



Western Locomotive Association e-Newsletter – February 2024

Welcome

Welcome to your latest WLA e-Newsletter, covering WLA activity in January – and what a start to the new year it has been!

I should of course start with a big welcome to 2024 and that we are looking forward to another exciting year and we hope lots of hydraulic operating and maybe even a return of D1013 Western Ranger.

However, as I start this e-Newsletter, there is of course only one thing on my mind, and I, like many others I am sure, am still buzzing from the Western Locomotive Association 50th Anniversary Celebrations which took place at the STEAM Museum and at Harpers Steakhouse at The Weighbridge, Swindon over the weekend.

It is still hard to believe that it is now 50 years ago that an incredible group of people gathered in Bristol with the purpose of purchasing and preserving a Class 52 diesel hydraulic locomotive, a dream which came true 2 years later in 1976 with the acquisition of D1062 Western Courier.

Fifty years later, we continue to go from strength the strength, and are so excited as the long-term overhaul of D1013 Western Ranger is now approaching its end (although there is still lots of work to do) and we have been entrusted with the future of D1048 Western Lady.



So, there is only one way to start this e-Newsletter, firstly with this classic shot, thanks to Colin Marsden, of D1062 in The Weighbridge at Swindon in 1976, undergoing a transformation from blue with full yellows to maroon with small yellow warning panels.



I would now like to share with you some pictures of this great day, starting with The Hawksworth Room at STEAM being prepared for our celebrations, complete with railway memorabilia – including both of D1062's original cab side numberplates, the Western Talisman Headboard from that memorable trip to York behind D1023 Western Fusilier, and of course the Western Tribute Headboard from that last day in February 1977.

The crowds were still due to arrive – we hoped.



Some closer shots of some of the historic memorabilia on show.



The Sales Stand, in the capable hands of Mr Bamber & Mr Kite, with of course assistance from Mark Perry, Marty Kent and Mark Simmons Jenkins was soon ready to trade. A thanks to you all for what was a successful day.



We were also joined by a rather special and unexpected guest – the original nameplate from D1000 Western Enterprise – complete with missing beading following a scrape! Thanks to STEAM for supplying this wonderful exhibit.



Rehearsals were soon in full flow, Bernard Mills seen below checking the projector worked with his computer, which was full of delights to be revealed later in the day,



And as the 1.45pm kick off time approached; the crowds started to gather. And to say we were humbled and overwhelmed is an understatement, on the day, nearly 130 people travelled from around the country, and Europe, to join us in our celebrations. A big thank you to our Spanish members for travelling all the way to a cold Swindon in January to engage in some diesel hydraulic recollections.



Our Chairman, Roger Smith, soon had proceedings underway with his welcome and the reading of a lovely message from Graham Howell, which is reproduced in full following this pictorial record of the day.



The first presentation followed Roger's welcome – "The Western Locomotive Association, Then and Now", given by yours truly.



It cannot have been too bad, just look at the crowd, all listening intently as we travel from 1976 and the purchase of D1062; through the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s with the benefit of presentations produced by the late Henry Coates, and end with “what did we do in 2023?”



Following this, we welcomed Martyn Williams to the floor, Martyn worked at Swindon Works in the 1970s and revealed his part in the saving of D1062 from the scrap yard and purchase and preservation by the Western Locomotive Association. I think we all learned some new facts in Martyn’s presentation which was “gripping.”

After a break for Tea, Coffee & Biscuits, the floor was handed to Bernard Mills and his slide presentation entitled "The last months of the Westerns." Bernard describes himself as a retired railwayman of 57 years' service who has spent a lifetime photographing trains and railways for the pleasure of it.

It was a fantastic presentation and took us all back to the last days when we chased "Westerns" around the west country and further afield, knowing that the end was nigh! Bernard's feedback – "it was a privilege to share them with a likeminded audience."

Thank you Bernard.



The formal proceedings ended with three BTC films presented by Keith Bullock – Diesel Hydraulics in the 1960s and 1970s; a film on the Blue Pullman; and a final one on the beginnings of the Channel Tunnel. The room was silent (and dark!) and everyone enjoyed these historic pieces of cinematic history.

It was then time for 45 of us to walk across to The Weighbridge for dinner and of course celebratory drinks.

WARNING!

What follows next contains alcoholic content and people enjoying themselves – the WLA does not accept responsibility for any fallout from the pictures contained on the following pages and the identities of those concerned have not been revealed!

AND A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT JOINED US FOR THE EVENT – I HOPE THAT YOU ALL ENJOYED IT AS MUCH AS WE DID.

THE NEXT EVENT – MAYBE THE RETURN OF D1013 WESTERN RANGER.





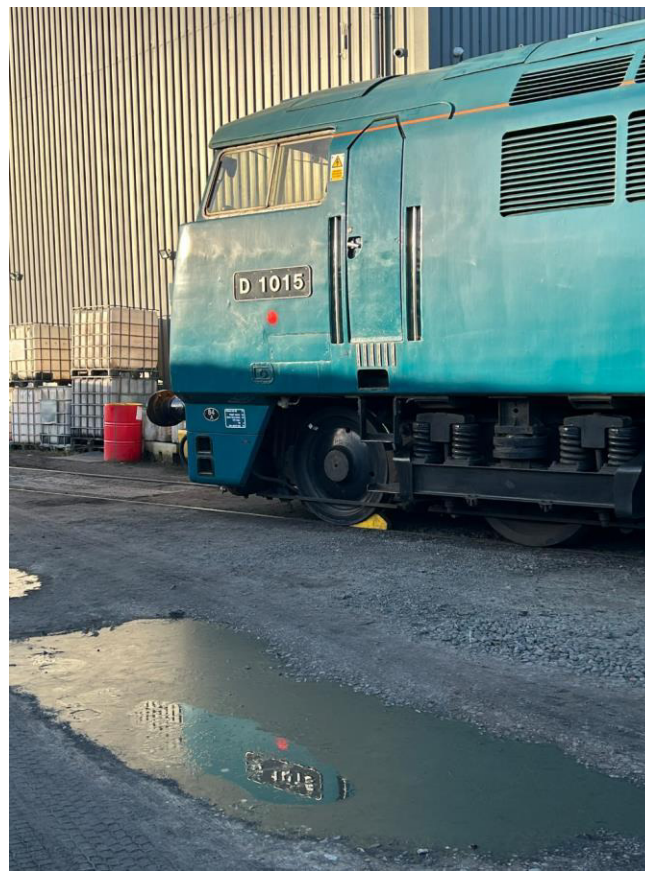
If I recall correctly, I started this e-Newsletter with a “Welcome to 2024.”

What a start in the TMD – as the first visit to the TMD and we are welcomed by on of Rail Adventures HST units undergoing maintenance on Wednesday 3rd January.

Normal business is reflected however – with D1062 on the left undergoing Winter Maintenance Work (covered in this e-Newsletter) and 50 033, whilst sheltering from the wind, rain and snow, also going through essential work before traveling to other heritage railways in the summer (she has already been announced at attending the West Somerset Railway Diesel Gala.



Meanwhile, outside on 9th January, D1015 Western Champion is seen as she is prepared for a Main Line Loaded Test Run – again reported on later.



To end this introduction, an image of D1062 Western Courier receiving some TLC also on 9th January – read on for full details and I hope you enjoy this e-Newsletter.



In this e-Newsletter

Features in this e-Newsletter include the following:

- News from The Chair.
- Western Locomotive Association 50th Anniversary Celebration – Graham Howell’s message.
- Monthly News Updates – an update on all that has been happening over the last month.
- Western Courier re-visited.
- Whizzo Woods Update.
- Sales Team Update.
- Membership News.
- Book of the Month.
- Media Coverage – new edition!
- Severn Valley Railway News – Running Dates & Events.
- Members Forum & Gallery – where we hear directly from you, our WLA membership.
- Closing Notes / Book Ends.

Of course, the usual reminder - the aim of this e-Newsletter is to keep you up to date on all things “WLA” – what we have been doing and what is being planned along with anything else that we think you will find interesting.

Your feedback and suggestions regarding what you want to see and read are important, so please do share, and please do not hold back!

And please send in anything that you think will be of interest to your fellow members – memories, photographs, stories and articles - and help to keep this e-Newsletter alive and interesting and informative.

News from the Chair

Well, less than a week ago, many of us were celebrating the WLA's 50th Anniversary on Saturday, 27th January 2024, at Swindon's STEAM Museum, the birthplace of Westerns and the place where D1062 was restored to her former glory back in May 1977, just a few months after the end of Westerns on BR. And what a day it was too!

Just to recall, the WLA was formally launched in Bristol, in January 1974, although the founder members had gathered around in 1973 to discuss the possibility of saving a Class 52, just as the first withdrawals were taking place in May 1973. The WLA managed acquired sufficient funds to purchase D1062 Western Courier in October 1976 and the locomotive was subsequently restored and painted in maroon with half yellows in the Weighbridge building - the exact same place where the WLA held their evening dinner to finish off the celebrations!

Following a welcome by myself, a message was read out on behalf of Graham Howell who used to work at Swindon Works and had much to do with D1062's preservation and sourcing of spares. Graham was also a WLA Committee Member in the early days, assisting the then Chairman, David Ashley. Graham said "I cannot quite take it in that the WLA was formed 50 years ago. Little did we all think our little group would achieve so much and it has now blossomed into a world-renowned organisation with members scattered all over the world." He asked the present Members to "carry on and continue to inspire the preservation world..."

