



Western Locomotive Association e-Newsletter – June 2025

Welcome to your June WLA e-Newsletter and your monthly update on all things WLA.

A big part of this e-Newsletter of course covers the Severn Valley Railway Spring Diesel Festival which took place from Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th May, with lots of great pictures included which have mostly been provided by our membership.



And a great picture to kick things off and this capture of D1048 Western Lady basking in the sunshine at Kidderminster station, thanks to Steve Widdowson for this great shot.



Just prior to this event, we had our first running day of the season on Saturday 10th May, and as the country had just celebrated the anniversary of VE day, we felt it appropriate to run carrying the Western Memorial headboard, thanks to Coop for sharing this picture from the day.



On the same day, Saturday 10th May, the other "BIG" event was the return of the Diesel Traction Group's D1015 Western Champion to the mainline with the "South Devon Explorer" from Birmingham to Plymouth and including a trip up the South Devon Railway from Totnes to Buckfastleigh. Thanks to Andy Byrne for sharing this picture of DTG's Western Champion departing Dawlish station and 19.05 on the return journey.



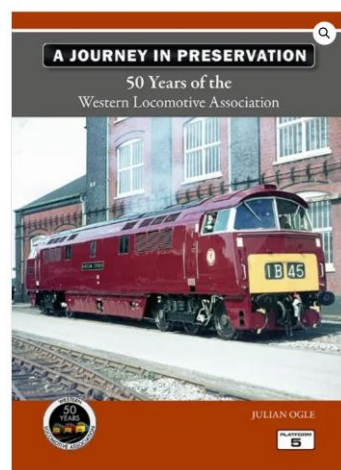
At the end of the month, D1062 Western Courier was back on service trains, for nine days in a row, from Saturday 24th Mat all the way through to Sunday 1st June.

As I type these words on Sunday morning 1st June, Courier is still doing what she does best, with our Chairman Roger Smith in the driver's seat, creating those Maybach sounds up and down the valley.

Here is Courier, about to depart Kidderminster on Friday 30th May, with 10 coaches and a "Manor" at the rear – quite a load!



Just to end this introduction to this month's e-newsletter, Julian Ogle has asked me to thank all of you who brought copies of his book "A journey in preservation – 50 Years of the WLA" to the Diesel Festival for signature. Julian felt so honoured to do so and we all hope you are still enjoying reading and learning all about the WLA and it's 50-year history. If you haven't got your copy yet, you can order now at [A Journey In Preservation - 50 Years of the WLA, by Julian Ogle - Western Locomotive Association](#)



In this e-Newsletter

Features in this e-Newsletter include the following:

- News from The Chair.
- D1013 – A Progress Update
- D1048 – A Progress Update (in next month's e-Newsletter)
- Monthly News Updates – an update on all that has been happening over the last month.
- Western Courier re-visited
- Whizzo Woods.
- Sales Team Update.
- Membership News.
- Book of the Month.
- Media Coverage.
- Severn Valley Railway News – Running Dates & Events.
- The Spring Diesel Festival – Your Memories.
- 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

I hope that many of you will have already enjoyed the sight and sound of D1062 doing what it does best at the Valley, plus of course, at the recent SVR's Spring Diesel Festival, judging by the many photographs and videos that have appeared on social media! Many thanks to all those who supported our Sales Stand, which took an impressive £5.7k over the four-day event. We also received a further £530 from our involvement with the TMD Tours which meant we received in total well over £6k. And there's more, as we took on another 14 members, several of which have indicated their wish to come and help as Working Members. We also received quite a few sizable donations, so it's difficult to know what the final figure and outcome is going to be!

Talking of membership, our numbers are still heading in the right direction. The current numbers are:

- Adult: 281
- Senior: 229
- Family: 25
- Adult Life: 29
- Family Life: 3
- Junior: 22
- **TOTAL: 589**

Just 11 away from our target of 600!

In any event, we've managed to increase our membership by 142% (345 new members) since 2020. Bearing in mind that we now have over 2,500 members on our FB Page, I'm hopeful that the target can be achieved without being too complacent. As I've mentioned many times before, the WLA would not be able to exist without its members, so it's really important that we keep doing our best to grow.

During the month just past, I would like to congratulate the DTG on their super mainline trip with the South Devon Explorer, with D1015 Western Champion. Amazingly enough, it enabled me to catch a Thousand from my hometown of Dawlish, something I hadn't done for 52 years, the last time being with D1017 Western Warrior. Of course, both locomotives were in the same livery and I even managed to get a photo from the same spot on the station! Hearing a Thousand over the Devon banks again was just pure magic, especially opening up to full power on the approach to Totnes, ready for the climb up Rattery Bank. So many memories from that day and in a way, it just shows how amazing it is to see and hear a working Thousand, whether or not it's on the mainline or on the Valley, something we can all be proud of, whichever part or role we choose to play in Western preservation.

During the month, our Business Plan (Vs. 1.4) was updated following the publication of our final accounts to 30th September 2024 and is available for anyone interested, to download from our website at: [WLA Business Plan 2025 to 2027 Vs. 1.4 - Western Locomotive Association](#)

Finally, I've now managed to get a few driving turns lined up for the end of this month, so I'm writing these notes a bit earlier than usual. Needless to say, I'm really looking forward to being back out driving D1062 again, even if I won't be thrashing it up Rattery Bank!

See you on the Valley!

Roger Smith, Chairman



D1013 – A Progress Update

D1013 has now been re-located in the TMD although an issue with the jacks has delayed the planned lift.

Here are our objectives for the time that the locomotive is inside.

(D1013's "B" end bogie was also scheduled to be moved over the pit at the same time but this move has also been delayed.)

Thrust Bracket 'machining' to be completed, although we still have to work with our contractor and arrange a 'viewing' of what is required.

Work to be done :-

Lift out "B" end Cooler Group for the welding in of the gutter drainpipe, refit the Cooler Group and re-connect.

Disconnect and remove both pre-heaters.

"A" end bogie - scrape and clean the underside of the bogie in preparation for NDT and Torque Arm rubber replacement.)If cleaning is attacked immediately D1013 is in the TMD, we may be able to have the NDT and Torque Arm rubbers carried out.)

"B" end Engine - lift back in.

Nose end Air Receivers pipework modifications to be completed.

Refit Fuel Tank hoses..

"A" end nose end valance - to be 're-shape' if contractor is available.

D1013 Turbo Project

Over the past few weeks 'The Team' have been putting together a "kit of parts" to be transported to the contractor in Lincoln where a spare turbo is awaiting overhaul for Rangers 'B' engine.

Two new metal boxes (picture 1) were obtained for the transportation of the "kit" along with a new lifting eye (picture 2) which had to be especially made for the rotor assembly for lifting safety compliance with the contractor.

The "kit of parts" includes a support bracket and stand (pictures 3 & 4) with 2 sets of clamp bushes marked 'A' and 'B' (picture 5) to make sure the correct ones are available to the contractor.

This is because the 2 different turbo manufacturers apparently used a different angle of taper on the rotor shaft. (the taper is visible in picture 2).

Various special tools for dismantling and assembly have also been put together (picture 6).

Just a few more shims to obtain and then all should be ready for dispatch.

