprised everyone at work by revealing a hidden talent for playing the trumpet. He would turn up with his trumpet case and disappear into the basement during his breaks to practise. I don't know if he ever found out that, due to the layout of the plumbing in the building, he was providing chamber music to anyone using the signallers' toilet!"

Lee and his colleagues showed their respect and affection for Alan by raising £1,060 in his memory, which they donated to the Friends for the specific purpose of buying new power tools for volunteers to use at Tyseley, since the old ones no longer comply with workshop regulations. The adjacent photo shows three volunteers with items of new equipment.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the West Midlands Signalling Team for their generous gift, and we salute a remarkable railwayman.

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is pleased to announce that Bob Meanley and Fraser Pithie have been made honorary members of the Friends.

Formerly Managing Director of Tyseley Locomotive Works and one of the most respected figures in the heritage railway world, Bob has always been very supportive of the Friends. Without his formidable engineering expertise, administrative skills, rail industry knowledge and reputation, the works and the train operating company that we support today would probably not exist. He is still active at Tyseley as Consultant Technical Director and keeps in touch with our Chairman, always ready with advice.



L to r: Roger Prestwood, Richard Dovey and Geoff Massey with a selection of the new power tools

Fraser is Secretary of the Shakespeare Line Promotion Group and Treasurer of the Friends of the Shakespeare Line, the Community Station Partnership that supports all station adopters between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon. A passionate, tireless and vocal supporter of the line to Stratford, he has worked closely with our Chairman on the project to adopt Tyseley station, offering advice and helping with difficult negotiations over funding, as well as enabling us to acquire gardening materials. Fraser is a very important ally who has shown solidarity with the Friends during a tough year. We are very grateful for his continuing support.



New for 2021!

There's nothing better than enjoying a soothing cuppa whilst wending your way through some beautiful countryside on a heritage steam train, courtesy of Vintage Trains and the onboard buffet service.

Volunteers have staffed the buffet from the early days of Vintage Trains. However, the 2021 season has seen a change in arrangements. At a volunteers' meeting with Michael Whitehouse in the autumn of last year, the idea that the Friends of VT should undertake not just the staffing but also the management of the buffet was put forward. A written proposal was made and subsequently accepted by VT, the volunteer role now covering not only selling but stock control and purchase, as well as management of buffet finances. A small subcommittee has been formed reporting to Friends of Vintage Trains (FoVT) to oversee the operation. The buffet subcommittee is responsible for the choice of items sold, pricing, obtaining and storing provisions, setting up the buffet for each train and, of course, staffing. The good news is that funds raised through buffet sales will be allocated by the FoVT to various Tyseley projects, thus supporting the Tyseley collection.

Along with the normal tea and coffee, the Friends now provide Taylor's Real Coffee, which is proving to be quite a hit. Also new in the buffet this season is a selection of beers to

supplement our normal offer of wine, pop and water. The new items are, again, proving to be very popular.

In conjunction with the new buffet arrangement, the Friends also oversee the provision and sale of souvenirs which include, amongst other things, our 2022 calendar, greetings cards, mugs, fridge magnets, Gomm locomotive badges (made in Birmingham, which is a feature we are always happy to promote), and the much sought after 'Ray the Driver' teddy bear. If you would like to purchase the calendar, a copy of the order form is enclosed in this magazine. The souvenirs will be on sale at the Social Evening and please get in touch if you would like to purchase any of them direct from the Friends.

Our picture shows two of the Buffet stewards, Brian Miles and Mary McCullough, behind the counter on the Scarborough Spa Express 'Day at the Seaside' in August. Brian has been a volunteer steward for nearly 20 years, working mainly in the buffet for the last 10 years. Mary has undertaken various volunteer roles at Tyseley for 20 years and is currently FoVT Secretary.

We look forward to pouring you that welcoming cuppa on a future tour!

Brian Miles Buffet Steward

THE 2021 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Thank you again to all our members who took the trouble to complete the questionnaire, either online or on paper. The total number of returns was 135, which is nearly 27% of the membership – a very good level of response for questionnaires of this kind which require some time and thought to complete.

A summary of the results is given in the table below, followed by a list of some of the suggestions made by members, under three headings. I shall be asking the various boards and committees concerned for their reactions and responses to the results for the next issue of the magazine. The Friends have already set up a sub-committee which will consider the findings and come up with a plan of action, including specific targets to be achieved by set dates, for publication in the next issue of this magazine.

I am very grateful indeed to Paul Hatton, our website and IT supremo, for volunteering to set up the online version of the survey form, then undertake the lengthy and tedious task of transferring all the answers on both online and paper forms to spreadsheets. Thank you also to senior actuary Fiona Clifton, my long-suffering wife, who helped with interpretation of the data.

NOTES ON THE SURVEY RESULTS

1. The percentages of answers to each question do not always add up to 100, either because not everyone answered certain questions, or because some questions had more than one answer and respondents were allowed to choose more than one.

2. Written answers to certain questions have been omitted for reasons of space, but they have been noted by the committee and members' suggestions appear beneath the table. The editor has made slight alterations to some of these for the sake of readability and clarity, without changing the writers' meaning.

3. We were not surprised to find that 84% of members are over 65 years of age, and only a tiny percentage under 55. This presents the organisation with a major challenge to its long-term future. However, member loyalty is

impressive, with 52% having been with us for 10 years or more, and the fact that nearly half our members joined less than 10 years ago shows that we are continuing to attract newcomers.

4. The number of members volunteering is low, and of the 20 regular volunteers who completed the survey, 19 are aged over 65 – the one exception being the editor of this magazine! In contrast, member attendance at Open Days is very high.

5. 'Steam In Trust' gets a high score as a member benefit, but so do newsletters, indicating that we should produce more of these. The survey mentioned that the member discount on the Shakespeare Express has been discontinued, but only a quarter of members listed it as a benefit of interest, with social events attracting a similarly low score. There was, however, a strong show of support for a members-only day at Tyseley.

6. 77% of members use email – far more than we expected – and 78% use the internet, but only 48% have visited the FoVT website, and 16% the Facebook page. Comments on the website were overwhelmingly positive, those about the Facebook page less so.

7. Many who responded are members of other steam preservation or heritage railway societies, usually several. 34 of you listed membership of the SVR, 17 of the GlosWarks, and 20 locomotive support groups, among many others.



Members value Open Days and would like to have an annual members-only day at Tyseley.

2021 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Far right column % based on all returns

Returns submitted	Total	135	100.0%
	Online	77	57.0%
	By post	58	43.0%
What type of membership do you hold?	Junior	0	0.0%
	Adult	26	19.3%
	Partner	3	2.2%
	Family	6	4.4%
	Senior	86	63.7%
	Senior Partner	14	10.4%
	How long have you been a member?	0 – 2 years	13
	2 – 5 years	21	15.6%
	5 – 10 years	31	23.0%
	10+ years	70	51.9%
What prompted you to join the Friends?	Interest in steam locomotives	128	94.8%
	Interest in Vintage Trains Excursions	82	60.7%
	Wanted to volunteer	30	22.2%
	Wanted to support VT financially	65	48.1%
	Interest in Friends social events	18	13.3%
	‘Steam In Trust’	50	37.0%
	Discounts on Open Days	33	24.4%
	Discounts on the Shakespeare Express	34	25.2%
	Personal connection (eg worked at Tyseley)	20	14.8%
	Other	21	15.6%
Are you a volunteer for Vintage Trains?	Yes, regular	20	14.8%
	Yes, occasional	4	3.0%
	No	111	82.2%
Have you ever...	travelled on a Vintage Trains excursion?	98	72.6%
	travelled on the Polar Express?	18	13.3%
	travelled on the Shakespeare Express?	92	68.1%
	attended a Tyseley Open Day?	116	85.9%
	attended a Friends social event?	42	31.1%
Which benefits of membership do you value?	‘Steam In Trust’	125	92.6%
	Newsletters	111	82.2%
	Discounts on Open Days	59	43.7%
	Social events	37	27.4%
	Discounts on the Shakespeare Express (n/a)	36	26.7%
	Private Facebook discussion group	4	3.0%
	Friends of VT website	33	24.4%
	Other	13	9.6%
What other benefits would you like the Friends to offer you?	Merchandise	48	35.6%
	Member badge	48	35.6%
	Annual members-only visit to Tyseley	78	57.8%
	More social events at Tyseley	26	19.3%
	More social events outside Birmingham	26	19.3%
	Other	15	11.1%
Do you have other heritage / modern railway involvement?	Yes	91	67.4%
	No	41	30.4%

2021 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Do you use email?	Yes	104	77.0%
	No	27	20.0%
Do you use the internet?	Yes	105	77.8%
	No	27	20.0%
Have you visited the Friends' website?	Yes	65	48.1%
	No	65	48.1%
Have you visited the Friends' Facebook page?	Yes	22	16.3%
	No	108	80.0%
Please provide your age band	Up to 16	0	0.0%
	17 – 25	1	0.7%
	26 – 35	2	1.5%
	36 – 45	2	1.5%
	46 – 55	2	1.5%
	56 – 65	15	11.1%
	Over 65	113	83.7%

IDEAS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Suggestions for VTL / VTCT

- In 2019 West Coast Railways ran a series of trips on Sundays from Burton-on-Trent to Stratford-on-Avon, price £26 return, and they were all steam hauled and well patronized. Therefore, could you please look into doing a series of "Jolly Fisherman" trips from Burton to Skegness at a decent fare, as B.R. did in the 1960s?
- Possibility of running more trips like the 2 round trips to Stratford, not too long and with time in an interesting town/city, rather than dawn to dusk for the crews/volunteers and general public. Maybe Shrewsbury, Worcester, Banbury, Chester, Sheffield, Newark or Lincoln, if these can turn/service railway carriages, locos etc.
- Train booking site to allow specification of forward seats on circular tours.
- It is unusual to see steam-hauled trains pass through Cheltenham Spa, let alone pick-up or set-down. Any chance?
- Regular updates on appeal fund projects would be appreciated, eg Defiant Club, Kolhapur, Bloomer, Pullman Club.

Suggestions for the Tyseley Site and TLW

- I would really like the museum to be open in the week, as it was before. I also miss Chuffs cafe, great food and chatting with the volunteers on site.
- Re-open the site as a museum. I used to bring children from schools to visit: for many, it was their first sight of a steam locomotive and, for some, the beginning of a journey that led them to volunteer and more - for example, Steven and David Fisher. If you want to engage the young for the future of steam on the mainline you have to allow them access and the experience.
- As a non-West Midlands resident member I would like to see, perhaps, the occasional Zoom or YouTube tour of the Tyseley Locomotive Works, when there is something notable happening or completed on site. And/or if meetings with a speaker are held on site, perhaps they could be shared more widely on Zoom or YouTube. This could help widen the appeal of membership and help more distant members to feel more involved.
- Private photo charters that feature locos moving around the site, early in the morning before an Open Day event or afterwards, alternatively the day before or the day after when locos are still in steam. This would contribute to funds. You have the assets, so use them!