The celebrations included a full afternoon with over 120 people attending. Presentations were made by Paul Finch, WLA Vice Chairman, outlining much of the work carried out during 2023 on D1013 Western Ranger and D1062 Western Courier, plus the transfer and gift of D1048 Western Lady in October 2023.

This was followed by a talk by Martyn Williams who was an Apprentice at Swindon Works who outlined how they managed to repaint D1062 Western Courier and D818 Glory around the Swindon turntable.

A slide show presentation followed by Bernard Mills renowned for his professional photographs of all things Western, including his dry humour, especially when comparing the railway operations that take place today!

Finally, an excellent BTC film show was presented by Keith Bullock, who normally undertakes preservation work for the DTG.

The day was completed with a meal and drinks at Harpers Steak House in the old Weighbridge building, where around 50 people enjoyed and finished off a super evening!

Many thanks to all of those who attended our event, those who organised the event and especially to our Guests who did so well to keep everyone entertained!

So now, after all the drink and food it's back to work doing what many of us do best – working on the Westerns and working on the WLA!

Thank you!

Roger Smith
Chairman.

Western Locomotive Association 50th Anniversary Celebration –Graham Howell's Message



First of all, may I offer my apologies for not being with you today on such an auspicious occasion. Although I shall be away from the UK my thoughts will be with you.

I cannot quite take it in that the WLA was formed 50 years ago. Little did we all think that our little group would achieve so much, and it has now blossomed into a world-renowned organisation with members scattered all over the world.

I recall very well attending a members get together in the British Railway Staff Association building at Bristol Temple Meads when it became very apparent to me that those present had an overwhelming desire to buy and preserve a class 52 locomotive but in all honesty did not have much idea how this was going to be achieved, let alone to fully realise the complexities of such a purchase and upkeep. Dear old George Russum and his friends meant well but were well out of their depth.

I remember standing up and introduced myself and explained that I worked in the Swindon Works as a locomotive fitter and then went on to ask some pertinent questions and before I knew it I was voted onto the committee.

Luckily it was not too long after that David Ashley came onto the scene who with his undoubted management skills guided us into the professional organisation which eventually guided us to run an incredibly successful main line railtour to from Kings Cross to York with D1023 and then more importantly led us through the successful contracts to purchase D1062, the setting up of a works order with Swindon Works for essential repairs and the eventual private railway working contracts, this was no mean task. Sadly, David is no longer with us, but he would be so proud I am absolutely sure.

The choice of D1062 for preservation was at the time considered by some to be wrong but there is no doubt that the choice was completely correct when weighed up alongside the dregs of the fleet that were still running. She was structurally sound, had never been in a serious collision and was in the right place being at Swindon Works and with certain people in the right position who I knew we were able to effect repairs and acquire a large quantity of essential spare parts.

It must also be recognised that the work and money that Richard Holdsworth put into the Association was significant even if at the time it was thought we may have bitten off too much taking on two locomotives following his purchase of D1013.

The placement of the locomotives at the Torbay & Dartmouth Railway was seen to be correct as this was typical class 52 territory although the storage facilities were lacking somewhat. After a short period, it became clear that the T&D Railway was not a good place to be and thanks again to David Ashley and a management committee who recognised the short comings of the situation we managed to move the locomotives to the Severn Valley Railway.

The early days here were not without challenges but thanks again to certain members such as Ian Jackson and a small band of willing workers the best was made of the situation.

The years slipped by, and it was recognised that both locomotives required extensive repairs and I have to add my personal thanks to the present working members who without doubt have shown total professionalism

and never-ending strength and a willingness to get the job done to such high standards. The work you have taken on such as a full rewiring of both locomotives is nothing short of miraculous, even down to the non-locomotive work such as a proper store where the precious spare parts can be held safely and dry.

Most people have no idea what it takes to keep these machines running and believe me this is not easy and often in far from ideal conditions, let alone the never-ending draw on the Association funds. Even now with the almost luxury of the diesel depot facilities at Kidderminster it must be recognised that it all comes down to leadership, enthusiasm and sheer guts and determination to get the job done. I take my hat off to you all and applaud you all for this work, I am sure all of those who are gathered here today will agree. Well done indeed one and all, you deserve every possible praise.

So, enjoy today in and around the surroundings of the former works where the Westerns were built, alongside Crewe works, and of course where the fleet were overhauled. It is worth recalling that as some works guides would say when they took parties around the works that when they walked into the 'A' shop they were in the cathedral of railway workshops.

Sadly, it was also the place where the fleet were disposed of but from the scrap piles you have brought the locomotives through it all and continue to maintain these two (sorry three) fine machines to such high standards.

The men and women of the works would indeed be proud to see what you have achieved. You can stand and throw your chests out and say yes, we are a good bunch dedicated to our task.

Do remember that the great bulk of the workforce in the works who would have built and overhauled these unique locomotives have now passed on to the great erecting shop in the sky.

You may also not realise it but the weighbridge where you will enjoy a raised glass or two and a meal later on today is the very building where Courier was worked on in 1976 and 1977 including the full repaint by works painters Terry Couling and Gary Stroud who did not charge us anything for their time which was considerable. It was Terry of course who painted, and sign wrote the headboard for the Western Talisman railtour. Terry died some years ago, but he would be smiling now.

I can still vividly recall the Saturday morning when we had pre heated the coolant and I had arranged for the Erecting Shop inspector Alfie Neate to come along and check a few things before we started the engines at a future date. I recall he said "well, it's a shame to waste all that hot coolant, let's have a run up!"

All went well and the rest is now history.

There were quite a few tears that day I can assure you.

So, my dear friends I ask you to carry on and continue to inspire the railway preservation world. You have achieved so much, and you can stand proud and once again I salute you all.

PS: Why not buy the book today that Mike Woodhouse and I have written that recall the events of all the diesel hydraulic locomotives!!!!

News Update – January 2024 (Pictures supplied by Working Members present)

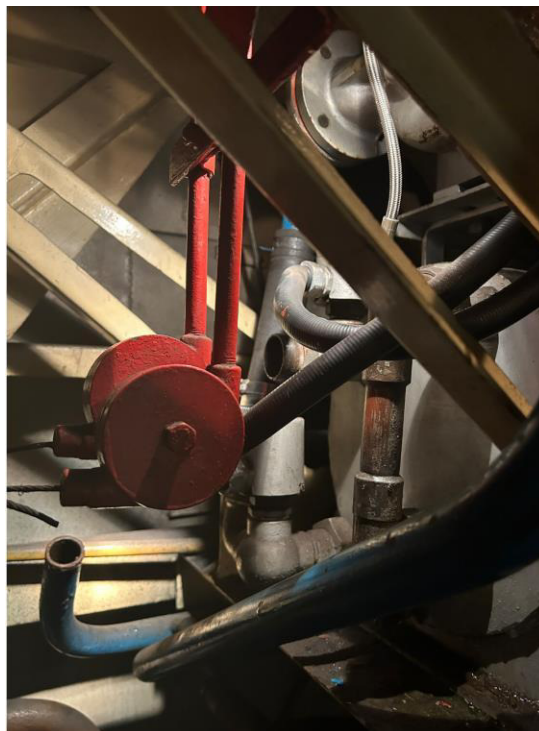
Wednesday 3rd January

Welcome back to the TMD and that HST welcoming us into 2024!



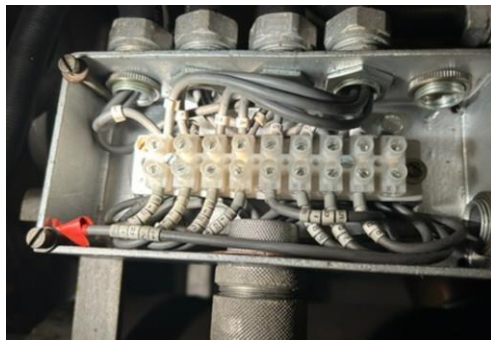
First job of the year – start on the task of disconnecting EVERYTHING in the cubicle at “B” End – the Pre-Heater, the Cradle, the Dynostarter, the Serck Pump, all pipework, electrics etc – quite a task.

Some pictures below of the work in progress and also the cleaning & painting task ahead..... Not too many words on this occasion, just all hands focussed on the task.









“B” End Coolant safely and securely stored alongside the locomotive.



Meanwhile, in the containers, Coop had been busy hanging “historic” Headboards – far safer out of the way and hung on the walls. Others Headboards hung have already been featured, as they were soon taken down again for display at the 50th Anniversary celebrations.



Then, a simple task (said Coop!) Let’s move a small piece of equipment from one container to another and its planned final location. How we got this on the pump trolley was quite an achievement.



And into the final “resting place!!



Saturday 6th January

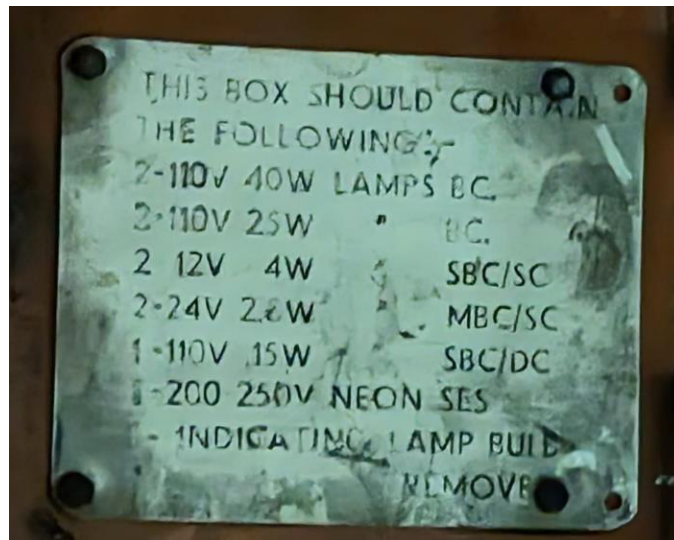
The Saturday Plan - the electrical disconnection of the Preheater and Dyno-Starter; the removal of the Roof Panels from above the "B" End Preheater and also the Roof Panel above the Engine above the Intercoolers.