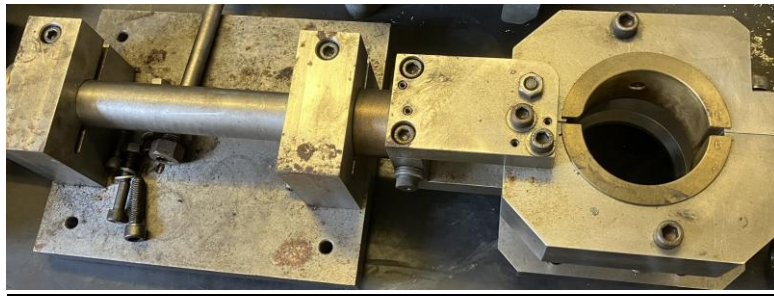
Picture 1 – the metal boxes and the gathering of parts.



Picture 2 - New Lifting Eye mounted on a spare rotor.



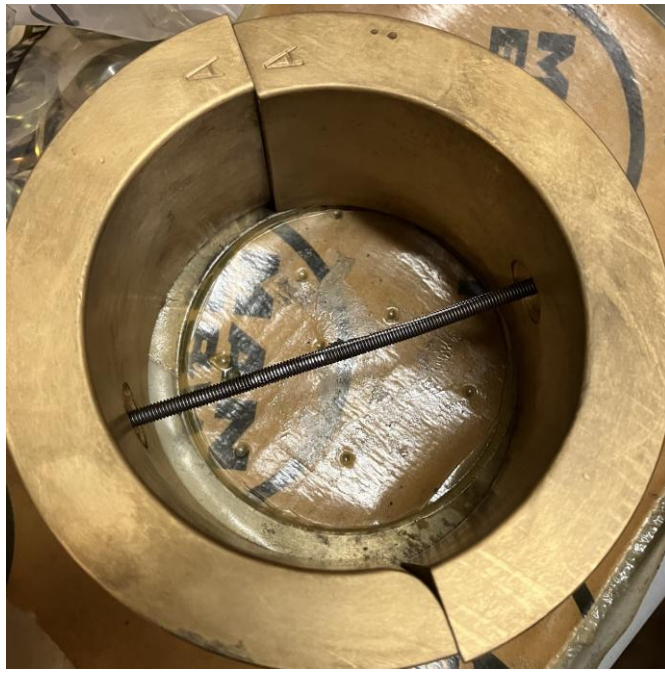
Picture 3 - Support Bracket with "B" bushes in place.



Picture 4 - Support Bracket Stand.



Picture 5 - Support Bracket "A" clamp bushes.



Picture 6 - Various tools.



News Update – May 2025 (All pictures supplied by Working Members present at the time)

Saturday 3rd May

Work completed at Bridgnorth included prime painting of 4 new pedestal brackets for D1013's bogie overhaul, preparation of tooling for the brake cylinder overhauls, the fitting of new bearings to eight new spring hangers including circlips, and the continuation of the spare pre-heater rebuild, with testing due over the next few weeks. Other work to be completed includes the reassembly of the equalising beams with the pedestal brackets, the beams firstly need the top hat bushes welding back on. A great team at Bridgnorth included Graham G, Richard H, Paul M, Stuart J & Roger Fry. The following picture shows the four pedestal brackets having been prime painted.



Wednesday 7th May

Ahead of D1062 Western Courier's first day in operation this year in Saturday 10th May, a number of small minor jobs were called out as being required – and of course firstly, the locomotive required a good clean, both outside and inside! The locomotive's examination also required signing off by Darren and Robin.



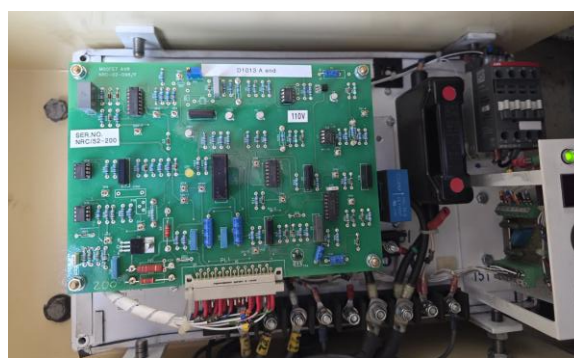
Darren showing that he can wash as well as drive, there is no end to the number of skills that he has under his belt 😊



Later in the day, D1062 is seen on the platform at Kidderminster as part of a test run to Bewdley & back. The DTG's D1015 Western Champion is seen on the other platform on a service train.



An issue during the day with one of the AVR boards was quickly rectified with a replacement being fitted.



A successful day overall, with all minor jobs completed and the locomotive being signed off ready for traffic.

Saturday 10th May Part 1 – The South Devon Explorer

As mentioned earlier, Saturday 10th May brought a Western back to the mainline with The Diesel Traction Group's D1015 Western Champion and The South Devon Explorer travelling from Birmingham to Plymouth. A good number of WLA Members were on the train experiencing and supporting this memorable event. D1015 put in a magnificent performance as can be seen in some of the pictures below.

Station	Departs	Returns
Birmingham New Street	07:27	23:59
Widney Manor	07:49	23:42
Warwick Parkway	08:05	23:23
Banbury	08:34	22:53
Oxford	09:08	22:27
Bristol Temple Meads	10:51	20:57
Dawlish	12:09	19:00
Teignmouth	12:16	18:54

Confirmed Destination Timings

Station	Arrives	Departs
Plymouth	13:01	15:56
Buckfastleigh	16:50	18:00

The service is seen approaching Oxford right on time at 09.08am. What a sign to see a Class 52 approaching the platforms at Oxford ahead of a great run all the way to Plymouth.



Upon arrival at Plymouth, the crowds gathered, as the locomotive started to cool, ahead of its return to home and stopover at Laira TMD.



A magnificent sight as the locomotive and stock is seen at the platform at Plymouth.





Of course, a mandatory trip to the waterfront at The Barbican and the sampling of some local fayre – by which I mean fish & chips, being enjoyed by Andy, Paul & John.



Departing a few minutes late from Plymouth, the service was soon meandering its way up the scenic South Devon Railway arriving at Buckfastleigh behind schedule, although a reduced stopover at the lovely location put the service back on schedule, ready for a spirited run back to Bristol and on to Oxford.





D1015 is seen in this last picture back at Oxford ahead of schedule, prior to its departure and run back to Birmingham. I was worried that I might miss my connecting service from Oxford, but Champion proved that with a Western at the front, there is no need to worry as we literally “flew” from Bristol back to Didcot and up to Oxford.



And one for the album, two railway celebrities posing in front of the DTG's Western Champion at Plymouth – a day full of great memories for all that took part.



Saturday 10th May – Part II & D1062's 1st Operating Day & The Western Memorial.

Coop and a number of Working Members remained at the SVR and recorded D1062's first outing of the year. As this weekend was at the end of a week of VE Day Anniversary Celebrations, it was decided that we would carry The Western Memorial Headboard, seen here at Kidderminster at the start of the day.



Later at Hampton Loade, the temporary terminus of the Severn Valley Railway due to the landslip blocking the route through to Bridgnorth, meaning that all services run around at Hampton Loade (or Top & Tail) prior to returning to Kidderminster.