Suggestions for the Friends of VT

- Committee members should be put up for re-election at regular intervals (eg 3 years) to provide the opportunity for new blood to join if they so wish to do. Members in key positions, such as Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman, should not be up for re-election in the same year.
- Merge with CBS so that people have the opportunity to:
 - (a) subscribe for shares
 - (b) be an annual member
 - (c) engage
 - (d) own part of a TOC
 - (e) feel part of the enterprise and help direct its future
- As a non-working/volunteering member, it is vital for me to be kept up-to-date with news and events as speedily as possible. I understand how Facebook can do this, but equally so can the website and emails.
- More proactive use of social media.
- Photographs with brief explanations of our organisation and how to book tickets in widely read local newspapers. Try parish magazines - many church-goers like steam trains.
- How about a bonus for introducing a new member, such as free entry to an Open Day or a voucher towards a purchase of merchandise from the proposed VT shop?
- Wider distribution of greeting cards and calendars through train tours and supply of membership details on trains. [Editor's note: this suggestion has been actioned, see the FoVT buffet article.]
- You're doing a grand job keeping people in touch. I love getting my 'Steam in Trust' and would not like to read it online. I don't think that putting past issues online for public access is fair to those who pay to belong. Has it decreased membership? Any events for Friends need to be daytime as without a car evening trips by rail become difficult. Keep up the good work everyone. Your 2021 calendar is great!



Gone but not forgotten by members of the Friends. On the far left, the former Visitor Centre of what was then the Birmingham Railway Museum, with a volunteer in rather unusual attire looking after two young lads on the footplate of what appears to be a 15" gauge locomotive. (Can anyone identify it?) Note the full-size loco cab in the background. On the top near left is the BRM shop, and below is a shot of the interior of Chuffs restaurant, which was beneath the coaling stage.

*All the latest about Vintage Trains Limited and the Vintage Trains Charitable Trust
by Mark Smee, Mary McCullough and Richard Herington*

Over the past few years, this section of the magazine has been prepared by a succession of seasoned and skilled report writers, including Ben Mason, Ian Lake and Denis Chick, who has recently stood down as VT Press Officer (see below). Members will know that there has been much change at Tyseley since VTL last ran trains in 2019 and the new team in the VTL office are still finding their feet, so Mary and I are helping out by producing this report on their behalf.

The most important item of news by far is that VTL has confounded the doom-mongers and naysayers by returning successfully to the mainline after a 19-month hiatus, running two VIP specials, one from Moor Street to Stratford and return, the other around the Leicester Circle, on Thursday 29th July. This was followed by three diesel-hauled excursions to the seaside during August and six Shakespeare Expresses on consecutive Sundays from 1st August to 5th September. I am very grateful to my good friend and fellow shareholder Richard Herington for the following account of the momentous VIP runs:

“The day before the trip, Michael Whitehouse sent out an email to inform passengers that unfortunately 7029 ‘Clun Castle’ would not be hauling our train as planned. Although the boiler had previously been fully tested and the locomotive had passed its fitness-to-run examination, the superheater header in the smokebox suddenly developed a leak when the engine was steamed for a test run. [Editor’s note: see the TLW report on page 19 for a full explanation from Alastair Meanley.] He told us that the train would now be hauled top-and-tailed by Class 47 No 47 773 and Class 20 No 20189.

On arrival at Moor Street for the departure we were given name badges, told which coach we would be travelling in and offered a complimentary drink from the buffet. Our first impression when our train arrived at Platform 4 was how smart the locomotives looked, and the coaches looked superb as well, a great credit to



Class 20 No 20189 at the head of the train at Moor Street. Photo: Jack Boskett

all who had worked on them during the period of closure.

The train took the traditional route via Wythall and Earlswood for a stop at Henley-in-Arden, where we were able to leave the train and admire the work done on the station by the local adoption team and the Friends of the Shakespeare Line, whose Treasurer, Fraser Pithie, gave a talk on their work looking after the stations along the line.

We then re-joined the train for the final leg to Stratford-on-Avon. The newly appointed catering staff of ‘Just Good Food’ served everyone with tea, coffee and tasty refreshments. On arrival at Stratford, Michael gave us a talk on what’s been happening at Tyseley and plans for the future. There was also an opportunity to mingle with the other passengers, renew friendships and make new ones.

Our return run to Moor Street was via Lapworth and the main line, completed in a fraction over 33 minutes – probably a 21st Century record. In the evening, the train made a second run, this time from Tyseley, travelling via Coleshill Parkway, Tamworth and Burton-on-Trent to Leicester. Following a 15-minute turnaround we headed back to Tyseley via Hinckley and Nuneaton.”

It would be very surprising indeed if everything had gone entirely to plan with VTL’s return to the mainline, and there have been other

mishaps besides the failure of 7029, but none were attributable to errors on the part of TLW or VTL.

The ambitious Shakespeare Express season had to be curtailed owing to the government's decision to delay full lifting of lockdown restrictions, and the Western Venturer excursion was cancelled after an enforced change to the planned route made the journey time too long. As mentioned in Michael Whitehouse's article in this issue, the first excursion of the season to Skegness suffered a two-hour delay at Nuneaton, where a paperwork issue led to the signalman rightly refusing permission for the train to proceed; and the Llandudno trip got no further than Small Heath, turning back after a three-hour delay owing to a problem with the connection between the two Class 20s hauling the train, which caused repeated emergency brake applications. This was particularly galling because TLW's Stuart Tayles had conscientiously coupled them up and run them up and down the depot only the day before, confirming that all was working properly. Such is life with ageing, temperamental machinery.



7029 'Clun Castle' at Shrewley, hauling the last Shakespeare Express of the season on 5th September. Photo: Jack Boskett

Far more important than the unavoidable incidents was the way VT staff and volunteers responded to them, which is eloquently summarised in a letter to Michael from one of the affected customers, reproduced in full on page 24 of this issue. And since the Llandudno trip, all has gone well, with 7029 returning to service on the Shakespeare Express in time for the last two Sundays, and the diesel-hauled

Scarborough Belle having a fast, trouble-free run. I have it from the highest authority – namely, your Chairman, Mr Neil Ewart, who travelled and dined on the penultimate Shakespeare Express – that the catering and service provided by 'Just Good Food' is excellent and the new team of volunteer stewards very professional, making for a thoroughly enjoyable experience. So, if you haven't already, sign up for one of the 2021 excursions while you can!

EXCURSIONS & EVENTS 2021: AN IMPORTANT UPDATE

Tyseley Open Weekend, 23rd & 24th October

This has unfortunately had to be cancelled owing to lack of time to prepare the site for visitors following the extended lack of access for maintenance during pandemic restrictions.

Excursions 2021

At the time of writing, the following changes had been made to the schedule published in the last issue of the magazine:

The Welsh Marches Express

The date of this has been changed from 9th October to Saturday 13th November. All other details remain the same.

The White Rose

We were told that an extra run of this excursion to York Christmas Market had been mooted for Wednesday 15th December, the one three days later having proved to be very popular. However, it has not yet been posted on the VT website, so please check with the office if interested.

5043 'Earl of Mount Edgcumbe'

The locomotive will not now be in service until next spring, so either 7029 'Clun Castle' or 6233 'Duchess of Sutherland' will be hauling all the excursions previously allotted to 5043.

Please consult the VT website at www.vintagetrains.co.uk and call the VT office on 0121 708 4960 to check for the latest news.

THE WELCOMING VOICE OF HARJ TAGGAR

So what happens when you call the office to ask for information and book one of VTL's excursions? The Friends' ace reporter Mary McCullough popped down to Tyseley to find out...

"Good morning, Vintage Trains, how can I help you?"... This is the friendly greeting you receive when you ring the Vintage Trains ticket office, but who is the person behind that welcoming voice? Meet Harj Taggar, the recently-appointed Customer and Data Officer who, amongst other things, oversees the very important task of booking tickets for the various tours.



It's a new environment for devoted mum Harj, who joined Vintage Trains in July to work alongside Phil Sturgeon, Chief Finance Officer, and Adam Williams, Commercial Manager. The first couple of months have been exciting,

if not a little bit challenging, at times! Mostly passengers book tickets via the Vintage Trains webpage but if that is not an option then Harj is happy to help them out. "It's good to talk to our passengers," said Harj, "helping them to book seats on the up-coming tours. Prior to the trains running it was difficult to fully understand how the seating plans work, or how the catering offer is managed, but now we have had the 'Days at the Seaside' tours and the Shakespeare Express season I have a much better appreciation of how it all pulls together into a very slick operation. It's rewarding to be able to help people to plan a tour and we have received some very useful feedback from our passengers."

Occasionally things outside VTL's control can affect a tour and being able to respond quickly to emails and telephone calls as efficiently as possible helps to ease any upset. "When a tour sadly has to be changed then one of my tasks is to arrange credit vouchers for use on another tour, or enable a refund to be paid as quickly as possible. Hopefully that won't happen very often but when a route is no longer available to us, for example for the seaside trip to Weston-super-Mare, then we have to make sure we respond as quickly as possible. Thankfully our passengers are very understanding and that makes the job a little easier."

"To see the joy on people's faces when they see 'Clun Castle' dashing along the tracks or the heritage diesels taking people to the seaside is lovely and I look forward to using my skills to help many more people enjoy this experience in the future," said Harj.

Welcome aboard, Harj! We wish you a long and enjoyable journey with Vintage Trains.

Tickets for Vintage Trains Tours can be booked at www.vintagetrains.co.uk or by telephone daily from 9.30am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday, on 0121 708 4960

Mary McCullough

Salvete

The Vintage Trains Charitable Trust strengthened its board of trustee directors in May with the appointment of two new non-executives, who have wide ranging experience in the transport industry and change management. Arabella Nairne and Audrey Ezekwesili bring skills that are highly relevant in the changing world of rail transport, customer service and community engagement.



Audrey (left) and Arabella about to make off with Pannier Tank No 7752!

Arabella’s experience blends transport, tourism and education, developing a strong network across these sectors and specialising in leading change and transformation projects, most recently with Rail Delivery Group and Catalytix.

Audrey is a professional change management specialist with a passion for taking business on a journey of improvement. Her experience comes from a number of years within the rail industry where she had a particular focus on diversity. Her current permanent role is with West Coast Partnership.

Michael Whitehouse, Chairman of Vintage Trains Charitable Trust said: “The appointment of two highly skilled non-executive director trustees with proven track records in change management will help strengthen the current board by widening our views on strategic and diversity planning, providing enhanced governance and, importantly, improved community engagement. The board is highly skilled but long-standing so the all-important subject of succession planning will also be on the agenda.”

Valete

Whilst it’s pleasing to welcome new talent on board, I regret to announce that Vintage Trains has also lost three key volunteers in recent months. Denis Chick resigned as Press Officer and from the VT Community Benefit Society Board of Directors in June, followed in July by Robin Coombes, fellow CBS Director and Secretary to the VT group. Sharon Salter, Tour Manager for VTL and member of the Friends’ committee, has also resigned.