Great progress made as illustrated below, as per above, but in addition the removal of the Preheater.

Investigations into the Driver's Brake Mode Indicator commenced – and bulbs replaced as required.



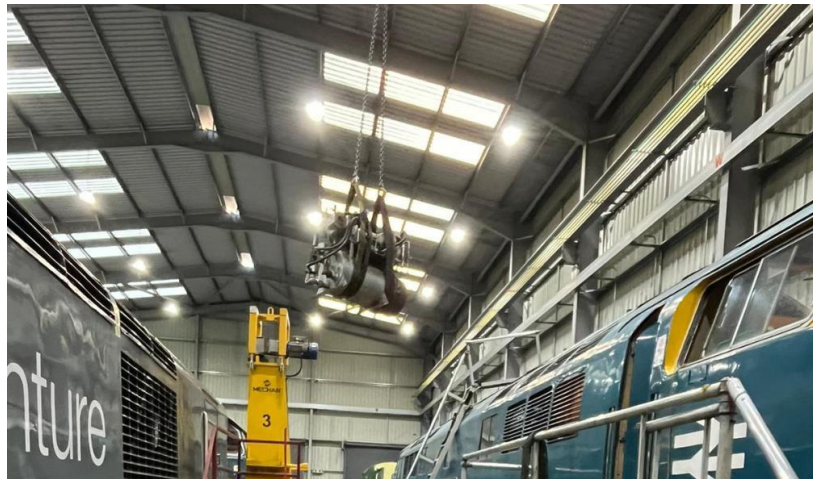
The number of bulbs required at each end is quite extensive!



AVR Boards were also removed and safely packed in order to be sent away for rectification.



I mentioned that the Pre Heater was successfully removed – poetry in motion witnessed below.



Tuesday 9th January

Coolant at "A" End was drained ahead of hose replacement work, and the outstanding work to disconnect all equipment around the Dyno-Starter & Serck Pump was completed.

Hydraulic Oil from "B" End Serck System was also drained.



Other major tasks included the removal of the Watchman Cradle; the removal of the Auxiliary Shafts Safety Rings; the loosening of the Shaft Flanges; the loosening of the Serck System Pump Hoses....



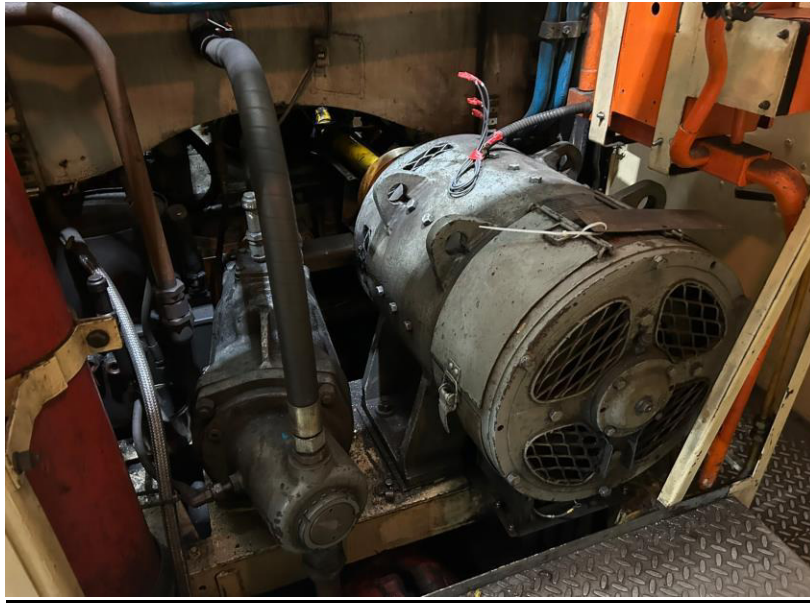
& the painting of the two Roof Panels that had been removed.



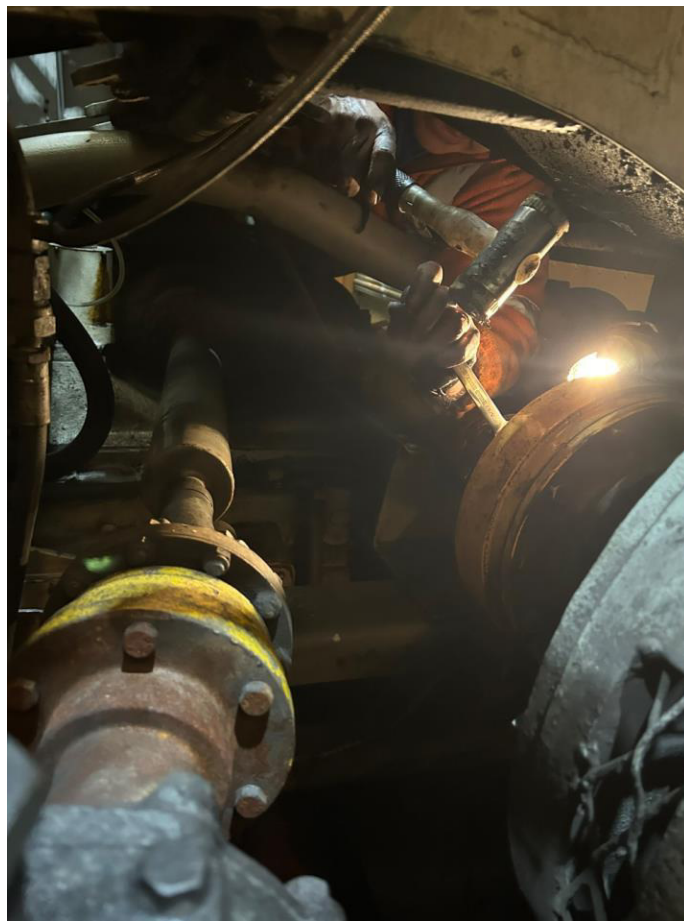
Meanwhile, outside in the sunshine, preparations were in progress ahead of Loaded Test Run!



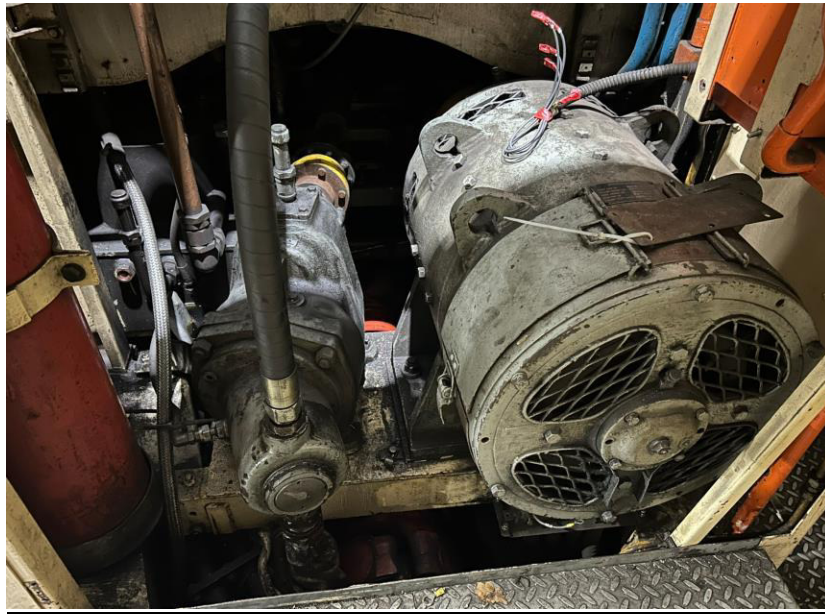
So, how to get those cardan shafts ready for disconnection.....



If I can just get my hands and spanner in here, said Mark Perry, it will be easy and done in now time at all.



& Mission One accomplished.



Meanwhile, Darren had a plan to make access to the work area much easier – let's remove the door!



Having removed the door, Darren was spotted quickly leaving the scene!



A couple of photographs to end the day – D1015 Western Champion out in the yard ticking over nicely in readiness for the next day.



Wednesday 10th January

D1015 Western Champion Loaded Main Line Test

A number of us want out to witness and photograph Champion on a main line test – from Bristol to Gloucester, and of course light engine from Kidderminster to Bristol and Gloucester back to Kidderminster. Some pictures shared below.

Peter Squire

In the early hours, in the dark, heading south....



& later with a full load passing Cam & Dursley.



& returning at lunchtime and passing Droitwich Spa.



Under semaphores – did we really travel back to the 60's!



Steve Widdowson - At Abbotswood Junction, Worcester {0Z15 1135 Gloucester New Yd. ~ Kidderminster SVR}



& at Wadborough, Worcester {0Z15 1135 Gloucester New Yd. ~ Kidderminster SVR}



Steve Hampton – under the wires at Bristol Parkway.



Paul Finch – and my shots at Tumpy Green



Saturday 13th January

Work commenced on the replacement of hoses at "B" End and some rectification work was carried out at "A" End.

And another delivery for Coop!



Wednesday 17th January

Carrying on with the work – Dynostarter and Serck Pump Mounting Bolts were released, and coolant pipes freed.