I am pleased to be able to report that as I write, work has started on the repairs to the landslip and hopefully we will soon have a full-length railway again.



Sunday 11th May

Sunday 11th May and a second day of D1062 on service trains, but later in the day is recorded at Kidderminster as the DTG's Western Champion returns home following its main line trip to Plymouth the previous day.



Always a great sight, two Class 52's side by side, bringing back those memories of the 1970s, and double Headboards also!



And a few more from our 1st weekend of operations, supplied by Mark Perry. With D1049 Western Lady also getting in on the act, as well as the covered DTG's Hymek 7029.







Thanks Mark for these memories.



A final few from Marty.





It wasn't all play, as it was business as usual at Bridgnorth with the team there were hard at work, starting with Richard H seen painting Equalising beam pedestal brackets, having primed them the previous week. The smoke wasn't from Richard but from the Pannier 7714!





Starting switches were also in the process of being restored and painted.



Monday 12th May

Work continued on Monday with a number of volunteers at the TMD cleaning one of the sets of coil springs on D1013's B End bogie as far as possible.



Then it was on to foot plates with before and after pictures.



The Spring Diesel Festival – Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th May

Thursday 15th

I am not going overboard with pictures in this section (famous last words) but starting with the welcome that everyone received upon arriving at the station concourse at Kidderminster and one of our locomotives peeping over the fence.



This was of course D1048 Western Lady, stabled in the dock and on display, and open for cab visits, for a voluntary contribution to our coffers – and many people indeed visited and significant contributions were made.



Note also the Western Lament board carried by Lady throughout the event – and last carried on Lady's last tour from Paddington in the 1970s when she became the last Western ever to leave Paddington whilst in BR service.



A new Pop-Up Banner was produced to promote interest in Lady and certainly served to be a great conversation starter.



D1062 seen at Kidderminster about to depart on her first service at the event.



Alan was captured connecting the locomotive to the stock.....



.....before D1062 roared into life and set the tone for the next 4 days.



A couple of pictures from the first TMD Tour which different WLA Working Members lead, showing some of the more unusual visitors attending the event. Starting with the “marmite” Class 70 in a new livery, which actually shows them off quite well, as long as you can get past some of the locomotives less endearing features! Seen here sharing the yard with our own Dick Tracey and 40 106 Atlantic Conveyor.



And hidden away and exclusive at that time to those on the TMD Tour, 56 113 ahead of its first duty call.



Back at the station, the first of many memorable line ups.



Thursday 16th May

D1062 on the turntable, seen during the first TMD Tour, and pre-heating ahead of its 1st service.



Located next to the DTG's D1015 Western Champion.



The TMD Tours allow those on the tour to get up close to the locomotives, whilst seeing work that is taking place within the TMD, and hopefully if we are in the right place at right time, to see locomotives moving around the TMD and service trains passing on the running lines.

This lucky group all received cab tours of the Class 70, and some were even granted an audience and exclusive picture with Peter Bamber 😊



Trying to include at least some of the other locomotives featuring in the event, the Peak is seen here at the end of its service having arrived at Kidderminster and pulled up alongside Lady.



Saturday 17th May

Mandatory Sales Team on the Sales Stand picture – featuring Peter, Peter, Marty, Mark, Paul and Mark. Yes – two Peter's, two Mark's and if you count the photographer, two Pauls !



Back to the TMD Tours, and this lucky group got to see D1013 Western Ranger being shunted into the TMD and being prepared for lifting.

Unfortunately, an issue with the lifting jacks meant the locomotive could not be lifted and the engineers are scheduled to come and try and address the issues early in June.



And another unusual visitor, is it “Kestrel” reincarnated or is it 69 014?



On one of the Tours, the Class 70 had been shunted right down at the end of the Carraige Shed, but the group elected to do the long walk in order to get up close to the Class 70.

They may indeed have thought otherwise when a member of a previous group was spotted.



I am pleased to report that all in my group returned safely and got to see the 70.



Sunday 18th May

The Final Day and the focus of attention was the Western Locomotive Association Spring Raffle – the draw taking place at midday alongside Lady.

We always look for a celebrity to draw the winning tickets and this year was no exception, although a bit of help was required from Dad.

A big thank you to all that purchased tickets and congratulations to the winners that walked away with some great cash prizes.

Our next raffle in the Autumn will have a Diesel Footplate Experience as the 1st prize – a great opportunity for the lucky winner to get behind the controls of D1062, or maybe even, dare I suggest, D1013.



The Spring Diesel Festival ended with another a final great photo opportunity, with D1062 Western Courier and the DTG's D1015 Western Champion lining up at the end of the platform for some great pictures.



And that's a wrap as the say, and we end we a picture of a very satisfied Sales Officer counting up the money – read on for his report later in this e-Newsletter.



Back to Work!

As has already been mentioned, during the Gala, D1013 was moved back into the TMD and was set up on the jacks, however due to a fault, a lift was not possible.

The following is the work that needs bow to be focused on whilst D1013 is back inside:-

- Thrust Bracket machining.
- Fitting of new fuel pipe hoses and the removal of redundant pipework underneath the fuel tanks.
- Cleaning of the fuel tanks and steel pipework, followed by repainting.
- Scraping and cleaning of A End Bogie, especially around the Torque Reaction Arm locations to enable NDT work to take place.

The following pictures show some of the areas to focus on.



Looking Ahead

From Saturday 24th, D1062 is in traffic for 9 continuous days so plans were put in place to check over the locomotive and to top up all fluids / oils.

Saturday 24th May

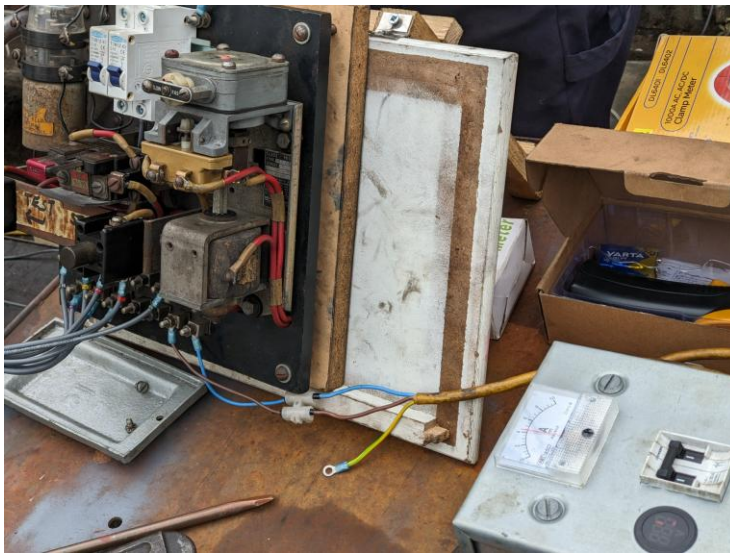
The start of 9 days of operating

Despite the distractions of D1062 in service, the Bridgnorth Team were busy and successfully tested the spare pre-heater, running it to 1,680 rpm and a water temperature reached of 65 degrees before shutting off.

Pictures show the water tank rigged up, the control board and the “wizards” checking that all is in order.