Denis is a renowned communications expert from the automotive world. He started his career in 1965 as an apprentice, moving through engineering roles to Rover’s Product Planning and Marketing Dept before joining the company’s PR team in 1985. By the time he left the Rover Group in 2000, he was Director of Product Communications, then became PR and Marketing Manager for GM Daewoo UK before being appointed Director, Communications for Vauxhall Motors in 2009 and overseeing the launch programmes for several of the company’s most successful models.

Something of a motor industry legend, Denis established a network of high-level media contacts during his career, enabling him to pull off such extraordinary coups as a splash for the launch of the TOC on page 3 of the *Daily Mail*. I’m trying hard to avoid clichés about hens’ teeth and rocking horse dung here, so let’s just say that Denis is a great guy and, given his extraordinary talent, PR experience and media

contacts, he is virtually irreplaceable as Press Officer.

He was also a regular, reliable and generous provider of excellent copy, press releases and photographs for this magazine, all of which I sorely miss.



Robin Coombes. Photo: Jack Boskett

A Chartered Architect by profession, Robin started his career with British Railways in 1980, becoming a project manager for the launch of Network SouthEast and then Rail Marketing Manager for Network North during his 8 years there. In 1989 he joined the architectural practice Burgess Partnership Ltd and stayed for 25 years, serving as Chairman for the last 10 and overseeing the growth of the practice from a single Cardiff office plus branch to a business with 8 offices throughout the UK, 90 staff and an annual turnover of £4m. Between 1992 and 2016, he was also a founder and company director of ERES, an economic and environmental consultancy working mainly on EU-funded technical programmes in Central Europe. An expert on corporate governance, operational management and the delivery of major projects, he has extensive experience in the fields of master planning, transport, education, regional development and the heritage sector. In August, he completed a doctorate on the subject of the sustainability of heritage railways at the University of Birmingham.

Not content with distinguishing himself in all the above fields (and others I haven't mentioned), Robin is also one of the finest photographers of railway subjects in the country. Most of the photographs that have graced the pages of this magazine since I

became editor were taken by Robin, and he has offered invaluable help and advice on many occasions as Company Secretary, ensuring that I received crucial information and documents in time for publication deadlines. And he's a very snappy dresser!

Sharon provided an article about her history as a VT volunteer and work as VTL Tour Manager in the last issue of this magazine, so I hope she will excuse me for referring readers to that article, rather than repeating the story here. Suffice it to say that as Tour Manager she was highly organised, extremely conscientious and utterly professional. She was also expert at making customers feel welcome and at home on excursions, while remaining conscious at all times of the importance of following rules and well-established procedures to keep everyone safe in a potentially dangerous environment.

Passengers who have travelled with VT when Sharon was Tour Manager will surely miss her in the future, but note that she has agreed to help with the FoVT onboard buffet on some excursions, so do pop along and say hello to her if you can – and spend some money with us!

I'm sure I speak for many members of the Friends, as well as volunteers and employees of the VT group, when I say how much we're going to miss the contributions of these three brilliantly gifted volunteers: VT owes them a huge debt of gratitude.

Fortunately, Denis and Robin have pledged to remain members of the Friends, and Sharon is staying on our committee, so we will still benefit from their expert counsel.

Mark Snee

Editor, 'Steam In Trust'



WORKSHOP REPORT

Tyseley Locomotives

7029 'Clun Castle'

During routine inspections in July, we discovered a defect within the superheater header that prevented the loco from returning to service.

The superheater headers on 7029 and 5043 are of the type that have the regulator valve incorporated within and are therefore quite complex castings to manufacture. 7029's header was fully NDT tested in all accessible areas (due to the complex internal walls and passageways of the superheated side of the header, not all areas are accessible for thickness checking) and hydraulically tested at the loco's overhaul four years ago. Despite this, there is a localised area within the superheated side of the header that has thinned and perforated, causing leakage inside.

We have the only two surviving four-row superheated Castle boilers, so in order to get 7029 back into working order quickly, we took the decision to fit 5043's header to 7029.

7029 was steam tested during the last week of August and subsequently operated the Shakespeare Express on 29 August and 5 September. The loco performed well on both occasions.

We do not have a pattern for the superheater header, nor do we have, or know of, a drawing for the 4-row, 28-element Castle header. We do have the drawing for the 3-row, 21-element header as fitted to 7029's boiler when built, which 7027 'Thornbury Castle' still retains. From this information, and by reverse-engineering the original 4 row header, Bob Meanley is producing drawings so that a new wooden pattern can be made.

Once the first header has been cast and we are happy that the new pattern produces a good casting, we will more than likely have a spare one cast as well whilst the opportunity is there.

5043's completion will now depend on how quickly a new header can be manufactured, given current lead times for this type of manufacturing process, and the time needed to fit the new header to 5043 and test it. Estimate: spring 2022.

At this stage we are envisaging a cost of between £15k-£20k for the pattern, castings and machining.

5043 'Earl of Mount Edgumbe'



The boiler has passed its hydraulic test and its steam test. It will be re-fitted to the loco frames in the coming weeks once we have completed the manufacture of a new ashpan.

As stated above, the date of the loco's return to service will be dictated by the time it takes to manufacture, install and test a new superheater header to replace the original, now fitted to 7029.

Class 47 No 47 773

Following its return from the SVR, the loco re-entered service with Vintage Trains in August and has been performing as well as we would expect, with an excellent run on the 'Scarborough Belle'.

Third Party Work

71000 'Duke of Gloucester'

Work is progressing on the manufacture of new pistons and piston rods for the cylinders. We are awaiting the return of the wheels from South Devon Railway Engineering, who have assembled the new crank axle and fitted new roller bearings to all axles. The boiler is now complete and awaits a hydraulic test once the wheels have been re-fitted to the locomotive.

7812 'Erlestoke Manor'

With repairs now completed, the boiler is awaiting its hydraulic test before a steam test towards the end of September.

The workshop has also been busy making new pistons and rods for several Great Western 2-cylinder locomotives, including 7812, 7802, 4110 and 4277.

New-Build Locomotives

Holden F5 (GER 2-4-2T No 789)

Considerable progress has been made during the last six months. The frames are now completely erected and the cylinders, cylinder cover hinges, smokebox, smokebox door, chimney, spring hanger guides and lamp irons are all fitted.



We have the new wheel castings on site, fully machined, and are making enquiries for the manufacture of the axles. Further details from www.holdenf5.co.uk



Photos of the F5: Elliot Powick CME

GWR 4-4-0 No 3840 'County of Montgomery'

Another new-build that has made good progress over the last six months. Work continues on fitting the rear drag box to the new frames.



See www.churchwardcounty.org.uk for more information.

GWR 2-8-0 'Night Owl' No 4709

The frames of this locomotive arrived at Tyseley in August for work on the extension frames. They will be removed and inverted for the fitting of various components, including the newly-cast cylinder blocks, then re-fitted to the main frames.



See www.4709.org.uk for further details.

Coaching Stock

Pullman Car 'Eagle'

We have completed the refurbishment programme and the vehicle entered service under our ownership for the first time on the Leicester Circle trip of 29th July.

Several carriages have been repainted, including Pullman Car 349, which has also had considerable work carried out to the vehicle ends and gangways. All the seats have been re-upholstered and carpets renewed, with the help of the £15,000 contributed by the Friends. It now looks really great inside.

BSO 9101

Major repairs have been carried out on the Buffet bodywork, including repairs to steelwork around the doorframes, doors and around the vehicle ends. It has also had a full repaint.

Turntable

This is back in working order and we are about to fit all the new decking. The volunteers have been doing a good job with the painting – a lot of hours have gone into it! Volunteers have also been refitting the handrails around the circumference of the turntable. An overhaul of the turntable electrics will follow.

Alastair Meanley, General Manager - Tyseley Locomotive Works, 10 September 2021



SO YOU WANT TO RUN YOUR OWN TRAINS?

by **Michael Whitehouse**

Until 1993, the railways were nationalised and run by British Railways as a monopoly, so no one else could run trains on the network. Having cut our teeth on private miniature, narrow and standard gauge railways, we started off on the national network by simply watching, riding on and photographing trains. Our involvement increased when we began chartering trains from BR, which simply meant we paid them a fee to run a train.

Then we bought our own locomotives, which required a little more effort, but initially not a lot more. We had to find somewhere to keep them, of course, and we chose Tyseley depot as it was not far from home and we had become somewhat used to the place following its association with Arthur Camwell's SLS Specials to Swindon which began the story of main line special trains some seventy years ago.



7029 'Clun Castle' at Tyseley in the 1960s

BR still did everything for us, or nearly so: some of our volunteers who were then also BR footplate crew willingly and voluntarily undertook some of the operational and light maintenance work, signed off by BR.

Once BR had determined to rid itself of steam in 1968, our involvement and obligations stepped up. We had to enter into longer-term property deals; we sourced patterns, parts and machinery and built a workshop. Some of this was done without cost, as time and materials were, to a very large and kind extent, freely given, but even in 1970 we had to raise about £30,000 (nearly £500,000 in 2021 terms) just to put up the workshop. Then BR, quite understandably, brought in MT276, a document setting out overhaul and maintenance standards which we were required to work to. BR came to inspect and approve the processes and the outcome and checked locomotives and rolling stock were fit to run each operating day. So we needed skills, equipment and money to comply. We had these in varying amounts and quality as time went on during the '70s and '80s.

When privatisation arrived in 1993, the bar to engineering and operating was raised higher. MT276 was not mandated anymore. It was up to us to devise a safety management system and operating & maintenance policy, to deal with our own repairs and maintenance and any operations the private sector wished to conduct. Train Operating Companies had to do their own fitness

to run exams. But processes and examiners were still checked and audited. All this required more time, paperwork and considerably more money. For example, it was no longer enough to rely on equipment and materials that BR had approved: everything had to be subject to ultrasonic testing for flaws and cracks. If new material was introduced into a locomotive, its origin and composition had to be approved and checked. Network Rail introduced Group Standards setting out all the detail of the requirements and processes. Some of this did not suit steam locomotives, of course, so derogations had to be obtained, meaning justifying doing something in a slightly different way and proving it was still safe.



TPWS equipment installed in a steam loco cab

As the main line railway became busier and faster, more stringent safety standards were introduced. Our GWR locomotives already had an automatic warning system for signalling installed in the cab, providing audible noises depending on the colour of the signals and even putting the brakes on if the driver did not acknowledge either an orange or red signal.

But, as each accident brought new solutions to prevent re-occurrence, additional safety precautions were introduced and, indeed, are still being introduced, either to seek to reduce operational risk or improve train control. We were obliged to fit tachograph-style data monitors and recorders and computerised train protection and warning systems to our locomotives. This meant boxes and wiring hidden in tool boxes, under dragboxes and wiring in new pipes amongst the frames. The cost of all this ran into tens of thousands of pounds of course and, all the while, the cost of repairs grew as the cost of labour and materials increased, assuming these were available in the right quality and volume at all.