Plinths prepared for the mounting of the Dynostarter once lifted out.

The big clean up also commenced.

“Before” & “After” shots...





Friday 19th January

The start of a two-day session. The BIG Plan – the removal of the Dynostarter and Serck Pump, after the removal of the Dyno Starter Cardan Shaft and Vulcan Coupling; followed by a further clean and repaint of “B” End.

The Watchman Cradle and all Panels will also be assessed and painted as required.

Success – the removed Dyno Starter and Serck Pump seen below.



Also on display, the Dyno Starter Cardan Shaft and Vulcan Coupling.

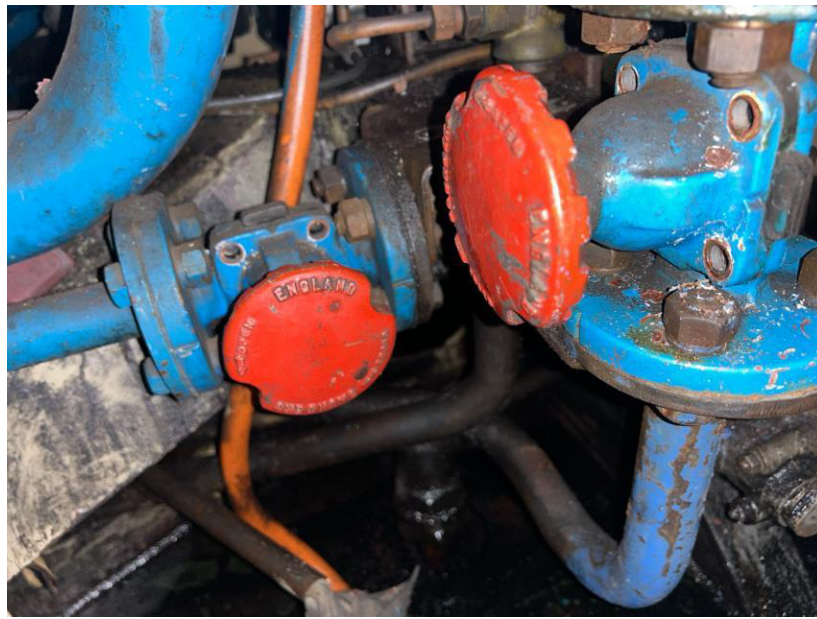


Saturday 20th January

Peter Bamber seen below starting to remove Saunders Valves so that new rubbers can be fitted.



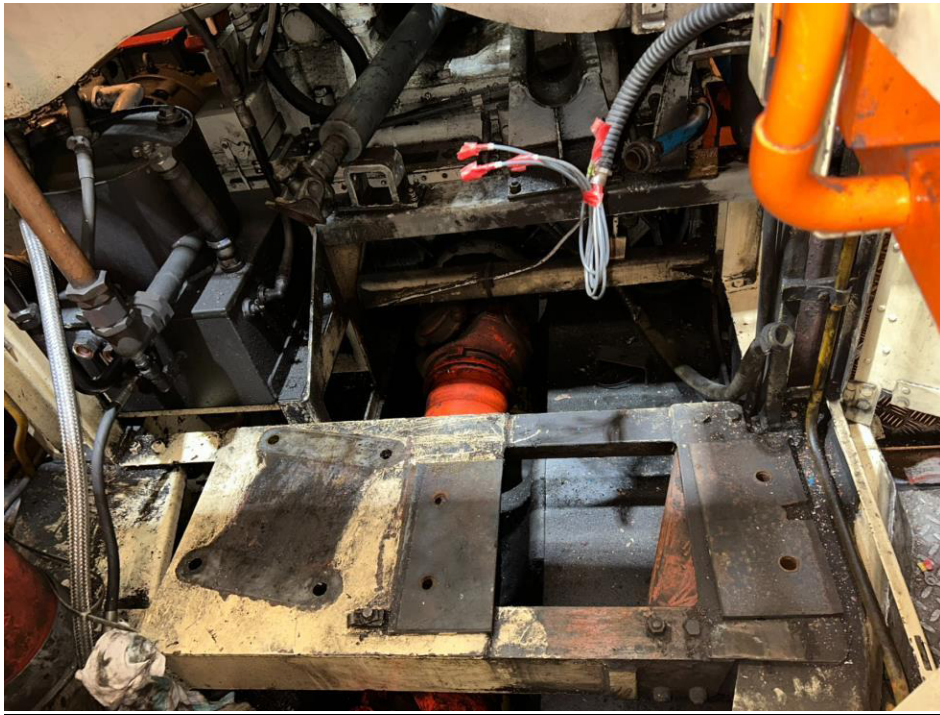
Saunders Valves revealed in all their glory, peaky little things, easy when accessible, not so easy when buried in the depths.



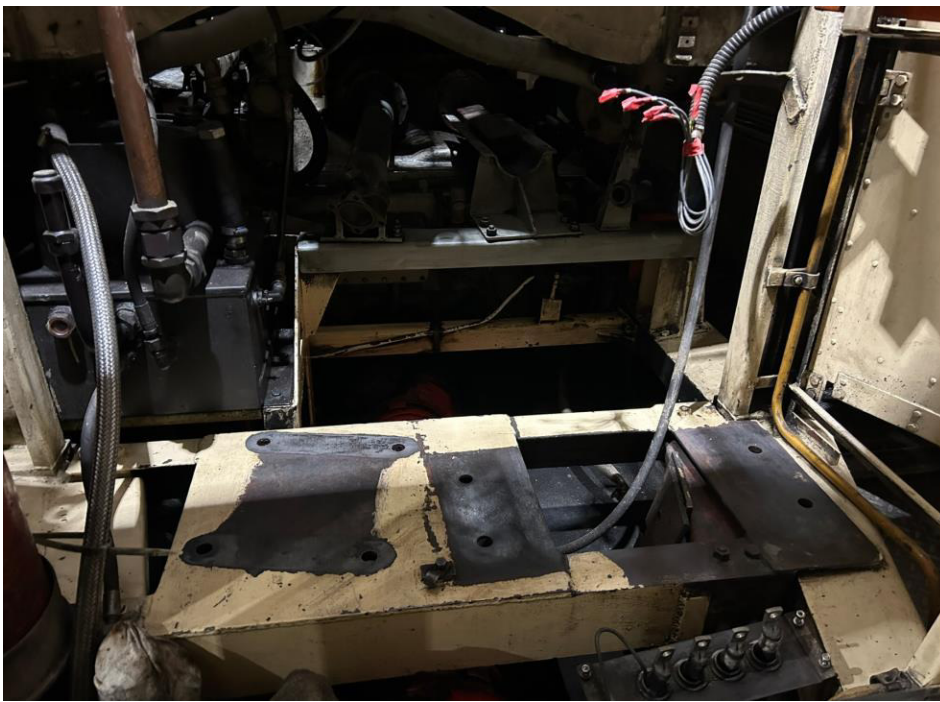
Meanwhile cleaning of the Auxiliary Compartment is well underway.



Before....



After, looking better and ready for rub down and painting.



The not so often seen view – looking inwards towards the Transmission, the left shaft visible connects to the Serck Pump and the “missing” right shaft to the Dynostarter.

Underneath – and red – the main cardan shaft from the Transmission to the Intermediate Drive is visible.

Access like this would have made life so much easier when trying to access the reverser in the Transmission!



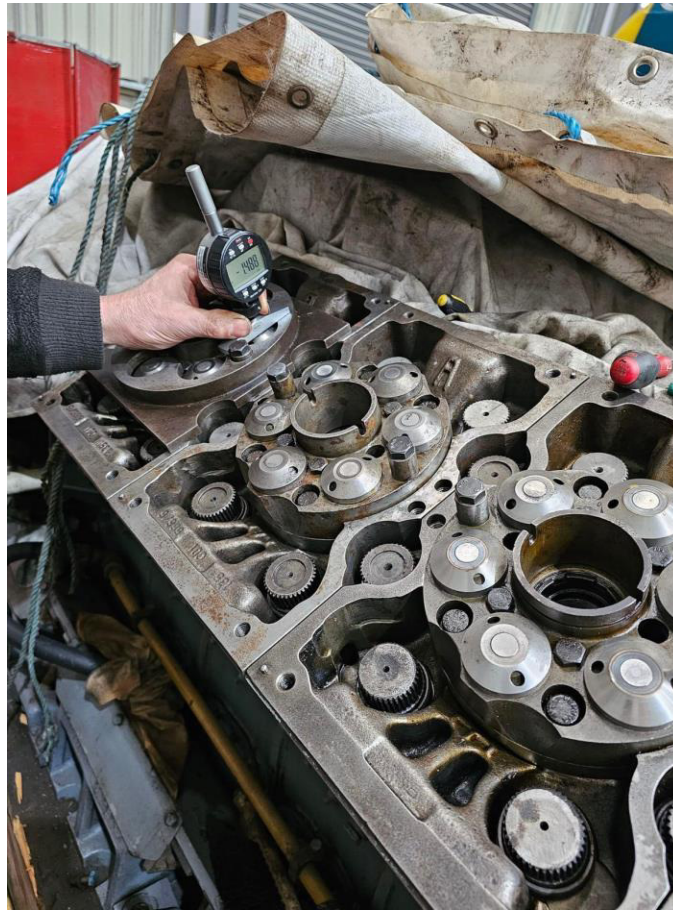
Cleaning of the Dynostarter – in this instance, sitting down on the job is mandatory.



Great job – on both the Dynostarter and Serck Pump.