This whole task has been made a little trickier as we have lost our water supply connection at Bridgnorth and are hoping to be reconnected asap.





Meanwhile, it was a busy day for the locomotive, thanks to John Kite for the pictures.



Mr Jackson providing guidance to the driver!



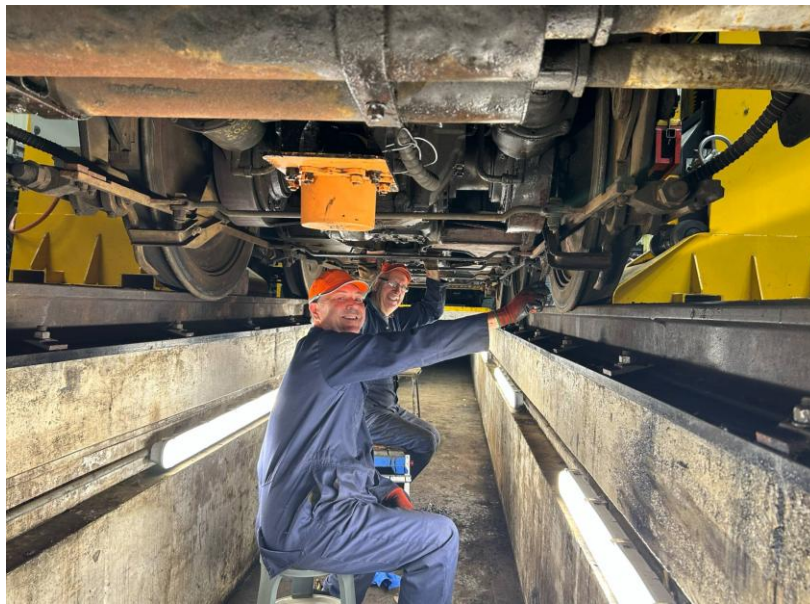
Also, out and about with his new toy was Paul Northcote and he seems to be getting the hang of it. Incidentally, it is a rather nice DJI mini drone, and not a long photo stick.



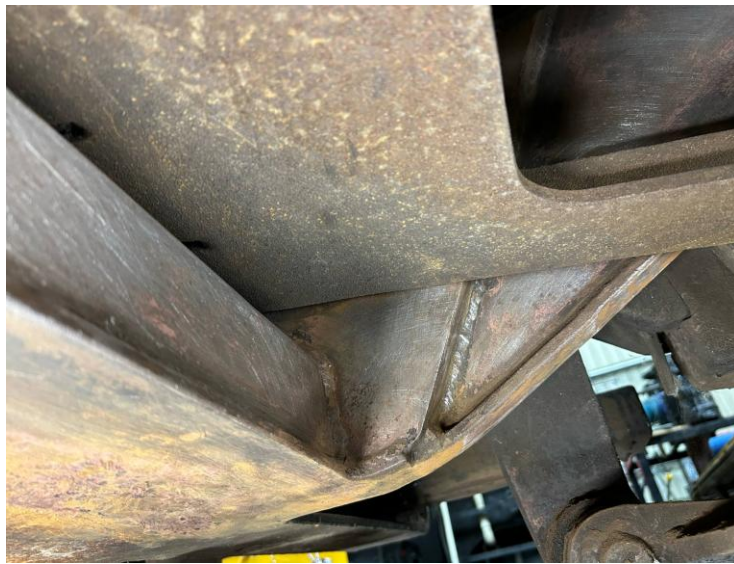


Monday 26th May

Less glamorous work today, as Marty says, back to cleaning the crud underneath D1013, and a special surprise – a diesel berg!



The results of hard work and scraping – well done team.



Meanwhile, topside, Sally was busy making D1013's ready for refitting.



Wednesday 28th May

Back under Ranger and Mark, Gareth and William were busy carrying out a number of the identified jobs, removing the redundant small water pipe. The large water pipe was also removed and placed on the bench for cleaning. The removal of these means that the damaged cross flow pipe is also now accessible and ready for removal.

New fuel hoses in positions 1, 2 and 8 were also refitted – and Mark was grateful for some advice provided – brute force is the solution!

An attempt was also made to refit hose 5 – but energy levels were exhausted – so saved for another day.





Friday 30th May

The SVR was having a busy week, it being Half Term and kids all being able to ride for a £1 and had to increase the number of carriages on the trains. Friday also required dining stock to be added and as a result the steam set exceeded the length of the run round at Hampton Loade – and so the decision was made to Top and Tail with a diesel.

So D1062 was moved from its booked diesel turn to work the Top and Tail – which was Load 10 with a steam locomotive (7082) at the rear – 20 048 taking over D1062's originally scheduled turn.

D1062 10.15 KR - HL with 7802 on Rear.

7802 11.25 HL - KR with D1062 on Rear.

D1062 13.00 KR - HL with 7802 on Rear.

7802 14.10 HL - KR with D1062 on Rear.

D1062 15.45 KR - HL with 7802 on Rear.

7802 16.58 HL - KR with D1062 on Rear.

The result – 10 coaches, 347 tonnes, plus an additional 100 tonne locomotive on the rear – and a very happy D1062 driver in the shape of our chairman – Roger Smith.

Locomotive Daily Record Form

21426

Date	30.05.25	Loco / DMU Car. No's.	D106Z	Turn No.	31
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Locomotive lit up by (team loco only)

Name

Locomotive/Traction Unit prepared for
service as per relevant prep procedure
contained within OPG-PROC-230 for this
Locomotive/Traction Unit

R. SMITH

R.S. Smith

Driver

R. SMITH

Fireman/Secondman

N. TAYLOR

Type of train
and braking method

Vehicles

Weight

Miles

VACPASS

10

347

Driver

Fireman/Secondman

Type of train
and braking method

Vehicles

Weight

Miles

Fault Details / Out of Course Events

For ESMPT/TMD Use Only

* PLUS 7802 ON REAR

A record of the day, firstly as the stock was being shunted, a Class 66 passed on the mainline – the view for the driver of the Class 66 being the much the better view – of an immaculate looking D1062 with 10 coaches!



The classic Hampton Loade view(s)





Back at Kidderminster – look at that smile !



A pair of happy “western” locomotives drivers – Roger Smith (D1062) and Will Marsh (7802)



And of course, not forgetting a happy second man!



The last pictures from a very enjoyable day.



Saturday 31st May

The last two days of D1062's epic 9-day turn, although still time for a quick visit to Didcot to check up on the National Rail Museum's D1023 Western Fusilier – seen in the sunshine in the Engine Shed, and some interesting conversations held with the Didcot Teams responsible for the locomotives safe-keeping.



Back at The Severn Valley Railway, Mr Kite was busy recording proceedings.





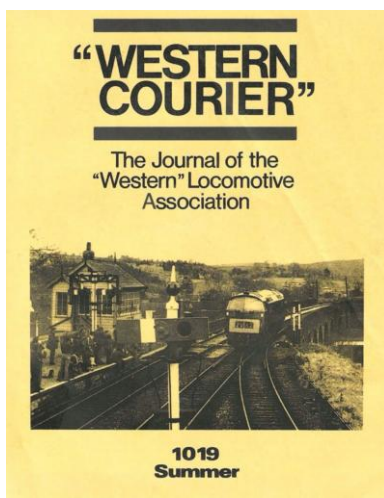
And to end this month's updates, and Mr Hargreaves at Bridgnorth finishing the great job done on the pedestal brackets throughout the month.