Fortunately, we had amassed a quantity of spare

parts at the beginning of our standard gauge preservation days from sheds and workshops which had closed and, if we had known then what we know now, we would have collected a great deal more. Some material is difficult to source and we are now obliged to go to France for some axle material and as far away as South Africa for locomotive driving wheel tyres for large wheeled express steam locomotives, where there is only a single supplier.

But all this is just the precursor to actually operating your own trains on the main line and marketing them to the public to ride on.

Of course, just driving a train is simple enough if you know how to do it: cylinder drain cocks open, reverser in forward gear, brakes off and regulator open. But the railway is a stranger place now. Even the track gauge has a slightly different rail profile. And the less said about the overall loading gauge the better, especially if you have a Great Western-designed locomotive, as they are slightly wider than many and taller than some. Amazingly, one or two owners are even altering their locomotives, providing narrower cylinders or reduced-height chimneys so the loading gauge margins are greater, giving a wider route choice. The all-encompassing height mantra of 13ft. 1in. is also a challenge, but I defy you to notice the reduced cab height on our 'Castles': it's all about keeping the same profiles and angles.

To run on the main line, an operating licence issued by the Office of Road & Rail is required. Before this can be issued, you need a team of 'fit & proper people', a safety certificate, access agreements and public liability insurance. The safety management system encompassing competence and methodology is all important for both safety critical operation and requisite skills and knowledge. Once this has been demonstrated in writing and on the ground, its maintenance and continuous improvement needs to be embedded in everything one does. All of this, and more, needs to be considered and established before a steam locomotive ventures out onto the network. And everything must be constantly maintained 'in good standing' and continuously improved all the time as well. A culture. A way of life. Every day.

As the railway is no longer an integrated system, there are many and varied organisations to deal with, ranging from Network Rail as owner and manager of the infrastructure to other train

operators and industry bodies, with whom one negotiates access arrangements for track, stations and depots and much more besides.

Beneficially, a train operating company can bid for timetable slots and has a 'seat at the table' for things such as proposals to make alterations to the network. Currently, we bid for charter paths at least sixteen weeks in advance, but we also have renewable working timetable paths for our *Shakespeare Express* trains, which enables us to operate at much shorter notice and, providing we use these paths, to keep them year by year. This provides us with commercial certainty and an increasing ability to plan ahead in the tourist marketplace.

All the above requires detailed knowledge of how the modern railway works – and funding, of course, both to enable operations to begin in the first place and also to provide working capital through the start up period until ends meet.

But we now have created what we believe is the only train operating company licensed to run express steam trains which is owned by the people of Great Britain and open to all. We are very proud of that. But we have only just begun the operating journey and only just in time. The main line railway is a very different place now compared with the 'steam friendly' arena of even the 1960s. And there are precious few people who still know and understand how to repair, maintain and operate steam locomotives safely and commercially at up to 75 mph. The whole steam main line movement is at a tipping point and will need to engage co-operatively in many ways to survive. The number of locomotive drivers, for example, who have real and deep knowledge of steam operations at 75 mph, is dwindling.

But even more changes are afoot and the recent pandemic is bringing some of these to the fore, especially now in customer services and marketing. For some while it has been obvious that the heritage marketplace is changing: the enthusiast ridership is declining whilst, at the same time, becoming more demanding and really quite assertive in several directions: an insatiable demand for instant information and detail, critical feedback if it is not exactly what is desired and sometimes verbose comment on social media, often without much thought. Some people understand the changes necessary to continue delivering main line steam and the constraints

upon us in doing so, while others only consider themselves. We are always interested in constructive feedback, but we can no longer deliver everything every enthusiast wants. Our excursions have to make a surplus for us to continue running express steam trains on the main line. And it is a fact of life that fewer enthusiasts and more members of the general public now travel on our trains than previously.



If we provide the right ambience, customer service and quality on board, particularly in our Pullman restaurant cars, we can enter new markets and, this year in particular, we are finding many new customers booking our trains and thoroughly enjoying the journey, whether it be behind steam or diesel. We have taken careful steps to improve each of these facets, working with TLW on carriage upgrades, with *Just Good Food* on the catering service and with both the office and on-board customer service teams.



Whilst we have still further to go, passengers have generally been delighted. They will, of course, become our ambassadors by telling their friends.

This has been the case despite the various issues we have encountered since restarting this August. The passenger letter at the top of the next page says it all really.

“Dear Mr Whitehouse,

I write as a regular user of Vintage Trains excursions over many years. I was on two trains recently: one to Skegness and one to Llandudno. Both were subject to major delays, the first for two hours at Nuneaton, and the second for nearly three hours at nearby Small Heath. No, this is not another complaint. It is to say that three things impressed me yet again about those trains:

- 1. The quality of the breakfasts, the coffee and the calm, courteous, unflustered service at all times.*
- 2. The patient, good-natured, unwavering courtesy of the stewards as they tried to keep all passengers informed regularly, and managed to placate the passengers when the grumbles started.*
- 3. The cheerful, informative and always reliable service from Harj in the Ticket Office. If I had queries, or “issues”, I would plan to leave a message after 5.00pm so as not to interrupt Harj’s working day. The trouble was, no matter how long after 5.00pm I delayed the calls, Harj still answered.*

Of course it was not good sitting in trains for hours wondering what was going to happen. But the “people part” of Vintage Trains was a model of patient, friendly, imperturbable attentiveness from start to finish.

I wish you all well for future excursions.”

Booking tickets is now achieved through our website but with a telephone explanation and query service available if needed. The 2021 customer is much more demanding than the 1971 customer and the questions come fast and furious, often demonstrating to us that prospective passengers now know far less about railways and train travel than they used to and are also less tolerant of information delays and misunderstandings about our offer. No longer is everyone confident of finding car parking and station boarding information themselves, and there is some understandable nervousness at present about sitting next to strangers.

I was told by a millennial that their generation will now only source experiences on the internet and will make a decision on the offer and price within some seven seconds! This means our website engineering and internet priority need to become second-to-none and that pictures of the inside of our train and the catering are just as important as the locomotives, sometimes more so. I spoke with

some dining passengers on the recent diesel-hauled *Scarborough Spa Express* who said that they had had a super trip, great meals and loved the First Class compartment. The locomotive was not even mentioned. It seems that the better the ambience and the quality of the restaurant car service, the less people consider the motive power. This resonates with the offer by luxury trains worldwide, hardly any of which are now steam hauled.

But, don’t worry, this does not mean Vintage Trains will cease to run steam trains. Far from it. It is our reason for being. But we need to run more trains which are diesel hauled and so spread overheads over a larger programme and probably offer destinations slightly further away. Indeed, our friends at Network Rail train planning encourage us to submit diesel-hauled specifications at 80-85 mph timings as these are much easier for them to schedule than 60 mph steam paths. We will plan the best of both worlds.

Even before the onset of the pandemic the national railway network was in some disarray and suffered considerable lack of confidence and delivery ability. Demand has since been severely hit by Covid-19 and many trains are cancelled for varying reasons. Whilst this has a benefit for us in reducing the network congestion that threatens charter trains, delivery has become more problematic. There are delays in getting timely gauging information for our steam locomotives; obtaining hired-in steam drivers has become less easy; and it’s more difficult to find out about network changes, whether they be major, like possessions, or minor, such as encroaching vegetation. We are, of course, still learning. But, perhaps most importantly of all, we are building up good long-term relationships, both internally and externally, so we can all understand both what the railway network can offer and what the customer now wants. The delivery of our service is improving and will continue to improve with both experience and the availability of more money to develop the ambience and facilities on our train. And that’s where the Pullman Club comes in: www.pullmanclub.co.uk

Indeed the presentation of our train, our on-board offering and marketing are now the most important aspects of our development. Of course the locomotives matter, but which ones and how many we have to haul our train is no longer crucial for justifying our existence.

**SHAKESPEARE LINE
PROMOTION GROUP**

I wanted to begin this latest Shakespeare Line update by looking at what has been happening with the normal train service, since like the Covid pandemic itself it has been rather a bumpy ride.

I recently overheard a conversation about road traffic levels between two male drivers. One was complaining, "The roads are rammed, where is all this traffic coming from?" Neither seemed to appreciate one unfortunate consequence of the Covid pandemic, namely the significant shift from rail to road travel. Much of this can be attributed to commuters working from home but Government messages about not using public transport during lockdowns have lingered in the public consciousness.

However, following the lifting of almost all lockdown restrictions in England on 19th July the general consensus is that rail passenger numbers will gradually increase, though it is unlikely they will reach pre-pandemic levels anytime soon due to the reduction in commuting. A mixture of home and office-based working, where possible, now looks to be the new norm. To make up some of the deficit leisure travel will become increasingly important.

The Shakespeare Line Promotion Group is concerned that the return to rail travel on the Snow Hill lines is being undermined by the poor reliability of service provided by West Midlands Railway (WMR). In recent months there have been significant numbers of train cancellations and late running services have been a problem too. The most important contributory factor has been the shortage of both drivers and depot staff who repair and service the trains. Of course, many delays are not the fault of the train operator and even the staff shortages can in many instances be explained by the pingdemic caused by the NHS Track & Trace app. However, there are also long-term underlying issues regarding driver rest day working arrangements that still need to be resolved.

In an attempt to provide a more reliable service, from Monday 2nd August WMR withdrew almost the entire Kidderminster - Stratford-upon-Avon service routed via Solihull and provided rail replacement coaches between Dorridge, Stratford-upon-Avon Parkway and Stratford-upon-Avon. These enabled passengers to get to their intended

destinations but it must have cost operator West Midlands Trains a small fortune. Ultimately taxpayers will have to foot the bill.

From 16th August fully-vaccinated staff have not needed to self-isolate if they have been notified of a close contact with someone with Covid-19, a move that should help to ease the staffing situation, and driver training has resumed, though 25,000 training days have already been lost. Then, in a welcome move, the Kidderminster - Stratford-upon-Avon service routed via Solihull was unexpectedly reinstated from 30th August. Let us all hope that high levels of train punctuality and reliability can swiftly be restored.