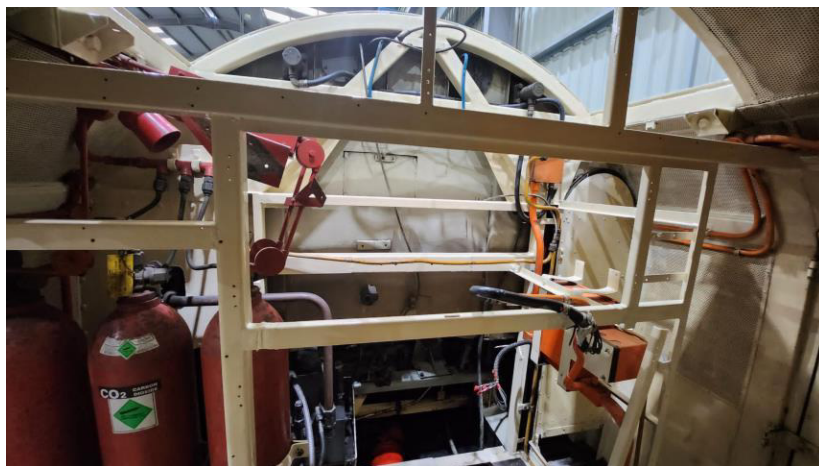
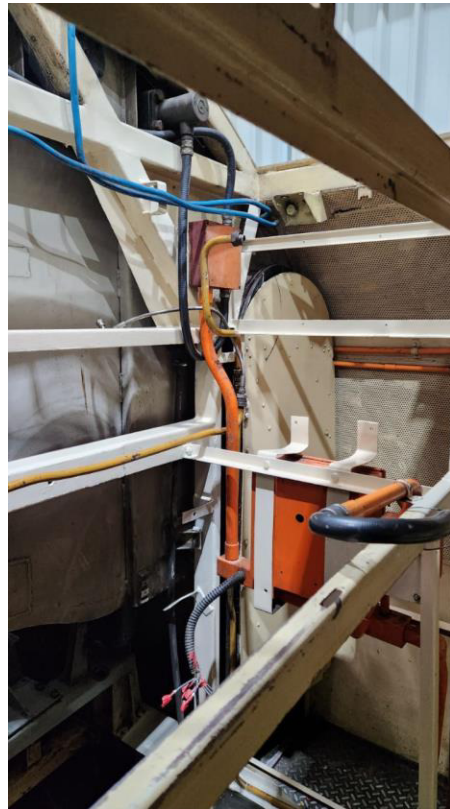
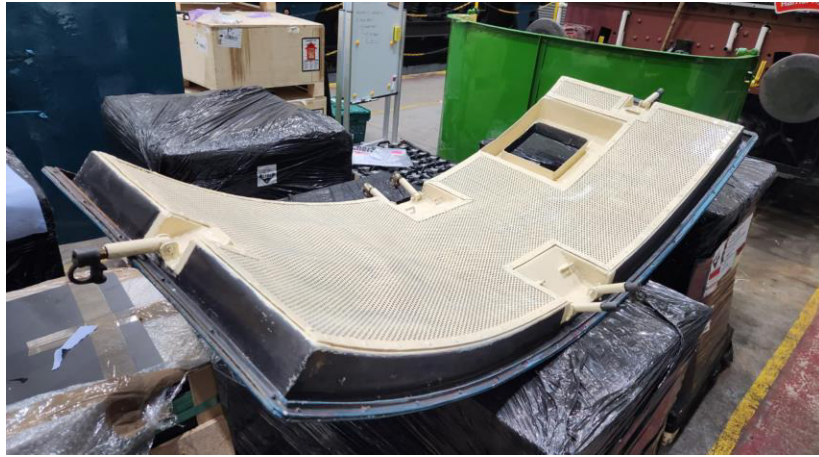
Measurements commenced on Ranger's "B" End engine – and the setting of Valve heights.



Sunday 21st January

Painting commenced and the Auxiliary Compartment and various parts starting to look ready to be re-fitted, once the refurbished Dynostarter is installed and Serck Pump are re-installed.





Wednesday 24th January

Simple request – can you start rubbing down and painting the panels?



No problem!



Saturday 27th January

Whilst many of us were celebrating our 50th Anniversary at STEAM, a number of working members were at Bridgnorth and Kidderminster – a MASSIVE thanks to all of them for carrying on whilst some of us were partying hard – as reported earlier.

Significant progress was made on the electrics for the transmission pump project on D1013 as can be seen below.



All that is needed now is a legend plate.



Wednesday 31st January

Painting continued by the Wednesday team present at the TMD.



Western Courier – Issue 1013 (Winter 1977)

“WESTERN COURIER”

The Journal of the
“Western” Locomotive
Association



1013
Winter
30p

Spirit of the West.....

A Ghost Story by the late Adrian Curtis (carried over from the December e-Newsletter)

It was two o'clock in the morning and we were just entering Taunton. It was a full train but the night was foul, wind and rain lashed at the coaches and I felt a little sorry for the driver of the train headed by Class 47 – 47 089 Amazon as he tried to steer us to our destination of London. I was returning home after a weekend visit to the WR in search of – yes, you've guessed it – Class 52's. About 30 were left remaining but owing to the adverse weather I hadn't got a decent photo of the seven that I had seen at Plymouth that Saturday. I was very tired but somehow on this rain lashed night I just couldn't seem to get my head down. The brakes were applied and we ground to a smooth halt. Taunton was fast asleep. The Station deserted and one could just hear above the hissing steam, the heavy raindrops battering at the window. Doors crashed and thudded and then slowly the 47 made a slow re-start towards Bristol.

I have seen some fine sights along this stretch of track, I thought to myself, Like D1035 Western Yeoman, bringing her train slowly into Taunton in the summer of '73, alas just a memory now. “A rough night sir?” said a gentleman sitting opposite which brought me back to reality. “Aye, it is” I replied. “Going far?” I continued. “All the way” he replied gaily. For me, I was alighting at Swindon as I had to pay homage to the unlucky fallers who now lay silent in the overgrown weeds. I slowly and eventually dozed off but presently I was awoken by a thud and a jerk. Must be somewhere near Bristol I thought, thinking to ask the gentleman opposite but he too had dozed off. I listened for a minute to the wind howling, it seemed a similar wind sound to the sound of a Maybach. That's no wind I thought, that's a “Western”. Jumping to the window, I waited. It was pitch black, all I could see were two tracks rusty and shiny below. Then a shadow appeared, the noise grew louder, then she appeared, two tracks away, D1050 Western Ruler, passed, but no cab lights were lit and the coaches were dark. Seconds later she had gone just as quickly as she had come. I sank back, still wondering, I was sure D1050 was withdrawn over a year ago, perhaps it was my tired eyes. We started to move on, still puzzled, I thought I must remember to enquire at Bristol. We arrived at Bristol some ten minutes late but no one was in sight to ask, we not 52 bashers anyway.

I sat back thinking hard but I must have been too tired. Perhaps it was a dream, I thought or did I read the number wrong. An hour later we were bearing Swindon and a 5 hour wait before my visit to the works which I didn't fancy in this weather. Swindon was reached just about on time, I bae farewell to the gentleman and alighted into the cold morning air, it was 6.00am, still dark and still raining. I started heading for the waiting room when I was drawn to a familiar ticking sound out on Platform One, and peering round the edge, I saw D1058 Western Nobleman shimmering under the Swindon lights, on a parcels train. She lefty almost immediately, music to the ears in the cold air. Making myself as comfortable as possible, I got my head down at last.

It was three solid hours later at 9.00am when I finally awoke. A stout BR man looking very important in uniform as well informed me that it was time to get up and asked if I wanted breakfast served as well. Cheek, I thought! I stepped out into the damp air. The rain had ceased, and it was quite bright in places. I had two hours to kill before my works trip but there is not much to do at that time of the morning as I found out. So, I slowly made my way to the platform end which was strangely deserted and lonely. I stopped and reflected on the night I had had, it was then that I remembered the sight of D1050. Pondering further, I came to the conclusion that it was either a dream or an hallucination. After all, a solid 48 hours on the railway does make one tired. My train of thought was interrupted by 50 033 arriving with a westbound train. Tired people clambered out of the coaches soon to be knocked cold by the damp air. 50 033 left quickly, chugging away as usual. Suddenly a voice rang out. Hello, I thought, am I going completely mad or is someone talking to me. Sure enough I turned to see a young man sporting a black jacket and trousers and wearing a WLA badge in his lapel. He came closer and spoke again. "Any 52's been in?" he shouted from a distance of about 5 yards. "Only 58 on parcels" I replied. After exchanging the usual pleasantries, we stood talking of the old times when the Maybachs were in total command – those were the days I thought. Then after a brief silence, he said "Going around the Works?" to which I answered "Yes, at eleven". "I hear there's about 12 52's in there, I should get some good shots." Then to my surprise and horror, he turned and said "Well, there is one you will not get a shot of. They cut Ruler up yesterday!"

So, if one rain lashed night when the "Westerns" have been long gone, and you are down in the heart of the West, just listen to the haunting melody of the wind and ask yourself "Is that a Western?"



Friday 7th May 1976. D1054 Western Governor drags a stone service out of Merthyr terminal to the Tolken point. The bright sunlight caused some problems, and was stewing the crew of the Western.