And I couldn't resist copying and sharing this one as it made me smile.



Western Courier



The last Time.....

By Mike Dodd

03.00 in the morning at Taunton Station during the bitterly cold January of 1977. The overnight sleeper from Penzance to Paddington has arrived for crew changing purposes.

A trusty D1048 Western Lady idles away at its head, the wind howling down the platform, seizing the noise of the vibrant engines and flinging it away into the blue / black sky. Now and again the hot exhaust burns my nostrils and warms my numb face before the wind catches it away again, a loud hiss issues from the steam heating pipe on the front end and occasionally the leading cab disappears in a cloud of swirling steam.

After a brief exchange between the two loco crews the fresh crew climb aboard with steaming tea cans. I too am invited aboard and gladly accept to escape the cutting wind as I grasp the well-worn hand rails and heave myself aboard, the heat from the two engines rushed over me and I take in the smell of reeking oil fumes, a faint light glows down in the bowels of the engine room.

I enter the cab where life seems more leisurely with driver busy sucking on his pipe, needles quiver in the gauges and the whole place buzzes with the vibration of the two engines, the controls are well worn and one or two of the switches are broken, a large tear extends down the back of the second man's seat and on the floor there is evidence of a mishap with a tea can as a brown stain can be seen. In the centre of the cab above the two large windows, the legend D1048 84A LAIRA is scrawled in black paint. Certainly, from the condition of "Lady" internally and externally one was aware that this was very much the twilight of the engines busy career with British Rail.

Ahead of the cab a couple of green signal lamps winked out through the night and clouds of steam which was still engulfing the front end all too soon the driver was telling me that he would have to be off and away to London, do for the last time I took in the cosy atmosphere of the "Westerns" cab, sadly realising that this was the last time that I would stand in a Western on an ordinary train in BR service.

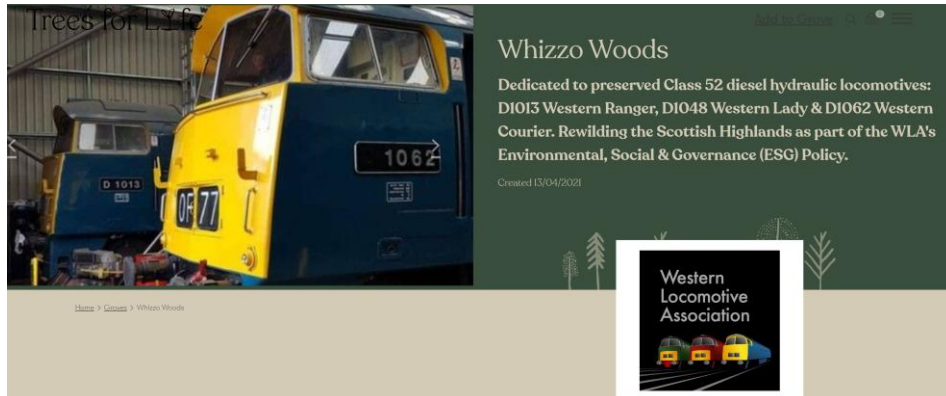
No sooner had I jumped down from the cab than the window banged shut and with a soft toot on the horn D1048 slowly pulled away from Taunton and into the cold, clear night the tell-tale sound of the Maybachs finally being lost to the wind.

The Westerns and indeed the hydraulic era on British Rail had but a few more days life before going out in a blaze of glory.

Whizzo Woods

At the end of November, we have **466 trees** in Whizzo Woods, an increase of 9 trees since the last count - thank you all for your continued support of this initiative, not long before we hit **500 trees – we are getting there!**

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

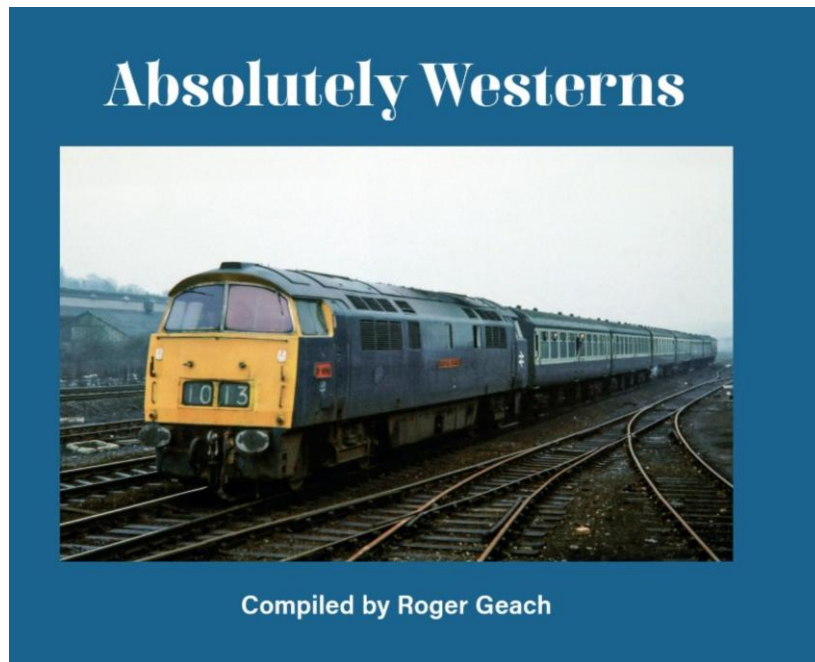


Whizzo Woods was first established in April 2021 with an objective of planting 62 trees a year – further details can be found at – <https://treesforlife.org.uk/groves/315992/>

Sales Team Update

Well, that's the Spring Gala come and gone with great results. Gala sales were £5,785 and raffle receipts £2,915. Donations to Lady were £243 from cab visits and the sale of a donated King MDF name and number set, and finally the WLA share of receipts from TMD Tours was £530.

Roger Geach produced a new book just in time for the Gala, "Absolutely Westerns" which is excellent and sold out on the Thursday, so we took orders for the rest of the Gala. The photos in the book were all taken by Peter Crawley from Chesterfield, who sadly died in 2013 having prepared the book, and it takes you right back to the late 60's and early to mid 70's. The book is of course available from the online store.



Another book is coming out in the summer entitled "Demise of the Diesel Hydraulics" by Steve Marshall with some 200 photos with captions. Steve has generously said that he will donate the proceeds from the book to D1048 Western Lady.

We had several donations of books and models during the Gala, most of which sold so we are keen to replenish our stocks as we are going to the GWSR Diesel Gala on 26th July and the Rail 200 "Great Gathering" at Derby on from 1st to 3rd August. The SVR Autumn Gala will be wall to wall 37's apart from the Thursday so 37 books and memorabilia particularly welcome.

One of the donations was a group of model buses, mainly London Transport, which I will sell on eBay but there was also a bus conductor's "Bell Punch" ticket punch and a "Mousetrap" ticket rack which I am offering to members first - see photos. Looking at what is on eBay offers need to be £100 or more, if you're interested please email sales@westernlocomotives.com.