FRIENDS OF THE SHAKESPEARE LINE

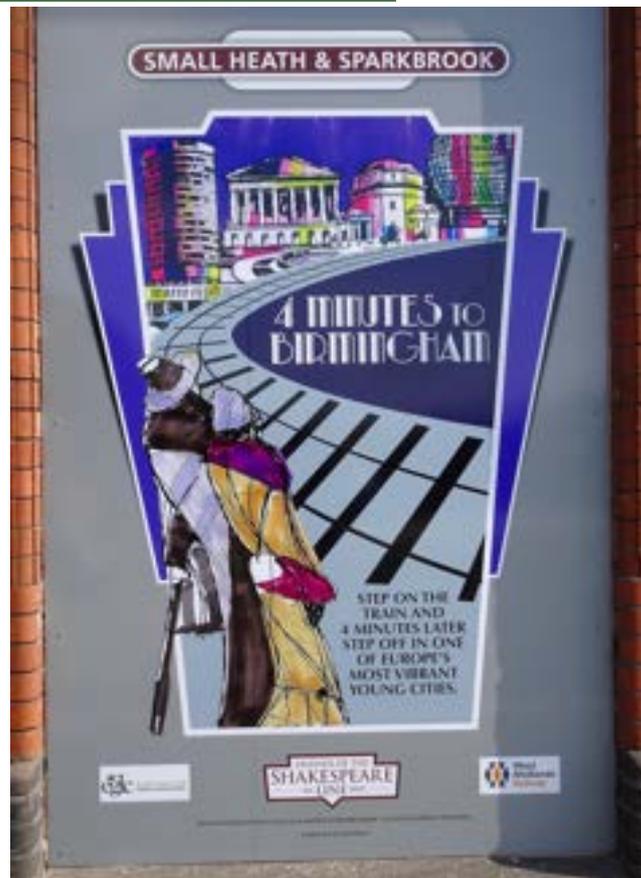
Turning now to the activities of the Friends of the Shakespeare Line (FoSL), firstly thanks are due to Vintage Trains for generously inviting station adopters aboard the inaugural run of the Shakespeare Express on Thursday 29th July. Despite the absence of 'Clun Castle' this private charter for the media and invited VIPs, which ran from Birmingham Moor Street to Stratford-upon-Avon and back via the Shakespeare Line, was a resounding success. A 20-minute stop at Henley-in-Arden station on the outward journey allowed passengers to alight and see the impressive flower displays and the new information boards installed on the platform side of the station building, which promote the Henley Heritage Trail and attractions around the town. Fraser Pithie, Treasurer of FoSL, and Angela Okey, Chair of Friends of Henley Railway Station, spoke about the recent transformation and future plans for the building. Negotiations with Network Rail concerning the lease are continuing, one very encouraging recent piece of news being the rail infrastructure owner's offer to meet up to 40% of the cost of the renovation.

As summer arrived the plans of the FoSL volunteers at the various stations began to come to fruition. The planters supplied by Earlswood Garden & Landscape Centre became the main focus of the flower displays with other garden and wildflower areas established where space was available.

Unfortunately, several of the stations at the northern end of the line have been subjected to attacks of vandalism. Whitlocks End, Shirley, Hall Green and especially Spring Road have suffered from unwanted attention, with some plants uprooted and others stolen. At Whitlocks End, wanton criminal damage was inflicted on the information boards on two occasions. Following representations by the SLPG to local Members of Parliament and also to WM Mayor, Andy Street, the programme to install comprehensive CCTV at all the stations, which had previously been suspended, has been reinstated. We are pressing for Spring Road to be one of the first stations to benefit from this vital about-turn. In addition, the Chief Constable of British Transport Police has dedicated a police officer to the line, PCSO Brendon Stewart, who will manage and respond to any further issues. Volunteers have remained undeterred by these distressing setbacks and any plants removed have been speedily replaced. Ian Taylor, Station Manager Dorridge/Stratford Lines, who has a track safety certificate, has assisted adopters by rescuing plants, some of which have been thrown onto the running lines.

The high-quality information poster boards mentioned in the last edition of 'Steam in Trust' have now been installed at each station, with unique artwork created by Art Attack and Creative Touch from Henley-in-Arden. Meanwhile at Small Heath, a large 'Art Deco' style hoarding, highlighting the fast journey time into the city centre (as little as 4 minutes), has been unveiled on the front of the station building. This is complemented by four smaller poster boards on the staircase leading down to the platforms, which promote visits to Earlswood, The Lakes, Henley-in-Arden and Stratford-upon-Avon stations.

Space does not permit description of all the activities carried out by station adopters but I would like to mention the lead adopter at Wilmcote, John Douglas, who has created four scaled-down replica GWR running-in boards for the station. John has done a splendid job at a fraction of the cost a commercial company would



have charged. It is also worth noting that station adoption coverage on both lines from Stratford-upon-Avon has now been completed following the adoption of Claverdon station.

Following a meeting between FoSL and Wythall Transport Museum, a plan was agreed to advertise and run a free classic bus connection for train passengers between Wythall station and the museum. This useful link operated on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays from 24th July until 5th September. The bus met two trains in each direction and also stopped en-route upon request at Beckett's Farm, Wythall Church and the Chapel Lane Caravan Club site. To promote the service and the museum their immaculately turned out former Midland Red LD8, a Leyland Titan double-decker, visited Stratford-upon-Avon on



15th August to meet passengers alighting from the Shakespeare Express. Free trips into the town were a big hit.

If you have not travelled on the line recently can I suggest you pencil in a trip in order to view the flower displays before they fade. If you meet any volunteers working on the stations I'm sure they would appreciate a quick "hello".

Finally, I wanted to update readers about the current position regarding the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) into the reopening of the railway south from Stratford-upon-Avon to Honeybourne. Many readers will be aware that whilst a single line of track still exists between Honeybourne and Long Marston to serve the rolling stock storage and rail innovation facility now owned by Porterbrook, there is a 6-mile gap northwards from there into Stratford. The full SOBC report was completed in mid-June by consultants Stantec and submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) for consideration. They will ultimately decide whether it has sufficient merit to proceed to the next stage of the process, which would be the preparation of an Outline Business Case. We do not know how long this evaluation by the DfT is likely to take, but expect a decision to be made by the end of the year at the latest. Once the decision has been made, the contents of the SOBC will be made available for public comment.

Neil Williamson

Editor, 'Shakespeare Line News'

WEST MIDLANDS RAILWAY: STATIONS, COMMUNITY & COMMERCE

**By Fay Easton, Head of Stakeholder &
Community**

I have been with West Midlands Railways for 3 years and have loved every minute of this new life in the rail industry. 'The Railways' was a parallel universe to my former occupation which was steeped in entrepreneurial activity, start-ups and enterprise development, but the commonalities are community and enterprise, with people and regeneration at the heart.

My work is based on the connection of people to the railways, be they stakeholders who promote improvements to rail or wider communities who support the rail industry and local neighbourhoods with their volunteer energies.

Over this past year those volunteer energies



Fay Easton

invested in the railways created a new and exciting model for community rail and this has been developed along the Shakespeare Line.

The formation of a 'Community Station Partnership' is a first in the UK, and during the challenge of national crisis and pandemic, this new volunteer-led model brought together 18 stations, all adopted by local communities.

The Community Station Partnership (CSP) works with West Midlands Railway and Network Rail to enable volunteer work at stations and the Group also finds funds, manages the purchase of landscaping & arts items and pools vital knowledge to help with the enhancement of the stations and the wider regeneration of local neighbourhoods.

The CSP is always happy to hear from local rail enthusiasts who might consider involvement in community projects at the Shakespeare Line stations. The energetic founding group have developed a website (link below), which not only tells the impressive story of the formation of the Community Station Partnership and its member stations (of which Tyseley is one), but also provides contact links to anyone with an interest in helping support this community stations venture.

www.communitystationpartnership.co.uk



Community Station Partnership

To profile the CSP and to publicise other powerful community rail stories, there is a link below to the first community rail magazine from West Midlands Railway which covers wider enterprise activities across the network. The aim of the magazine is to spread the word about ‘community rail’ which seems to be the UK’s best-kept secret, and to shine a light on the volunteer activities which contribute so much, not only to our business and stations, but across the country to so many lives and businesses.

Please visit:

www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk/community-rail

and click on the ‘View our Community Rail Magazine’ button.



Volunteers inspecting one of the SMR open carriages, with the green container behind.

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Since I last wrote an article for Steam in Trust we’ve had the welcome easing of COVID restrictions, which has allowed a lot more physical volunteering to take place on site as well as back on the tracks. With much planning work continuing behind the scenes as well, it all adds up to a pretty hectic time in the world of volunteering. So, in no particular order, the following aims to give a flavour of what’s been happening.

The Volunteer Administration Team welcomes a new member, Joseph Bevan, who has joined us primarily to manage Train Steward duty rosters as well as general administrative support. The team has been coping with all the new applications and ensuring all our paperwork is up-to-date. We envisage a continued busy time for them as we intend to increase our volunteering teams in various areas – watch this space! If anyone would like to offer their time then simply email volunteering@vintagetrains.co.uk where your generosity will be gratefully received.

Managing volunteer activity has now switched from a time available basis to a project management focus. This means that, rather than looking at when you can come to the site and allocating work for you to do, which can be different each time, the emphasis is now on the individual projects themselves, with activity taking place whenever volunteers can get access to site. This allows us to improve continuity of work, plan what needs doing on a particular project in the right order and monitor progress to task completion more accurately. It also means that we can run projects concurrently and have multiple teams working at the same time, or at different times, depending on when volunteers are available. I would like to thank our resident project management guru, Richard Dovey, who has been taking the lead on this.

Talking of when volunteers can gain access to site, I am very pleased to report that Thursday night working is again able to take place. Using the above project-based philosophy, we have been focussing on the new Sutton Miniature Railway project. Now called SMR @ Tyseley, volunteers have started by clearing space in the large green container by the front car park gates in order to return it to being the shed and workshop for the SMR. (See photo on the left.) Now we can accommodate at least one carriage at a time to undertake renovation work.

As there are currently nine carriages to work on it means there's a lot to do!

We will also need to look at fundraising for materials such as paint, wood, upholstery fabric *etc*, so if anyone would like to donate anything to the project please do get in touch with me at tony.watson@vintagetrains.co.uk and I will be only too pleased to make the necessary arrangements. You will be kept regularly updated on progress and how donations are spent.

Another project now underway is renovation of the former LMRCA Club building, led by Simon Edmunds. More volunteers will be needed in future so, if anyone is interested in helping to bring it up to a satisfactory standard for use, please do let us know by contacting our central volunteers' email address:

volunteering@vintagetrains.co.uk.



The former snooker room in the LMRCA building. Note the traces of the snooker table legs on the floor tiles.

Now we are back on the tracks running the Shakespeare Express and long-haul tours, I am pleased to report that previous requests for volunteers proved successful and we've trained new Train Stewards accordingly, providing adequate cover for all the trips made to-date. Many thanks to all who have contributed to this.

On a different note I would like to thank our former Tour Manager, Sharon Salter, who has taken the difficult decision to retire after years of dedicated service. I would like to say personally that it was a pleasure to have worked with her and learn the art of stewarding from her – announcements to engage the secondary door locks will never be the same again!

Tony Watson

UPDATE ON THE LMRCA PROJECT

Visitors to the Tyseley site will no doubt have seen some significant changes around the old LMRCA building, with fly tipping cleared and security improvements.