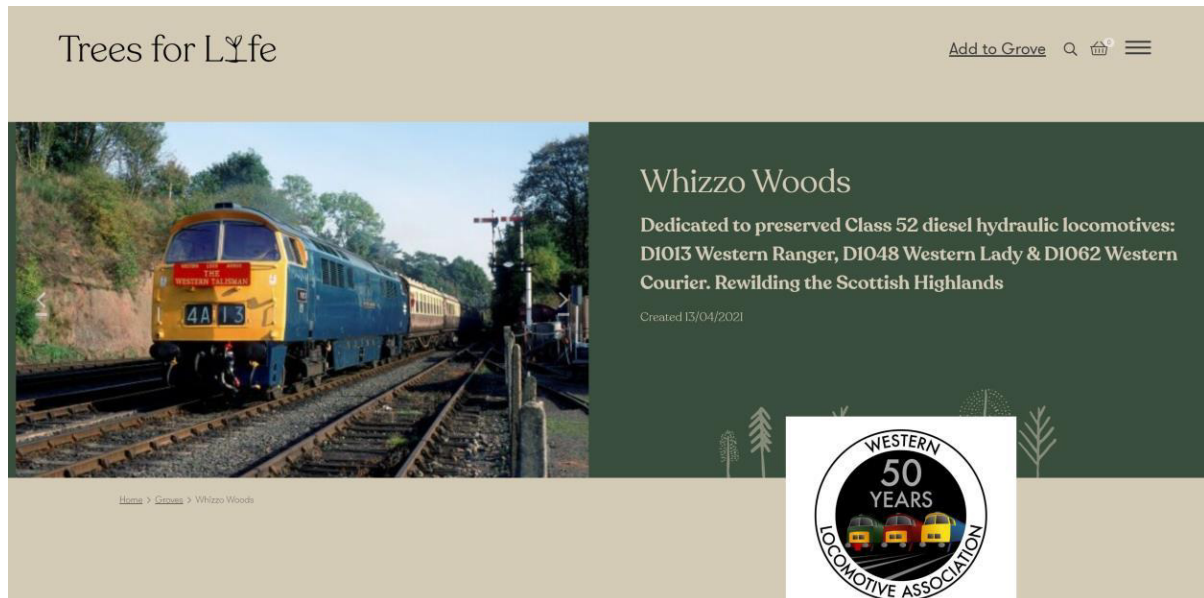
Photo: Steve Jackson

Whizzo Woods

We start the year with **307 trees** in Whizzo Woods – thank you all for your continued support of this initiative.

Trees can be purchased for just £6 – what an investment, and can be found at <https://westernlocomotives.com/shop/a-tree-in-whizzo-woods/>

The Whizzo Woods has been updated and D1048 Western Lady is now also included in our description.



Our planned trip to Scotland to visit Whizzo Woods has still to be developed, something for 2024, finding the time is the challenge – watch this space.

The below picture of D1062 Western Courier at the Autumn Diesel Bash is now the new Whizzo Woods poster child!



Whizzo Woods was first established in April 2021 with an objective of planting 62 trees a year – further details can be found at - <https://treesforlife.org.uk/groves/315992/>

Update from the Sales Team

50th Anniversary Merchandise now available at www.westernlocomotives.com
Do not miss out – when its gone, its gone!

Glasses, Mugs and Coasters



Mouse Mats (mouse and computer not included)



And there is more.....

"& Then there were Three" Mug



"Blue Heaven" Mug



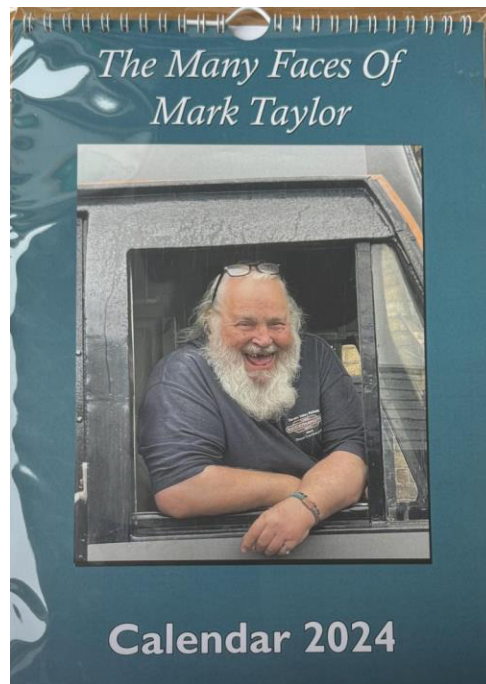
"Western Lady" Mug – and of course "Western Ranger" and "Western Courier".



For those that like GREEN – this one is for you!



The item of the month – a MUST HAVE 2024 Calendar – “The many faces of Mark Taylor”. This calendar features Mark in different poses each month as he goes about his work at the SVR – a must have calendar.



Peter Bamber has also asked me to remind you that if you have any old railway related books (or new books!) or any railwayana that you no longer want, or is taking up too much space, then we would be delighted to take them off your hands.

The success of the Sales Team last year, was in part been as a result of all the donations that we have received – they make a **massive** difference (especially as they come at zero cost) and so anything that you want to part with will make a big difference to us.



Membership Update

A reminder that it is the start of the year and your WLA membership traditionally renews on January 1st.

Please renew as soon as possible as your support makes it possible to do what we do.

You can join the WLA, or renew your membership in three ways:

- Payment by Credit Card (via Stripe) from our website – www.westernlocomotives.com
- Joining with a membership form and paying by cheque (including renewal) – post to Paul Tucker, forms can be downloaded from our website – www.westernlocomotives.com
- Downloading a Standing Order Form = as above

One of your objectives is to grow our membership, so please continue to talk to your friends and colleagues and tell them all about the WLA and what we do and see if they are interested in joining, they will be made very welcome.

Just think, if every member persuaded one other person to join, we would double our membership! So why not step up to the challenge and help us to achieve our objective of doubling our membership.

We are also always looking for “Working Members” to come and help us with our work on the locomotives, and with all of the other essential associated work carried out at Bridgnorth and Kidderminster – no special skills are required to help, just enthusiasm and a good sense of humour. Of course, any engineers or railway professionals are VERY welcome.

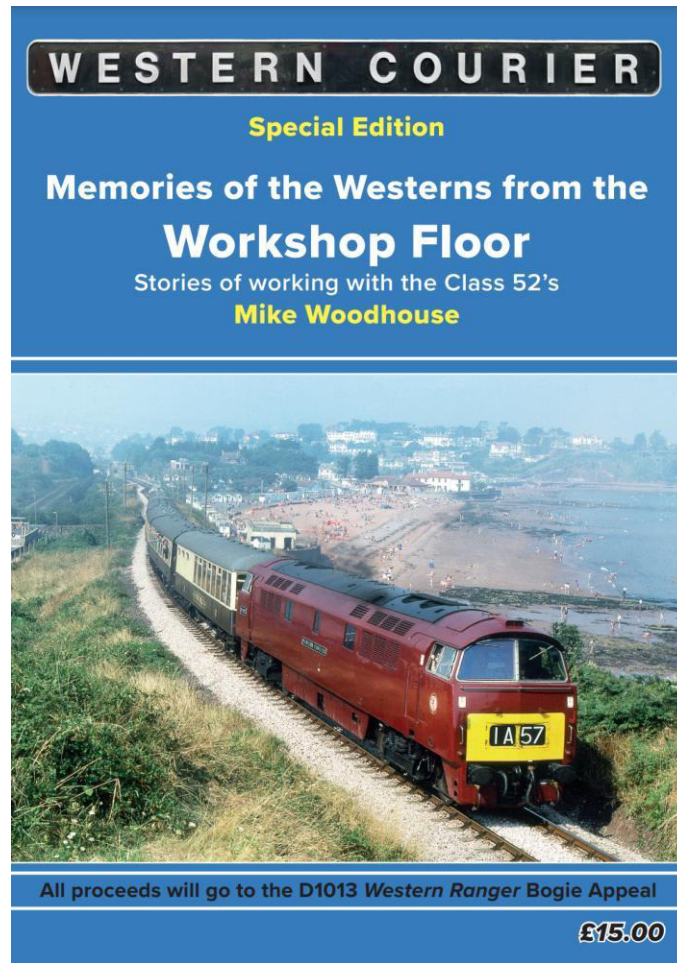
If you are interested in helping us, please do not hesitate to contact any Committee Member or Working Member directly, or contact the WLA at [info@westernlocomotives.com/](mailto:info@westernlocomotives.com) or contact me at wp.finch@icloud.com

Book of the Month

Available for the first time at our 50th Anniversary Celebration, a new booklet commissioned by the WLA and produced by Mike Woodhouse is now available to purchase at www.westernlocomotives.com.

In the same style as our twice-yearly Western Courier magazine, this booklet – entitled “Memories of the Westerns from the Workshop Floor” contains multiple stories of working with the Class 52s – it is a must have and a must read.

Mike Woodhouse’s Introduction below sets the scene perfectly.



Introduction

The 'Westerns' were just part of my railway engineering career, from their building to the end of operation and the cutters torch.

My eyes witnessed the arrival of No. D1000 *Western Enterprise* at 81A - Old Oak Common in December 1961.

Over the years, I had many adventures with the

'Westerns' at Old Oak and 84A Plymouth Laira.

Here are some tales from ye *olde Westerns* over sixty years ago.

Hope you enjoy reading them.

Mike Woodhouse

The booklet has a retail price of £15.00 but is available to WLA members for £10.00. Stocks are limited so purchase your copy as quickly as possible – at www.westernlocomotives.com

On the next page, I feature the centre page double page spread just to whet your appetite – I am sure many of you were there at the Laira open day in September 1991.



The back cover features this evocative shot of D1055 Western Advocate on shed at Oxley on Saturday 24th March 1963.