Finally, I have added new t shirt designs for Class 42's and Class 52's to the online store plus a Warship of your choice polo which was prompted by a flurry of interest when a picture of our own John Kite modelling one we sold back in 2021.

Membership News

Thank you to you all for your continued support.

Please all remember to renew whenever you receive a reminder, or at the start of the year as your continued 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 continue 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.

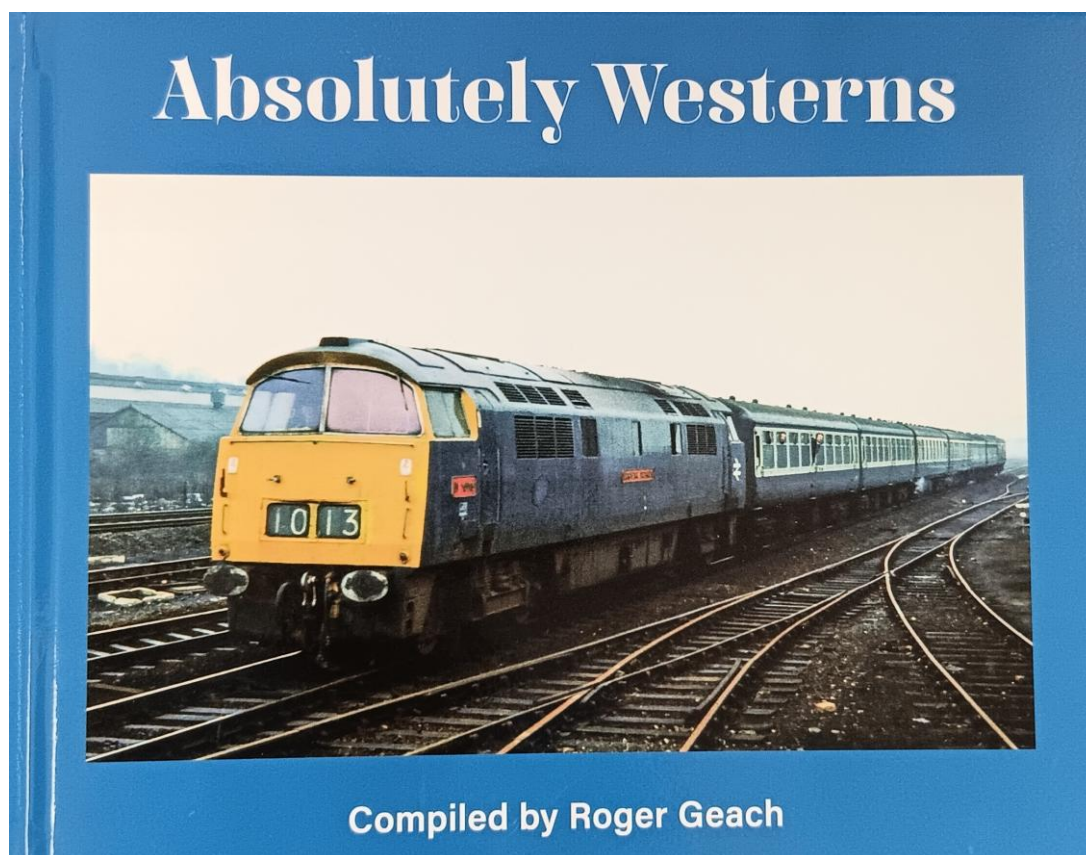
Just think, if every member persuaded one other person to join, we would double our membership! So why not step up to the challenge and help us to achieve our objective of doubling our membership.

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 specific 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

The latest book by Roger Geach – “Absolutely Westerns”



The Western Regions might Class 52 locomotives left an enduring legacy, captivating rail enthusiasts across the country. In “Absolutely Westerns”, the late Peter Crawley’s passion for these legendary machines is brought to life through his rare and evocative photographs.

Compiled and expanded with detailed captions and additional research, this book offers a fascinating glimpse into the final years of the Westerns, from their workings on the Swansea to Leeds service to memorable moments at Plymouth, Reading and Dawlish. Featuring insights into excursions and railtours of the era, this is an essential read for those who fondly remember the Westerns and the golden age of British Rail.

A long-awaited publication, this book stands as a fitting tribute to Peter Crawley and the enthusiasts who dedicated themselves to documenting these iconic locomotives.

Price - £17.50

Availability now at [Absolutely Westerns - Western Locomotive Association](#)

Media Coverage

Railway Magazine – May 2025

Our visit to The Greatest Gathering is shared in the Rail Magazine.

Tribute to pioneers will see trio of locos exhibited at Darlington

The original *Locomotion* No. 1 forms part of a Hopetown display celebrating railway pioneers alongside replicas of Richard Trevithick's *Penydarren* and John Buddle and William Chapman's *Steam Elephant*.

FIGURES who led the way in the development of steam locomotives during the early 19th century are celebrated in an exhibition at Hopetown Darlington, which brings together *Locomotion* No.1 and replicas of *Penydarren* and *Steam Elephant* in the Grade II listed former Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works.

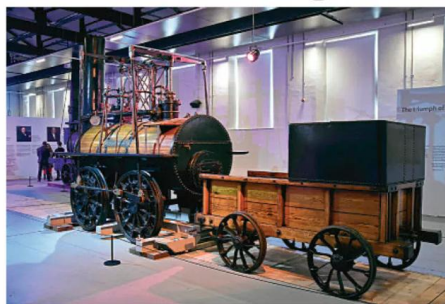
"The whole idea was to tell the story of that 20 years of engineering before 1825 and I think they really represent that," Alison Grange, collections engagement manager for Hopetown Darlington, told *The RM*. "The lighting has helped us to display them in a really unique way that people probably haven't seen before."

Railway Pioneers, which runs until June 22, is part of the nine-month S&DR200 festival across County Durham

and Teesside and examines the rapid refinement in locomotive engineering and the innovations which inspired George Stephenson.

Locomotion No. 1 is part of the National Railway Museum collection and its temporary relocation to Hopetown brings it back to Darlington, its post-preservation home for over 160 years, for the first time since it was moved to Shildon in 2021. It was designed by Stephenson and driven by him on the opening day of the S&DR on September 27, 1825.

This was, however, 21 years after Richard Trevithick's *Penydarren* completed what is credited as the first journey in the world to be made by a steam locomotive, travelling nine miles from the ironworks at Penydarren in South Wales to the Merthyr-Cardiff Canal. The



Locomotion No.1 has returned to Darlington for the Railway Pioneers exhibition at Hopetown, displayed alongside replicas of two other early locos – *Steam Elephant* and *Penydarren*. GRAEME PICKERING

replica on display at Hopetown was built in 1982 and has come from the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea.

Steam Elephant sits in the middle of the exhibition's time frame, 11 years after *Penydarren* and a decade before *Locomotion* No. 1.

It was designed and built by John Buddle and William Chapman for the Wallsend Waggonway on the north bank of the Tyne and is represented by Beamish Museum's

2001-built replica.

"You can see the transition of the design and the engineering prowess behind them from *Penydarren*, through *Steam Elephant* to *Locomotion*," said S&DR200 director Nicci Hallifax.