Earlier this year, we were approached by West Midlands Trains and asked if we would consider sub-letting the building to their contractors, the Spencer Group, for use as a welfare building whilst they worked on the main Tyseley depot for an 18-month project to update their fuelling systems. As part of the deal, they would clear, repair and secure the building as well as adding additional security, electrics, heating and a new kitchen. A key demand from us was that, during these works, we would also retain access to, and use of, half the building as required.

Our agreement has been of real benefit to Vintage trains and has seen some of the more costly parts of this refurbishment project funded by WMT/Spencer Group. Whilst we continue to have shared access for the next 12 months, our primary focus will be to cosmetically improve the main lounge area and snooker room.

We have not wasted any time putting the building to good use and it now provides a comfortable base for both our Tuesday and Thursday volunteer teams, with good quality toilet and kitchen facilities. FoVT are also using the original bar cellar area as a secure and dry storage area for the train buffet supplies. Our Tuesday volunteers have been busy clearing these spaces and creating easier access to the cellar by installing double doors in place of the old bar opening (see picture overleaf).

After weeks of advertising locally and several price reductions, we have finally sold the snooker table and had it removed – see opposite. Clearly demand for professional snooker tables is not that high now and we've had the most bizarre enquiries from buyers that clearly have no concept of the sheer size and weight of a 12' x 6' slate bedded snooker table. No, the legs don't simply unscrew, no it won't fit in the back of your Vauxhall Astra and no, we do not have anything smaller like a pool table! We are relieved to finally get the table removed and the modest proceeds of the sale will go back into the project.

Our longer-term intention for the building is to create an attractive and usable multi-purpose



Cellar double doors installed by the Tuesday volunteers

venue for the community, our passengers and our own onsite events. Our vision is that in time, the LMRCA will become the hub for all public activity on our site and a springboard for future site development. In time, it is hoped that the facility can be financially self-supporting through room and event hire and providing refreshment facilities to passengers and visitors.



The new LMRCA kitchen

The project also presents a large number of new volunteer opportunities, both in terms of the actual development work as well as staffing and managing the site in the future once it is operational.

Simon Edmunds

If you have skills that would be useful for refurbishing, staffing or managing the LMRCA and would like to help, contact Simon through

volunteering@vintagetrains.co.uk

THE PACER PROJECT:

A Letter to the Friends of Vintage Trains Committee from Jake Orros

I am writing to you on three counts. Firstly, I want to say a huge thank you to the committee for pledging £500 to the Pacer Project, raised in memory of longstanding FoVT member Henry Pinchin. I also want to offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all those who have donated or pledged money to the project to date. This means a great deal and will have an enduring legacy. The Pacers will form a cornerstone of Vintage Trains activity for years to come and it is fitting that, in your 50th year, you and your members have supported the preservation of a small but mighty part of railway history.



Secondly, it has now been five months since the three Class 144 Pacer sets arrived at Tyseley – where has the time gone?! I am currently working closely with our new Commercial Manager, Adam Williams, and VTCT Director Richard Cadge, to design a sustainable sponsorship and fundraising scheme for the Pacers. We hope to launch this to the general public in the very near future. As you can imagine, it has been pretty busy recently managing the launch of our new website and train programme for 2021. Our next steps for Project Pacer are to get them gauged for the line to Stratford, to incorporate a Pacer fundraising page on the Vintage Trains website to make donating easier, and, of course, to plan our first public outings.

Thirdly, a number of Friends have contacted me pledging funds, asking how to donate and sharing their ideas for using the Pacers. (Please keep the ideas coming in, I love hearing from you all!) So here are the details for donating to this unique project to preserve an iconic and occasionally infamous part of our railway heritage.

Donating to the Pacer Project

1. Send your donation to Vintage Trains, either by bank transfer or cheque. BACS payments can be made to the VTCT current account, 30863890, sort code 20-48-08. The reference must show 'Class 144' so that it can be allocated to the project. Cheques should be made out to Vintage Trains Charitable Trust. Please ensure that 'Class 144' is clearly written on the back or on an attached note and post it to VT's registered office (see page 2), FAO Phil Sturgeon.

2. Let us know you have donated by emailing jake.orros@vintagetrains.co.uk or writing to me at the VT address. This is vital so that we can ensure our records are up-to-date and funds are appropriately allocated to the project.

3. Put the kettle on, sit back and relax as you picture the Pacers running to Stratford-upon-Avon accompanied by a live band with delicious refreshments on board.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please email me at the address given above. I'm looking forward to welcoming you aboard the Pacers in the very near future.

Best wishes and, once again, a huge thank you for your ongoing support,

Jake Orros

ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE

What's In Your Memory?

For some time, people at Vintage Trains have been thinking about setting up an oral history archive. There are many memories that are in danger of disappearing forever, and we want to capture and preserve them before they do. Thankfully, there are still people around who have worked with Vintage Trains for decades, even from the very beginning, and we would like to record their recollections.

The main constraint until now has been lack of time – although that became rather less of a problem last year, during which we became acquainted with one of the tools of lockdown, Zoom. This allows us to record oral history interviews remotely. Tony Watson, Michael Whitehouse and I have been testing the technology, and it works reasonably well. Zoom lets us record sound and video in high quality and in standard formats (MP4 video and M4a audio).

If you would rather have a face-to-face meeting that can be arranged, too: Mary McCullough, Secretary of the Friends, and I are working on arranging interviews.

We have already identified a number of people we would like to interview, but **please get in touch if you have memories of Tyseley that you would like to share.** We will arrange a time and place, which could be in your home, or even on one of our trains. Interviews usually last between 30 and 60 minutes, to avoid fatigue, and can be followed up if necessary. There is some inevitable bureaucracy involved, including the completion of two consent forms, one to agree to the interview and one to consent to its being recorded.

If you are willing to share your memories of Vintage Trains, Tyseley Works, or Birmingham Railway Museum, please get in touch with me, Michael Hughes, at:

archive@vintagetrains.co.uk.

MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPHS

Vintage Trains' archivist Michael Hughes tells the story of a photograph collection that turned up unannounced at Tyseley during lockdown

This edition's news from the archives is about caring for your photographs, and what can go amiss if you neglect them.

Many readers of *Steam in Trust* will have collections of photographs taken over the years. You may have them stored in boxes or folders with all the details carefully noted in a clear catalogue. Unfortunately, it is more likely that cataloguing is one of those things that you will get around to 'one of these days'. But that day may never come unless you make a real effort...

When we returned to the archive after lockdown, we were surprised to discover that a large collection of photographs had been left, with little accompanying information and nothing to say where it had come from.

There were two large boxes and some bags of railway books. The boxes contained colour prints as well as a huge quantity of slides, many unmounted. They are mainly of railway locomotives from the 1960s onwards, but there are also steam traction engines and even racing cars and coastal shipping.



Castle Class 7011 'Banbury Castle', which was withdrawn at the end of February 1965. Its last shed was 84B, Oxley, but here it has the Reading 81D shed code.

Since discovering the mysterious boxes we have managed to identify the photographer and learnt how the collection came to Tyseley. All the photographs and slides were taken by John Harvey who lived in Hall Green and died in October 2019, aged 91. Starting in the 1960s and continuing until the 2010s, he was a keen photographer and train enthusiast, spending many hours at Tyseley station taking photographs. His collection includes shots of Tyseley, Earlswood, and Hatton, as well as further afield. In later years he photographed Vintage Trains excursions as well as steam on the Severn Valley and the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire. He also took pictures of diesel and electric traction around the West Midlands and on shed and works visits.

We have now been in contact with John's family. They did not find any notebooks, so the sorting of the images will slowly continue! Thanks to John's son and daughter we have many interesting additions to our collection.

Archive Policy

All archives have collection policies: without them, they would simply overflow. Even with the huge capacity of a digital archive, there has to be some limit on what is retained.

The Vintage Trains Archive's policy is to sort any

material donations into the following categories:

1. Items that are relevant to the history of Tyseley Locomotive Works before the preservation era. These could be about the works or the sheds, including photos of locomotives, personal recollections of railway staff, or plans and diagrams.
2. Items that refer to the history of Vintage Trains and the Birmingham Railway Museum. Much has happened in the last 50 years: site improvements and the construction of buildings, Open Days, visits by Royalty and guest locomotives and, of course, the coming and going of many people who have volunteered and worked at Tyseley on the trains.
3. Items relevant to the wider history of the development of railways in the West Midlands.



BR Class 9F 2-10-0 No 92001 was delivered new to 84E, Newport Ebbw Vale Junction. Its last depot was 25A, Wakefield, from where it was withdrawn at the end of January 1967. It's in remarkably clean condition here, but what a pity about the shadow.

Anything that does not touch on these three categories is reviewed. We may keep it, or we may dispose of it. In disposing of items we first try to find a safe home for them. If that is not possible, we try to sell them, all proceeds returning to Vintage Trains and the Archive.

John Harvey's photographs remain mostly uncatalogued at present since there is no information about them, apart from details written on the back of a few photos of heritage railway subjects.

The Lesson

So, if you want future generations to enjoy your photographs, here's what you should do:



Something for the diesel traction fans. D37241 was built by English Electric in 1964 and renumbered 37241 in 1973. Its first shed was Canton, Cardiff. It was placed on EWS's stored locos list in June 1996, cannibalised for spare parts, and condemned at the end of July 1999



LMS Coronation Class 4-6-2 No 46238 'City of Carlisle'. Its first and last shed was 12A, Carlisle Upperby, but the shedplate in this photo is 12B, Carlisle Canal. It was withdrawn at the end of September 1964



The effects of water damage (and this picture is by no means the worst example). Swindon-built BR Class 4 No 75027 running on the Bluebell Line sometime before February 2007. The slightly out-of-focus effect is due to the slide having become welded to the plastic wallet in which it was kept.



GWR King Class 4-6-0 No 6024 'King Edward I' alongside Castle Class No 5080 'Defiant'. Both carry Shakespeare Express headboards. The likely date is either 15th or 16th April, Easter 1990, when both were rostered for the SE – the last one until Christmas 1992, after which there was a break until December 1998.

- a) **identify the ones you wish to save;**
- b) **catalogue them with as many details as possible, especially date, time, place, and names;**
- c) **make sure they are stored properly;**
- d) **make arrangements for them to be saved for posterity after your death, if possible.**

The first five photographs in this article were digitised from slides. They all fail the tests for inclusion in the Tyseley Archive. However, the last photo at bottom right, which was digitised from a print, passes all the tests!

Michael Hughes

Volunteer Archivist

I would like to thank the following individuals and owners of the listed websites for their help in preparing this article:

Alastair Meanley

Michael Whitehouse

www.railuk.info

<https://preservedbritishsteamlocomotives.com>

www.sixbellsjunction.co.uk

PULLMAN CAR ‘EAGLE’



‘Eagle’ looking magnificent at Stratford-upon-Avon after returning to service in July 2021

Eagle is a Pullman First Class Kitchen Car. Like the other Pullman Cars in the Tyseley fleet it was constructed by Metro-Cammell at Washwood Heath to Lot 3281 and delivered to British Railways’ Eastern Region in September 1961. Eagle was numbered 311, but was always referred to by name, the number being referred to by the Pullman Car Company as the “schedule number”.