Media Coverage

Some good media coverage this month, starting with, and I know the event is now past, Rail Express's coverage of at the time our up and coming 50th Anniversary celebrations, and progress on D1013.

WLA 50th anniversary celebrations

THE Western Locomotive Association, which has recently seen an increase in membership by over 25% to more than 400, celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2024.

To mark this, an event featuring various presentations is being held at STEAM museum in Swindon, (appropriately located on the former Swindon Works site where 30 of the 'Westerns' were built), on the afternoon of January 27, followed by an optional dinner.

The agenda for the afternoon includes a presentation and update on the WLA, followed by a talk on the last days of the Westerns on BR and the early days of preservation by the WLA, followed by a question and answer session by Martyn Williams, who worked at Swindon Works and was involved in repainting No. D1062 *Western Courier* into maroon while it was stored there.

Following a break, well known photographer Bernard Mills will put on a slide show entitled 'The Last Months of the Westerns', after which the event concludes with a British Transport Commission film show. Tickets for the afternoon cost £15.00 and can be booked at westernlocomotives.com/shop

Later in 2024, No. D1013 *Western Ranger* is expected to return to service at the Severn Valley Railway after a 15-year overhaul. The locomotive was stopped for attention in October 2009. At its annual general meeting on November 11, WLA members voted unanimously, apart from two abstentions, for No. D1013 to remain in BR blue for the time being. Options for a livery change will be reconsidered at a later date.



AFTER a failure the previous weekend, Class 105 No. 51485 underwent a gearbox change at Bury on November 5. Later in November, the '105' was in action at the East Lancashire Railway's diesel multiple unit gala. On November 18, the ELR's *Cravens set* arrives at Bury Bolton Street. Chris Gee

main line.

'RAT' REVIVAL

WORK has begun on returning the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's No. 25059 to service, it being damaged by flooding at Haworth in 2019. The locomotive's boiler and water tanks have been removed in advance of the Class 25 being dispatched to Barrow Hill for repairs.

CLASS 37 REPAINT

FOLLOWING the fitting of new Oleo buffers (RE331), North Yorkshire Moors Railway-based No. 37264 has now received bufferbeam skirts prior to a repaint into BR blue livery which will be undertaken over the winter months.

'PEAK' STARTED

NOW nearing the end of an extensive and lengthy restoration, the Pioneer Diesel Locomotive Group's No. 45105 was started for the first time in many years on November 16. Work on the locomotive began at Matlock in the mid-1990s before it moved to Barrow Hill in 1999.

PIONEER '47' BACK IN ACTION

WITH repairs now completed, No. 47401 *North Eastern* made some test runs and crew training trips at Butterley on November 20. It was due to see use on Santa Specials in December.

MULTIPLE UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

SVR CLASS 108 PROGRESS

FOLLOWING completion of contract repairs at Grosmont, Severn Valley Railway Class 108 car No. 51941 was reunited with its overhauled bogies in November, enabling a two-car set (with partner No. 52064) to return to service. A test run took place on November 18 and the unit should be in use on the line's winter diesel day on December 29.

January 2024 RAIL EXPRESS 29

The Railway also featured the WLA in their January edition, again promoting our 50th celebrations and some coverage of D1048.

CLASSIC TRACTION

Compiled by Jack Boskett and Josh Brinsford

'Western' groups make progress

Both the WLA and DEPG are working on bringing their Class 52s back to traffic.

THE Western Locomotive Association celebrates its 50th anniversary in January 2024. Its 1974 objective was to ensure the preservation of a Class 52 diesel-hydraulic loco, but today it owns three based at the Severn Valley Railway.

The donation of No. D1048

Western Lady in September has given the WLA the opportunity to think about the future of this locomotive, but in the meantime it will prioritise the overhaul of No. D1013 *Western Ranger* and keep No. D1062 *Western Courier* in traffic.

Work will be done to ensure

'Lady' does not deteriorate and a full assessment will be made. No. D1048 has been made fit to be shunted within the yard and station limits at slow speed, which will allow it to be viewed on gala days in 2024. It has already been noted that the major parts at the 'B' end are in better condition than the 'A' end. ■ Meanwhile, the Diesel and Electric Preservation Group at Williton, on the West Somerset

Railway, is seeking new volunteers to help to complete the restoration of Class 52 'Western' No. D1010 *Western Campaigner*.

The loco was withdrawn from service during the WSR's diesel gala in 2018 following major problems with the 'B' end transmission. The DEPG then discovered that a full restoration was needed, including removing both the 'A'

and 'B' end transmissions, plus full bodywork repairs followed by a repaint into maroon with a yellow buffer beam.

To raise money for the restoration, the group has launched a 'Campaign for Campaigner' appeal, where donors could have their name engraved on the loco's bodywork. The aim is to return No. D1010 to service at some point in late 2024 or early 2025.

The month ends with some good coverage in Railways Illustrated on both D1062 and D1013. Something that I did miss but pointed out – a picture of a Class 37 taken by our own Working Member Richard Hargreaves, and if that is not a big enough concern, the Class 37 is being driven by our very own WLA driver Mr Darren Shelmerdine!

NEWS | Heritage

832 – Bury: Another great year for the locomotive, although it has experienced a few minor electrical gremlins. As a result, the group has painstakingly removed all contactors and cleaned or repaired them accordingly. Like the Hymek, the locomotive is no-heat (its boiler is isolated) and has been winterised.

45149 – Toddington: The Peak was withdrawn at the end of October so it could have one of its blower motors removed for overhaul off-site. It has also been winterised and had its coolant topped up ready for the colder temperatures and has had its batteries charged to prevent them from going flat.

47376 – Toddington: Freightliner 1995 has been removed from the roster for the winter so that repairs can be undertaken to its engine. The locomotive has been running with some long-standing engine issues and needs some parts replacing.

After the Autumn Showcase gala, the locomotive was drained of diesel, oil, and water, before work could commence on the repairs. The engine room also saw more work, with some parts being removed and repainted.

The locomotive has undergone some repairs to its exhaust system and cylinders during the season, however, it was identified that its engine governor was also showing some cause for concern. This has been traced to a governor joint leaking and so the locomotive was drained and the governor was removed for repair at the end of October.

With the locomotive out traffic, the Brush Type 4 Fund has also continued with the engine room refresh that has been ongoing in stages throughout the last year.

50030 – Peak Rail: The team have been continuing to overhaul valves for the braking system. They fitted rubber strips behind the last air filter frame, then wired in the four brake valves on the brake frame.

Other volunteers have carried on investigating the tail light issue on No. 1 cab and removed the headlight lamp. In doing so, a large amount of debris behind the centre part of the cab desk was noticed and removed.

D1013 – Bridgnorth: Now that 'Courier' is settling down, much more attention has turned to D1013. With more of the internal pipework being refitted, and internal and external painting, *Western Ranger* is looking more complete. The B-end engine that has been removed has now had most of its heads refitted. Unfortunately, despite that fitting of the thickest iron sealing ring, one of the cylinder heads is sitting on the block. This has meant that the WLA is having thicker rings, of the next two sizes, made specially. These are not cheap, but risks can't be taken. When 'Ranger' returns, it needs to be the best that the WLA can deliver, so a little extra time and expense will be worth it.

To that end, the trial of the additional transmission lubrication continues on D1013. The team is also monitoring the oil pressures on D1062's transmissions. This is all in reaction to D1010's unfortunate

failure, which is something the WLA can learn from and try to mitigate against similar issues. For those in hydraulic preservation, the transmissions are probably their biggest risk.

The WLA must look after what spares and equipment it has. Over the last 12 months, a great deal of sorting has been carried out in the new containers at Kidderminster.

The jobs needed for D1013 are complicated, and the main task is to continue with the overhaul. That will include welding on one of the cooler groups and the B-end engine rebuild. Other jobs include oil samples to be taken from the final drives and changing the Saunders valve rubbers on both cooling systems, which are on order and expected soon. One of the engine-to-transmission cardan shafts needs sending for overhaul.

Two turbos for use on 'Ranger' are required for overhaul and due to the parts required, these will be done one at a time. The team needs to assess the best of the spare equalising beams, pedestals and spring hangers.

D1041 – Bury: Plans are being formulated to start the reassembly of the loco and rebuild of the MD655 engines.

D1062 – Kidderminster: *Western Courier* gave 100% reliability in operation during 2023. This is thanks to the locomotive exams, regular and preventative maintenance, and the overhaul that was carried out on 'Courier' all those years ago and the one currently being undertaken on D1013 *Western Ranger*.

From this time last year, the 2022/23 winter maintenance on D1062 was

carried out successfully. The main projects were torque reaction arms rubbers on 'A' bogie, replacement of the A-end preheater, A-end engine work, replacement of coolant hoses, brake work, and a balance exam.

The exams that are carried out lead to any maintenance and monitoring, though failures can and do happen. One such issue was the failure of the A-end AVR (Automatic Voltage Regulator). This led to two work streams: firstly, the ordering of a spare AVR to mitigate against any such failure on either locomotive, and second was to identify the cause of the failure and have it repaired. This was done; however, during this time, it was discovered that overheating was taking place on two resistors on the temporary AVR fitted to D1062 from D1013. This led to some thinking by the supplier of the AVR and a fix was identified. The fix was fitted to the new AVR that has now been delivered and other AVRs are having a retro-fit, currently being carried out. This is just one example of the attention to detail that the locomotives require to keep them operational.

Another example is the work carried out with the brakes on D1062 to trim the set-up. This is worthwhile, as the brakes are probably the best they've ever been.