Railway Pioneers is the first of two major S&DR200 exhibitions to be held at Hopetown. The second, *STEAM to the Future*, in partnership with Hitachi, Network Rail and LNER, is due to run from July 11 to October 5.

SIDELINES

Middleton talks

THE Middleton Railway in Leeds is holding a series of Railway 200 talks at its Moor Road headquarters. Admission is from 5.45pm for a buffet meal and a trip on the line, then the talks begin at 7pm to approximately 8.15pm each evening.

May 17 will see Ian Smith present *Middleton Railway – A Preservation Pioneer*; June 21 will be Anthony Dawson covering Blenkinsop, Murray and Leeds Loco building; then July 19 will be Dr Michael Bailey and The 1811 Model of Salamanca, what the CT scan revealed.

For more details, see www.middletonrailway.org.uk.

Greatest Gathering grows

MORE exhibits have been announced for the sold out Greatest Gathering event at Alstom Derby on August 1-3.

Joining those already announced, and subject to availability at the time, will be diesels Nos. D8568, D821, 44004, 46045, 47715, D1015, D1062, 66004, 67005; electrics Nos. 83012, 85006, 90040, 92011 and EMU No. 323221; and steam Nos. 13268, 6023, and 4930.

DIARY

FEATURE

Rising to the challenges

The Severn Valley Railway has faced some challenging times since the Covid Pandemic. Chris Milner talks to managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster about how this popular heritage railway has handled them, and how it is facing the future...

Like many heritage railways, the Severn Valley Railway has faced some very difficult times recently. Two years ago, in the post-Covid recovery period, the railway suffered from a drop in passenger numbers which also resulted in a reduction of spending on infrastructure, staff and other things. Within a matter of a few days, it was back to work.

On top of that, the railway – along with all other heritage rail – suffered a financial crisis as a result of the pandemic. It was a crisis that was not unique to the railway.

The railway was in a very difficult position. It was a crisis that was not unique to the railway. It was a crisis that was not unique to the railway. It was a crisis that was not unique to the railway.

Jonathan Dunster, managing director of the Severn Valley Railway, has been at the helm since 1992. He has seen the railway through some of its most difficult times, and he is now facing the future.

2020 was a year of challenges for the railway. It was a year of challenges for the railway. It was a year of challenges for the railway. It was a year of challenges for the railway.

The railway has been through a lot of challenges. It has been through a lot of challenges. It has been through a lot of challenges. It has been through a lot of challenges.

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FEATURE



With the largest display of Western Region 'Hydraulics' in one place, two 'Hymeks', two 'Warships' and four 'Westerns' are lined up at Kidderminster diesel depot on the October 6, 2023.

have been marooned at Bridgnorth following the landslip.

Gus said that several steam locos were marooned, and BR Standard No. 75069 was moved south a week after the landslip in readiness for the half-term holiday service. A few weeks later, No. 7812 Eriestoke Manor left for a visit to the Gwili Railway and will be returned via road to Kidderminster.

Also coming back in circulation is No. 7802 Bradley Manor after receiving a recast cylinder block. The loco was delivered back to Bridgnorth a week before the slip as its tender was there, but as testing the loco on the four miles of available track at the Bridgnorth end isn't really practical, the loco has since moved to the Kidderminster end of the line to begin the process to recommission it.

After the landslip, one positive aspect was the location of the diesel depot at Kidderminster. All the diesel locos except for the Class 14 were south of Mor Brook, and with the Class 40 and 46 both having steam heat capabilities, it meant services could provide heat as winter services moved towards springtime.

The railway is pushing the message out loud and clear on social media that it still has 12 miles of operational line. Adds Gus: "I don't want to sound patronising, but we've still got more railway available than many other railways."

I steer the discussion to that all-important matter of day-to-day costs, and allow Gus to explain. "Obviously we are still in a situation where costs are much higher than they were five years ago, whilst things settle from the peak around 2020 to 2023. Coal is still stubbornly sitting at £315 to £350 per tonne, but bear in mind that before the Russian invasion of Ukraine it was £160 a tonne. On utilities, water and

electricity has risen, as it has for domestic users, but has stabilised a little, however we need to keep a tight control of costs. As a railway we have a lot of fixed costs, buildings and station upkeep, maintenance and infrastructure costs and so on, which we manage carefully."

Another area where the heritage railway relies on is what is termed 'secondary spending', which covers refreshments, the bar and gift shop.

I raise the prospect of the £5 coffee in the High Street which could deter people from those establishments.

Gus responds: "Where possible we keep our prices competitive, but we have had some basic cost and staff increases and try to keep those as low as possible. We're still competitive and we're seeing reasonable business in both our pubs and in the cafes. We're a long way from the £5 cup of coffee!"

DEPENDENT ON VOLUNTEERS

As mentioned earlier, the railway had faced the difficult decision to make some roles redundant, and although it's not in that position anymore, staffing and costs are constantly reviewed.

In fact, the railway has become more dependent on volunteers than it was five years ago, which Gus says is not a bad thing. He explains that with many people reviewing their work/life balance and opting for early retirement, volunteer numbers at the railway have increased.

Two years ago, the number of volunteers over the age of 55 was 65%, however the railway is working to increase volunteers in the 16-21 age band. It is well recognised volunteering helps people's mental and physical well-being, but Gus thinks heritage railways have

been behind the curve on taking advantage of early retirees, but are catching up now.

The ability to attract volunteers is vitally important, particularly as this year marks 200 years of the first passenger railway and indeed the 60th anniversary of the SVR, which means railways are enjoying a high profile.

"It's a great time to become involved, as we can offer any experience from gardening to engineering," says Gus.

He adds: "What has become apparent is the number of volunteers that the railway is attracting from professional walks of life. While you

may not always know what their background is, and quite often they don't want you to know, which is their right, volunteers want a different spare time activity as their way of relaxing.

"We've found that those happy to reveal their backgrounds come from diverse backgrounds. We have one driver who is a vicar, and another who was the organist at Westminster Abbey, so volunteers from all walks of life."

I ask whether any volunteers have helped the railway in their professional day-to-day capacity and Gus reveals that there have been some in senior IT roles, finance

The two remaining 'Warship' class locos Nos. D821 Greyhound and D832 Onslaught stand under the signal gantry at Kidderminster on October 6, 2023.



or education who have recently become members of one or two of the boards.

When it comes to visitors, Gus knows that as well as value for money, the actual experience visitors receive is vital and this aspect has been a recurring theme at recent HRA conferences.

Since the Covid pandemic, the SVR has rethought its offerings as visitors are far more discerning. What the railway has to offer is more than just a train ride from A to B, and one of its prime attractions is its Engine House visitor centre at Highley. There's an arboretum at Arley with

discounted admission via the railway and both the towns of Bewdley and Bridgnorth are attractions in their own right and ideal for visitors to fit in around their train ride.

As part of the experience, the timetabled operation of diesel locomotives has increased to meet demand, and appeal to people from different generations.

Gus, who is 57, admits to being born three months after the end of steam in 1968 and is pragmatic enough to recognise that the general public's attachment to the steam era is diminishing because the memories are fading. "In fact, you have to be at

least 67 years of age to remember steam working," he says.