British Railways Service

The cars (Pullmans were never called carriages or coaches) were constructed with the same bodywork and underframe as the Mark 1 stock that British Railways had introduced to replace older life-expired coaching stock inherited in 1948. Pressure heating and ventilation were fitted, and from 1971 steam and electrical heating were available. They were originally vacuum-braked, but in 1971 air braking was added.

Original interior design scheme	
Ceiling	Light tan
End Partitions	Rio rosewood
Tabletops	Sirocco (muddy green)
Chair upholstery	Bronze, green, and black
Carpets	Black, green, and light grey

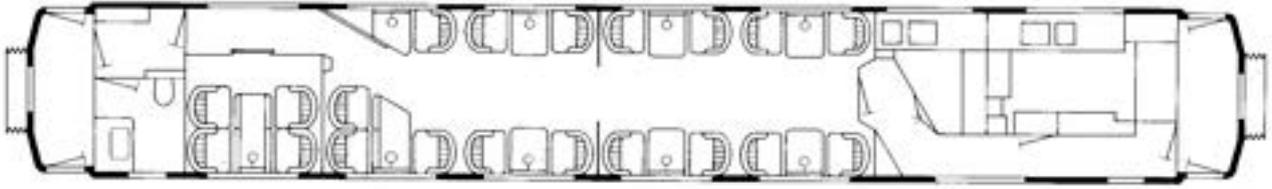
The interior decoration scheme was designed by John Carter MSIA (Member of the Society of Industrial Artists). He aimed to achieve “*a dignified following of contemporary trends*”. Twenty First Class passengers enjoyed the luxury of the Wilton carpeted flooring and moveable armchairs.



External paintwork and the original nameplate fitted to the internal glass partition

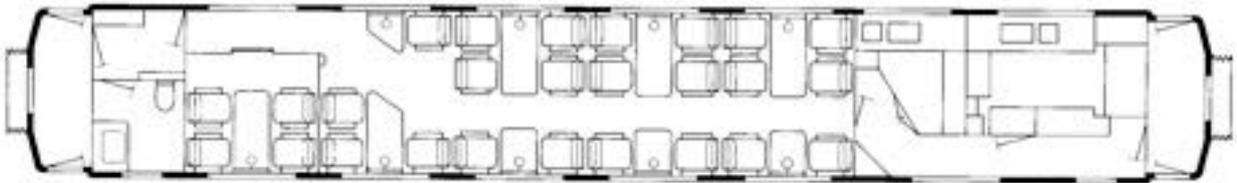
Externally, Eagle was turned out in the Pullman Car Company’s colours of umber and cream. The structure below platform level was painted black, except for the axlebox covers, which were picked out in yellow. Identification plates for seat reservation purposes were slotted into a carrier by each door, featuring umber

letters on a cream background. The Pullman name was carried above the central windows, and the car name was below. Originally, the roof was painted white!



The internal layout of 'Eagle' as built. (Keith Parkin (1982) 'Locomotive Hauled Mark 1 Coaching Stock of British Railways' – The Historical Model Railway Society)

'Eagle' was first allocated to the *Master Cutler* service. In 1960 the train ran between London Kings Cross and Sheffield, calling only at Retford. By the late 1960s, however, the economic case for heavy luxury trains running on the East Coast Mainline was becoming more difficult to make in the face of air travel and company cars. So, between 1965 and 1968, 'Eagle' and the twelve other Pullman kitchen cars of the 1960 batch were refurbished in the style of British Railways' First Class carriages, with an increase in seating capacity to 26. Internally, this is the 'Eagle' that we have now. Refurbishment of the interior meant replacing the armchairs with fixed seats and replacing the tables. Externally it meant blue and grey corporate livery with no name. 'Pullman' in white was on the left-hand side of the car body and the new number E311 was on the right.



The internal layout of 'Eagle' after refurbishment. (Keith Parkin (1982) 'Locomotive Hauled Mark 1 Coaching Stock of British Railways' – The Historical Model Railway Society)

Eagle in numbers			
Numbers	311 <i>Eagle</i>	Built	1960
	E311	Diagram	130
	95403	Lot	3281
	99971	Delivered to BR	28 th September 1961
	95403		
Length	64 feet 6 inches (vestibule ends)		57 feet 9½ inches (body ends)
Width	9 feet	Bogie Centres	46 feet 6 inches

The Preservation Years

After 17 years' service, ownership of *Eagle* was transferred to the National Railway Museum and it was repainted in Pullman Car colours and overhauled. A year later in 1979, it was part of the train celebrating a century of on-board catering in Britain, and in 1980 it took part in the 150th Anniversary of the Rainhill trials.

In the early 1990s the National Railway Museum started a policy of loaning out its rolling stock. *Eagle's* new life in preservation started with a stint on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, followed by the Bluebell Railway and the Mid Hants Railway. Ten years ago, it arrived at Tyseley, a decade after our other Pullman cars.

The first stage in *Eagle's* restoration to main line running was the cosmetic overhaul that it received for the Channel 4 Television programme *Great Rail Restorations with Peter Snow*, where it briefly ran on the Llangollen Railway. The refurbishment enabled it to be used as an attraction on Tyseley Open Days. For mainline running, however, it has needed further work. This included wheel changes, brake refurbishment, and general cleaning and painting of the bogies. Vintage Trains has also made reversible changes to the internal layout in order to comply with Covid-19 regulations.

In July 2021, just shy of 60 years since 'Eagle' was first delivered to British Railways at Doncaster, it re-entered mainline service with Vintage Trains.

Michael Hughes

With thanks to the Tyseley Archive, the Pullman Society, the National Railway Museum, Pullman Car Services Archive and the Historical Model Railway Society.

Right: inside 'Eagle', looking towards the kitchen end, with the temporary Covid-19 partitions in place. The internal nameplate is also visible.



DONATIONS TO HELP PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN TYSELEY'S PULLMAN CAR COLLECTION ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. PLEASE VISIT <https://pullmanclub.co.uk>



**GREAT WESTERN
RAILWAY GOODS
BRAKE VAN No 35938
(GWR Telegraphic code
name TOAD)**

**by Robert Ferris
Volunteer Archivist**

Great Western Railway goods brake vans were distinctive in having a single large veranda at one end. In the centre of this veranda stood the manual brake standard and handle, which applied clasp-type brake blocks to both sides of all four wheels when turned. To assist adhesion for braking in wet weather, sand could be applied to the track via a pipe from a hopper bunker located above each wheel. A lever connected to the two sand hoppers at the back of the veranda controlled the flow of sand from these, while another lever next to the veranda door was connected to the hoppers over the wheels at the other end of the van by a mechanical linkage. This was suspended inside the van along the length of the roof, serving an additional purpose as an overhead handrail for the guard. (See photos opposite)

A coal-fired stove vented through the van roof via a stove-pipe chimney, keeping the interior warm and dry and providing basic cooking facilities. There were benches on either side, under which were kept spare lamps, tools and equipment. The guard was responsible for the safety of the train, so, in the event of an unexpected stop on the main line, he was required to walk back a long distance behind the train and fix detonators to the track to warn any following train of the obstruction in good time. One common failure on Private Owner goods wagons was coupling breakage, so spare couplings of various types were kept in the van as well as detonators.

The basic design of GWR brake vans remained unchanged until the company was nationalised in 1948, although they gradually became larger and heavier as goods trains became longer and heavier, since braking



Manual brake standard & handle and the two overwheel sand hoppers with interconnecting linkage. The operating lever is just visible, heading upwards out of shot on the right.



Van interior seen from the veranda door, with the stove pipe to the left and the hopper linkage-cum-handrail on the ceiling to the right. One of the hoppers is visible beneath the window on the right.

capacity was largely dependent on the weight of the brake van. Tests in the early 1920s on a 1-in-100 gradient showed that a 10-ton brake van was capable of holding a load of 450 tons, while a 25-ton van could hold 840 tons. At the time, a typical open wagon weighed 6 tons empty, or 16 tons when fully loaded with coal. To increase the weight of brake vans to 10 tons and more, voids in the underframe were filled with scrap cast iron during construction.

In the days of steam, brake vans were found at the rear of all goods trains. Their function was to provide braking facilities for the guard to assist the locomotive crew in three main ways:

- 1) stopping the train when required, including in emergencies;
- 2) securing a detached portion of the train to enable shunting operations to be safely performed;
- 3) controlling the train on gradients.

Goods trains consisted mostly of unfitted wagons (*ie* wagons without remotely actuated brakes) and stopping them relied on the co-ordinated application of brakes by the locomotive at the front and the brake van at the rear. The wagons were usually attached by placing three-link couplings between their drawhooks, an action that could be performed relatively quickly and safely by lifting the end link of each coupling over each drawhook with a long shunting pole, without standing between wagons.

An advantage of three-link couplings was that they created some slack between each wagon, allowing the load of a heavy train to be picked up gradually by the locomotive as it started, thus avoiding wheelslip. However, once the train was in motion and the gradient changed from downhill to uphill, the couplings could 'snatch', causing them to break. And when stopping, the guard needed to apply the van brakes at the rear of the train to prevent the wagons from bunching up and banging together, which could damage the freight inside or even cause a derailment. The same thing could occur when descending steep hills, so goods trains were sometimes required to stop at the top of these and the guard would then get down and manually apply brakes on a number of wagons before using his van brakes as well to control the descent after restarting.

The brake van at Tyseley is unusual in having a vacuum brake handle in addition to the manual brake. (Note the red pipework and lever to the left of the doorway in the photograph). This enabled the brake van to be used on goods trains where the wagons were either fully-fitted (*ie* fitted with vacuum brakes) or piped (*ie* had a vacuum through-pipe, which would be connected to the vacuum braking systems on the adjacent wagons). A train with fully-fitted wagons had increased braking power and the risk of coupling



snatch and bunching was much reduced, so such trains were allowed to travel faster. Although our brake van has a lever that could release the vacuum to operate the brakes on any fully-fitted wagons, it wasn't deemed necessary for it to have its own vacuum brake equipment, so the system is simply 'piped through', with rubber hoses visible at each end. Owing to the much-increased braking power of fully-fitted freight stock and the resulting longer and heavier trains, the wagons were provided either with screw or 'Instanter' couplings, which took longer to attach than the three-link type but reduced the amount of slack between wagons. Being equipped for use with vacuum-braked wagons, Tyseley's brake van has screw couplings rather than the earlier three-link type.

All railways used the telegraph to communicate between locations and they developed a short form code to clearly identify particular wagon types. The GWR used the telegraphic codeword 'TOAD' to describe their goods brake vans and this is why they are frequently called Toads.

Despite having a single veranda at one end, the brake vans were allowed to be coupled to a train facing in either direction. Each was, however, originally allocated to a particular goods yard or depot and this location was written on the outside of the brake van to ensure that it was returned there. After 1943, a shortage of goods brake vans required them to be pooled and the allocation marks were generally removed.