Winter maintenance for D1062 is to weigh the locomotive, check the bogie and body heights, trim the suspension as required, and take oil samples.

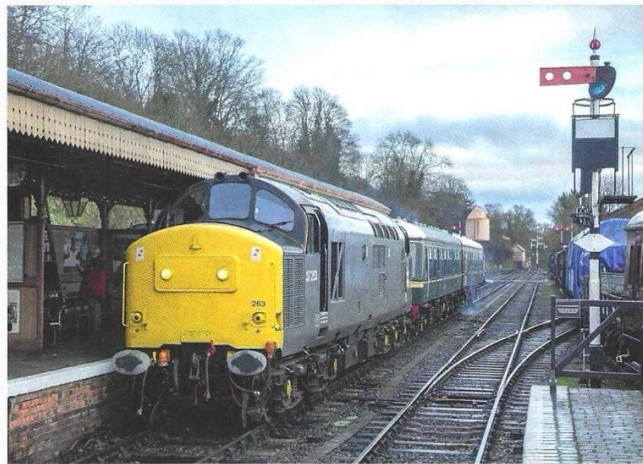
Other jobs are for the spare dyno-starter to be sent for overhaul at Bowers, drain the B-end coolant (a job that can only be done once the locomotive is weighed), change the B-end pre-heater, change the B-end dyno-starter, change the B-end coolant hoses, and change the B-end Saunders valve rubbers which are on order and due for delivery.

There is also the need to change the transmission to heat exchanger hoses at both ends and change the oil in the final drives. A number of working members will carry out a mid-life repaint on D1062 to keep on top of the bodywork and the engine oil changes, while finally the transmission shuttle valves will need to be checked.

D9015 – Barrow Hill: As the locomotive is now only requiring electrical work, the opportunity is being taken to complete the internal cab painting, with two volunteers working independently in each cab.

Primer was applied to the required parts in No. 1 cab and top coat green in No. 2 cab. The volunteers then had a quick tidy in the engine room.

Another member of the team finished off smoothing the edges of the engine room doors before they were also treated to some primer. Some missing fittings to complete the sun visors were found among the stores items being sorted, which were duly cleaned and fitted. ■



On an extended loan to the Severn Valley Railway from its usual base on the Telford Steam Railway, grey-liveried 37263 was used for a DMU 'drag' using the SVR's two-coach Class 108 using vehicles 51941 and 52064, on the 15.00 Bewdley to Highley service during the SVR's popular Winter Diesel Day event. The train stands at Bewdley, awaiting departure, on December 29. Richard Hargreaves

Severn Valley Railway - Running Dates & Events

The Severn Valley Railway have published the below provisional timetable for 2024 – with further detail to be made available later.

Dining Experience
Special Event
Special Experiences
Timetable D

< > This Month **FEB 2024**

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 FEBRUARY HALF TE... 10:00 - 17:30 VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA 2024	11 FEBRUARY HALF TE... 12:00 - 17:00 ON-TRAIN DINING - SUNDAY LUNCH
12	13 THE GRUFFALO VISIT FEBRUARY HALF TE...	14 FEBRUARY HALF TE...	15 FEBRUARY HALF TE...	16	17 FEBRUARY HALF TE... 10:00 - 17:30 VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA 2024	18 FEBRUARY HALF TE... 12:00 - 17:00 ON-TRAIN DINING - SUNDAY LUNCH
19	20	21	22	23 18:30 - 21:30 EVENING PHOTOSHOOT - 7714 & 7812 AT BEWDLEY STATION	24 18:30 - 21:30 EVENING PHOTOSHOOT - 7714 & 7812 AT BEWDLEY STATION	25
26	27	28	29	1	2 TIMETABLE D 10:00 - 17:30 VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA 2024	3 12:00 - 17:00 ON-TRAIN DINING - SUNDAY LUNCH

< > This Month **MAR 2024**

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26	27	28	29	1	2 TIMETABLE D 10:00 - 17:30 VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA 2024	3 12:00 - 17:00 ON-TRAIN DINING - SUNDAY LUNCH
4	5	6	7	8	9 TIMETABLE D 10:00 - 17:30 VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA 2024	10 TIMETABLE D 12:00 - 17:00 MOTHER'S DAY LUNCH
11	12	13	14	15	16 SPRING GIFT FAYRE TIMETABLE D 10:00 - 17:30 GIN TRAINS 2024	17 TIMETABLE D 10:00 - 17:30 GIN TRAINS 2024
18	19	20	21	22	23 OPEN TODAY 18:30 - 22:30 THE SPICE TRAIN	24 OPEN TODAY
25	26 EASTER HOLIDAYS 2024	27	28	29	30	31

< > This Month APR 2024 ~

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 EASTER HOLIDAYS 2024	2	3	4	5	6 OPEN TODAY	7 OPEN TODAY
8	9	10	11	12	13 STEP INTO STORIES ... OPEN TODAY	14 OPEN TODAY
15	16	17	18 SPRING STEAM GALA	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 OPEN TODAY	28 OPEN TODAY
29	30	1	2	3	4 10:00 - 17:00 SPRING MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND 2024	5 10:00 - 17:00 SPRING MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND 2024

< > This Month MAY 2024 ~

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	1	2	3	4 10:00 - 17:00 SPRING MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND 2024	5 10:00 - 17:00 SPRING MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND 2024
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 PHOTOGRAPHY WO...
13	14	15	16 SPRING DIESEL FESTIVAL	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 BRICKLIVE™ BRICK OCEAN AT THE ENGINE HO...	26
27 BRICKLIVE™ BRICK OCEAN AT THE ENGINE HOUSE	28	29	30	31	1	2

Member's Forum & Gallery

Andrew Maurer

My wife and I were visiting the NYMR on the weekend of 20th October to celebrate my birthday with a Pullman lunch and a visit to the railway. The 20th was very wet and windy, but the following day was much more clement which enabled us to get some decent photos around Grosmont Station and the locomotive works.

While in the loco shed we came across locomotive name and number plates for Western Lady mounted on the wall on the public viewing stage outside the memorabilia shop. It wasn't much after the announcement of Western Lady's gifting to the WLS and so spiked my attention and interest. I have attached some photos showing the plates with the dates and times the pictures were taken. I don't know if they are original, I'm no expert on this, however assuming they are original plates once carried on 1048 and they do look authentic, they raise the obvious question, where are the other two plates from the other side of the loco now? (assuming, of course, that they aren't still attached). It also begs the questions when were these plates removed from a loco now in preservation and how did they end up on the wall in the NYMR loco shed at Grosmont?

A quick search on the internet has produced quite a few archive pictures of Western Lady, one of which is a very clear photo of 1048 in the platform at Grosmont Station taken most probably in the late 1970s judging by the dress of the people standing on the platform. This photo shows the locomotive, apparently freshly painted, in green livery with small yellow cab end panels and bright red name plates. Maybe these are the same plates repainted now displayed at Grosmont, which might help to explain the answer to the first question.



David Hewell

A couple of snaps from David from October 2021!. "There was a pint in my hand for the Bridgnorth snap. What more do you need - Western - Sun - Beer!"



Stephen Bartlett

A note and great picture below from Stephen....

“Thank you for your welcome to the WLA, it’s taken me a very long time to join, and I honestly don’t know why I haven’t become a member much earlier given that although now retired my railway career started at OOC in 1973. Please find attached a photo I took probably in 1974 which I hope is of interest, unfortunately I don’t know the identity of the Western, but I believe the small grill on the front could narrow it down!”



To end this month’s Member’s Forum and Gallery, here is another of Steve Hamptons photographs of D1015 on the loaded Test Run on 10th January under the wires at Bristol Parkway.



Closing Notes and Book Ends

I was privileged and honoured earlier this month to be given copies of two Power Point Decks that the late Henry Coates used to present – some of the slides I used at our Anniversary Celebration, and I look forward to including many more of them in our current slide shows that we present to societies around the county.

I couldn't resist sharing this one with you all – our Chairman Roger Smith and Working Member Lyn Jones – but what has Roger said!



During my last visit to the TMD, we were joined by Rob Andrews, as we are most weekends, but we were all rather confused as to what this message implied 😊



To end this e-Newsletter, we return to Harpers Steakhouse at The Weighbridge, and our celebration dinner. This was one of the Working Members tables, see from left to right – Darren (the back of his head), Mark P, Paul B, Tony G, Peter S, Mike T and

The reason for this picture – a big thank you to Jose and Anna who joined our celebrations having travelled all the way from Seville in Spain. We truly have an international membership, and we shall be asking Jose and Anna to set up the Spanish Chapter of the WLA.



If you know of anyone with an interest in the railways of the 1960s and 70s, or has a craving for anything diesel hydraulic, or remembers seeing the magnificent Westerns whilst in service, please encourage them to join us.

We are also looking for members to come and help us with our work on the locomotives, and all of the essential associated work at Bridgnorth and Kidderminster that makes what we do possible – no special skills are required to help, just enthusiasm and a good sense of humour, of course any engineers or railway professionals are VERY welcome.

If you are interested in helping, please do not hesitate to contact any Committee Member or Working Member directly, or contact the WLA at info@westernlocomotives.com or contact me at wp.finch@icloud.com

Please keep sharing with me your photographs, memories, stories and experiences, so that they can be shared in the e-newsletter with members, keeping the e-Newsletter interesting, informative and fun.

Next Member's e-Newsletter should be available on or around **1st March 2024.**

<https://westernlocomotives.com/>

The Western Locomotive Association is a Company Limited by Guarantee – Company Registration Number 3873466

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