AGE PROFILE

Another significant change is the age profile of visitors, particularly for the diesel galas which are attracting younger enthusiasts. Gus admits to being both surprised and delighted by what could be termed as the social media generation.

He says that there has been a notable upsurge of interest in railways from people aged between 16 and 25, and this is reflected in the content on social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube and 'X'

(formerly Twitter) where visitors edit and post their clips from the diesel galas, which generate thousands of views – and is free publicity that benefits the railway.

This use of social media helps spread news of SVR events much faster than the conventional way, for example via magazines, but whether this is possibly working in a more positive way and actually encourages people from this age group to consider a career on the railways, it is too early to tell.

Looking at all enthusiasts, there is a distinct crossover between those who buy printed magazines and



Accelerating away from Bewdley past the site of the junction of the line to Tenbury Wells on June 29, 2024, is 'Western' No. D1062 Western Courier, with a Kidderminster to Bridgnorth working.



Having recently been returned to service and returning to the SVR last December, Metro-Cammell Class 101 DMU led by No. E50253 heads away from the Tenbury junction during the recent SVR Steam Gala on April 21, 2025.



The SVR regularly hires in diesels from main line operators for its diesel galas, and on May 21, 2022, GBRF Class 69 No. 69005 Eastleigh pilots Class 33 No. D6515 Lt Jenny Lewis RN up Eardington Bank towards Bridgnorth.

Severn Valley Railway News – Running Dates & Events

Looking ahead to June & July, and D1062 is out and about on the following dates :-

- Sunday 1st June
- Friday 20th June
- Saturday 21st June
- Sunday 22nd June
- Friday 4th July (Diesel Footplate Experience)
- Saturday 5th July
- Sunday 6th July
- Friday 25th July (Diesel Footplate Experience)

The full Diesel Rosta is as follows :-

Sunday	1-Jun	May Special WTT - 2 Train - S2 Diagram KR - HL & Rtn x2	WLA - D1062
Wednesday	4-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	Class 20
Wednesday	4-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Thursday	5-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	Class 20
Thursday	5-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Friday	6-Jun	Diesel Footplate Experience	37263
Saturday	7-Jun	1940's Weekend - Diesel Requirments TBC	DTG - D821
Sunday	8-Jun	1940's Weekend - Diesel Requirments TBC	Not Required Currently
Wednesday	11-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	DTG - D821
Wednesday	11-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Thursday	12-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	DTG - D821
Thursday	12-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Friday	13-Jun	Diesel Footplate Experience	DTG - D821
Saturday	14-Jun	1940's Weekend - Diesel Requirments TBC	DTG - D821
Sunday	15-Jun	1940's Weekend - Diesel Requirments TBC	Not Required Currently
Wednesday	18-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	Class 20
Wednesday	18-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Thursday	19-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	Class 20
Thursday	19-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Friday	20-Jun	Supporters Day - Diagram 1	Class 50
Friday	20-Jun	Supporters Day - Diagram 2	WLA - D1062
Saturday	21-Jun	Table B S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	WLA - D1062
Saturday	21-Jun	Table B N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Sunday	22-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	WLA - D1062
Sunday	22-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Wednesday	25-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	DTG - D8568
Wednesday	25-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Thursday	26-Jun	Table A S2 Diagram (One Return Trip)	DTG - D8568
Thursday	26-Jun	Table A N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Friday	27-Jun	Diesel Footplate Experience	D821
Saturday	28-Jun	Table C S3 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	Class 50
Saturday	28-Jun	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip)	3-Car DMU
Sunday	29-Jun	Table B S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	Class 50
Sunday	29-Jun	Table B N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	3-Car DMU
Friday	4-Jul	Diesel Footplate Experience	D1062
Saturday	5-Jul	Table C S3 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	WLA - D1062
Sunday	6-Jul	Table B S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	WLA - D1062
Friday	25-Jul	Diesel Footplate Experience	D1062

And also, the DTG's D1015 Western Champion is back on the mainline on Saturday 28th June on Pathfinder Tours Mazey Day from Dorridge & Birmingham New Street to Penzance.

The Spring Diesel Festival – Your Memories.

Mark Perry has shared his memories....

Working Members unwrapping D1013 ahead of its shunt into the TMD.



D1062 about to depart Kidderminster on a Festival service.



TMD Depot Tours were extremely popular.



Western Lady and “Lady Boy” on display 😊



D1062 about to depart Bewdley with Mr Guntripp at the controls & Mark Smith as second man.



Mike Tromans with social media celebrity Francis Bourgeois



D1013 Western Ranger in company of visiting 56 094



D1062 also preparing for service.



The WLA Spring Raffle being drawn.



Thanks also to Steve Widdowson for the following....

D1062 and Class 50 Ark Royal share the limelight at the festival.



An impressive line up of Western Region 1970s diesel locomotives.



A final view of a magnificent looking D1062 arriving at Highley.



Member's Forum & Gallery

"Memories"

Last month, memories were featured from Andy Collett and I shared a magnificent picture of our own D1048 Western Lady emerging from Dainton Tunnel in July 1974.



I stated that "The picture was taken from the steps of the signal box which was out of use by that time - so a proper 'signalman's view' you might say."

What I love is the feedback that I often receive from memories like this and the attention to detail that is shared – so a big thank you to Bernard Mills for pointing out the following – "I have to draw your attention to the picture from Dainton Signal Box. It was very much still operating in 1984, otherwise there would have not been a signal there. It closed on 13 May 1987 when the Exeter Panel took over."

Bernard then shared the following picture of D1070 Western Gauntlet emerging from the tunnel with 1B39 10.40 Paddington to Plymouth on 9th December 1976.

Bernard shared a couple of additional pictures that will feature in a future D1048 banner – the 1st being a shot of D1048 Western Lady passing Burngullow on 13th September 1971 on the 1B65 10.30 Paddington to Penzance. And finally, at Dorsley Park just west of Totnes right at the end on 31st January 1977 with the 1B39 (again!)

Thanks Bernard for sharing and allowing me to share with our members.

Andy has also mentioned to me that he has uploaded a video to YouTube - a 14-minute video compiled from Super8 cine film and 35mm colour slides taken on the 'Westerns South Western' RPPR railtour on 30th October 1976. This charter departed Paddington and went to Meldon Quarry in Devon, out via Berks & Hants and back via Salisbury behind D1023 and D1009 double-headed throughout.

You'll find it on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/0eYzv-zGLfI>

ENJOY!

D1070 Western Gauntlet emerging from the tunnel with 1B39 10.40 Paddington to Plymouth on 9th December 1976.



D1048 Western Lady passing Burngullow on 13th September 1971 on the 1B65 10.30 Paddington to Penzance.



D1048 at Dorsley Park just west of Totnes, right at the end on 31st January 1977 with the 1B39 (again!) Paddington to Plymouth.



WLA Member Paul Davies earlier this month was going through his transport tickets and badges and came across this badge our early days!

What do you have in your collections?



Closing Notes and Book Ends

Back to the start of the month and before the month's activities started, a rather bizarre picture of the cleaning team!



And a final picture of an in-depth conversation in the TMD – David Russell from Rail Express and myself discussing options on how to get the jacks working again 😊



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 July

<https://westernlocomotives.com/>

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