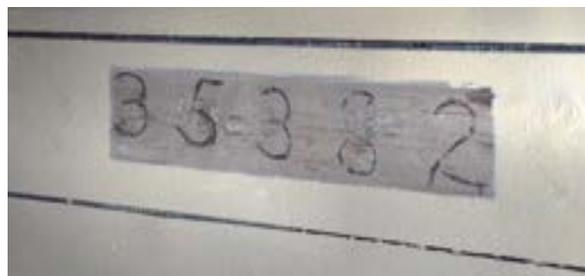
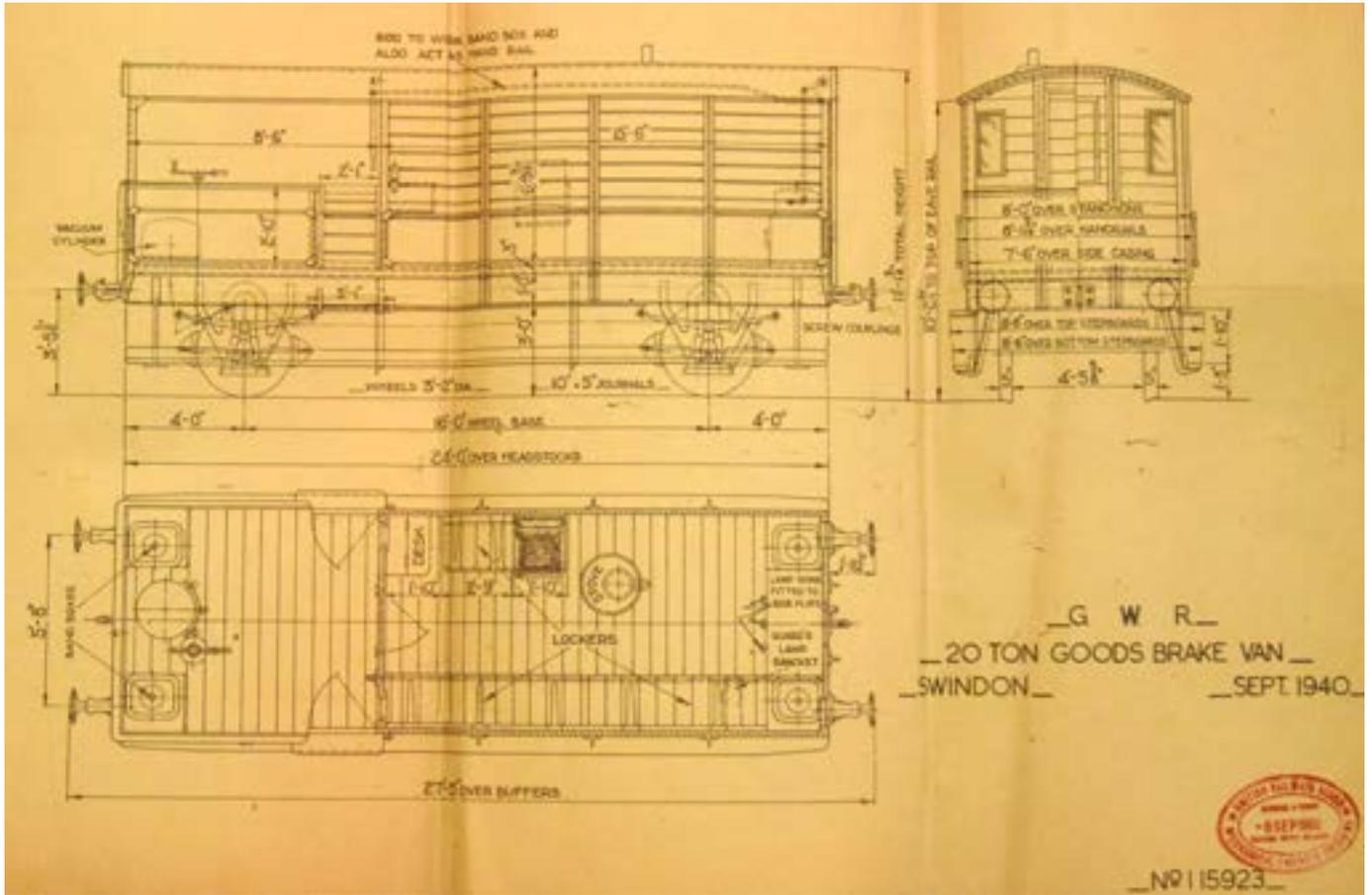
There were windows at both ends of the enclosed portion of TOADs, but no protruding side windows to allow the guard to view signals and the whole length of the train, as provided on the brake vans of other railway companies. This meant that if the train included enclosed wagons or tankers as tall as the TOAD, the guard had to stand outside on the veranda in all weathers and lean out to carry out his duties, making TOADs unpopular outside the Western Region. As a result, their usage was restricted to their home territory after nationalisation and they were branded 'RU', later changed to 'Not in Common Use'. Eventually they were prohibited by BR from working on long-distance trains, so many became surplus to requirements and were converted to other uses, often becoming Engineering Department mess vans.

Brake Van No 35938

The goods brake van at Tyseley was numbered 35938, records showing that it was built by the Great Western Railway at their Swindon Works. Both of the steel solebars are embossed 'Earl of Dudley Steel 12 x 3¼ BSG 118', indicating the size of the steel channel used and where the channel was manufactured: Round Oak Steelworks in Dudley. It was one of fifty 20-ton goods brake vans ordered under lot 1451 in 1943 and built to GWR Diagram AA23, which was the final evolution of this iconic goods brake van design with its single large veranda. A total of four hundred of these Diagram AA23 brake vans were ordered, but only six lots were built between 1942 and 1949, totalling three hundred and twenty-six. The remaining seventy-four brake vans originally ordered on GWR lot 1641 were cancelled after nationalisation, but then re-ordered on BR lot 2099 in 1949. These were built to BR Diagram 1/502, which was identical to the GWR Diagram AA23.



No 35938 was acquired with the Tyseley site in 1966. It had been painted in bauxite livery, which was the standard BR colour for non-fully-fitted vacuum stock and branded 'XP' with the sixteen foot wheelbase length marked underneath, indicating that it could safely travel in express passenger trains. The brake van was also marked 'FOR USE BY DCE DEPT', showing that it had been reallocated to the Divisional Civil Engineering Department. The abbreviation 'COND' daubed on the side indicated that it had recently been condemned by British Railways.



At some stage it had undergone major surgery as all the vertical corner and end stanchions had clearly been cut and then welded together again with brackets just above the solebar. All four sand pipes had also been cut at this height, which suggests that the upper bodywork had been removed from the underframe at some stage. They were not re-joined, however, which implies that the work was done after it ceased to serve as a brake van. Perhaps the bodywork was lifted in order to remove ballast from the voids in the underframe to reduce the tare weight, but the figure 20t was left painted on the side. Another possibility is that the brake van was involved in an accident and the bodywork of a second brake van was substituted during the repair. If this happened, it must have come from another diagram AA23 brake van as the external handrails on the bodywork have corner fittings which are only found on this type. This would also explain why the number 35382 is roughly etched into a wood panel inside, as this is the number of another diagram AA23 brake van, one of sixty

built for Lot 1588 in 1947. More investigation is clearly required.

The brake van was carefully restored by volunteers at Tyseley and repainted in GWR livery. Over the years it has given rides, served as a classroom for educational visits and as a mess room for the volunteers, as well as appearing at Open Weekends. It was repaired and repainted a few years ago by volunteers, but is again in need of some care and attention.

Robert Ferris
Volunteer Archivist

FRIENDS of VINTAGE TRAINS

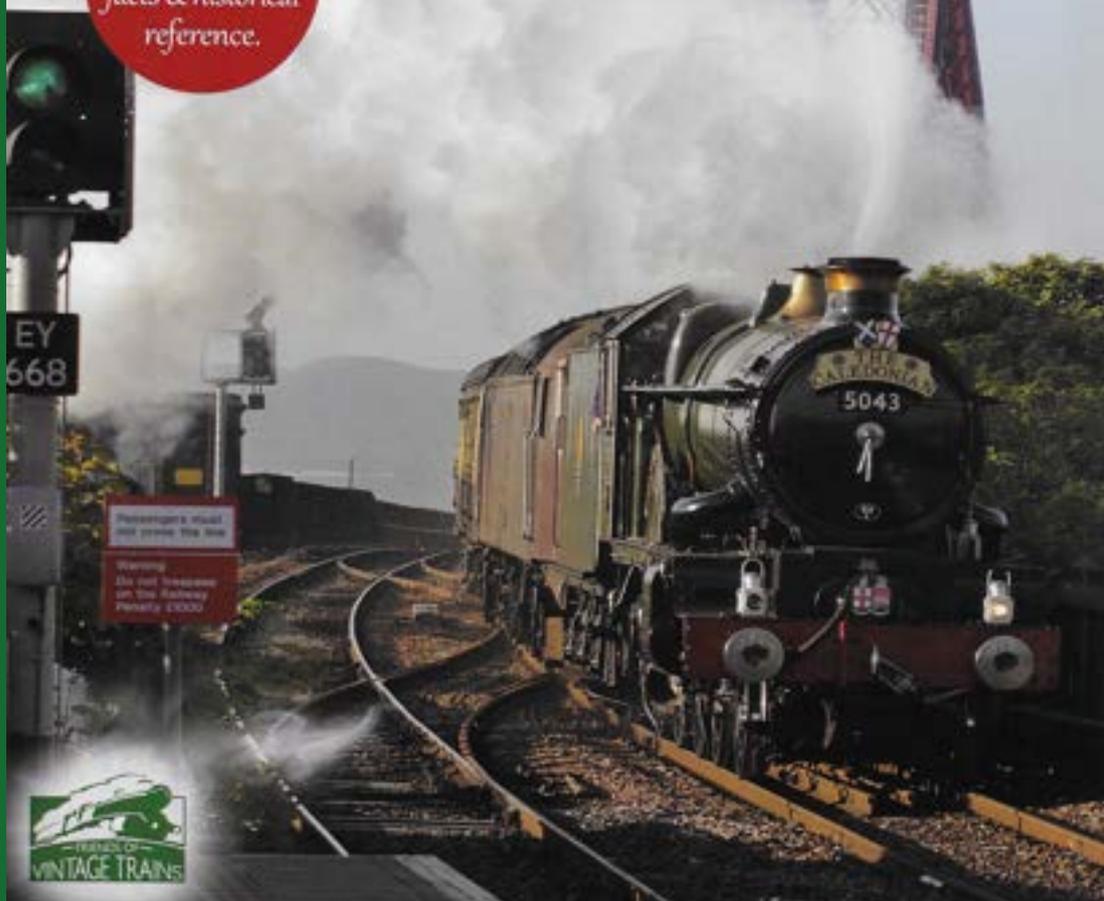
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