



Western Locomotive Association AGM 2025

Election of Management Committee

We are pleased to introduce below the WLA Management Committee who are standing for election/re-election at our 51st AGM on 15th November 2025. We also hope that by knowing a bit more about who we are and why we got involved in the WLA it may resonate with Members who were wanting to get more involved but not sure in what capacity. Any new Working Members are always warmly welcomed, as are Sales Stand volunteers or potential Management Committee Officers, so if you are interested please do reach out to us. You know who we are now!!

WLA Management Committee Standing For Re-election



Chair – Roger Smith

Whether he likes it or not, Roger is not unaccustomed to being Chairman, having had an 11 year stint from 2004 to 2015 and then being reappointed again from 2021...! Roger's interests go back to when he was still at school, finding time to visit Paddington to watch, photograph and record Westerns, including a few quick trips to Reading and back! Of course, all the main Western rail-tours had to be supported including Southern Belle, China Clay, Memorial and Tribute. At the time, any thoughts of Western preservation were just a wild dream but then, after dwindling interest after 1977, things took a positive turn ten years later when Roger became a WLA Working Member at Bridgnorth in 1987. Roger subsequently trained as Secondman and then also as a Fireman on the steam side, before becoming a qualified Driver for Westerns in 1999 and Driver for steam engines in 2004. During this time, Roger purchased D1013 Western Ranger, on 16 October 1995 which in effect, was secured for the WLA until such time they could afford to buy it off him, which eventually happened on 14 August 2004. And the rest as they say, is history!



Vice Chair and Publicity Officer – Paul Finch

Like so many of you, I spent the mid-1970s chasing Westerns around the West Country before the inevitable happened on 26th February 1977. A sad day I am sure we all remember.

Living in Cheltenham at the time, the highlight of my day was the 8.30 am southbound China Clay empties – guaranteed Western, through Lansdown Road Station, before running to Cheltenham Boys Grammar School for an 8.50 start! (I was often late) University followed, plus beer, girls, then a career, family, expenditure.... and my interest in railways, although always constant, took more of a back seat.

Until the summer of 2018, and Mrs Finch's question – what do you want for your birthday? I am not sure how it actually came about, but a Driver Footplate Experience with D1062 was booked. The day came, it was HOT – a 30-degree summer day.

Darren was Driver in Charge and Derek was the WLA representative looking after the guests. Paula sweltered in her carriage, but what a day, my interest was re-ignited.

I soon hooked up with the Sales Team and a visit to the 2019 Crewe Diesel Depot Open Day to help out with the WLA Sales Stand, and I was on-board.

Standing for Publicity Officer Role in 2019, against one other, was a make-or-break day! I have never looked back, I hope that I have made a difference in promoting and raising the profile of the WLA and was delighted to accept the additional role of Vice Chair when Roger Smith asked for my support - 46 years on, our Maybachs still roar!



Company Secretary – Ian Clayton

As a young lad I was brought up on the railways in the 1980s often frequenting Lichfield Trent Valley signal box helping my Mum's partner pull the leavers and keep the trains moving on the West Coast Mainline. Not sure that would pass Health and Safety of today!! My Dad also took me around the country on different preserved railways. We attended the SVR Diesel Gala's and it was at one of these I remember a wonderful sounding and looking locomotive coming on the front of the train. It was D1013 Western Ranger. I was mesmerised and it was instant love!!! The rest they say is history and I am proud and honoured to be volunteering for the WLA as Secretary since November 2016 and Director since November 2021. My paid job is working for the Environment Agency in Digital Leadership as Forecasting and Warning Systems Service Owner being responsible for the digital services that forecast, warn and inform over 6 million people at risk of flooding in England.



Treasurer – Mike Targett

I guess I have my Dad to blame of this! My introduction to the railways were evenings spent at Shrewsbury station seeing double headed class 37s on the shiny silver bullets. Unfortunately for me class 52s on BR metals were before my time. My introduction to the class was visiting the SVR in my childhood to see D1062 in her then maroon with full yellow ends doing what she did best. The sights and sounds were certainly very impressive. Fast forward a few years and my Dad ended up fully rewiring D1062 during her ten year major overhaul between 1998 - 2008; it certainly was quite interesting assisting pulling new wiring through the loco, having a peak "behind the scenes" as it were. My contribution here did fall away I must admit, the usual focus on progressing my career, taking exams and travelling eliminated any spare time to contribute to the WLA. As time passed however I once again found myself with some spare time which would turn out to be very good timing. As an accountant I was asked whether I would be interested in becoming treasurer after my predecessor expressed an interest in stepping down. I accepted the offer as this, I thought, was the ideal role to best support the WLA. The membership voted me into the position of Treasurer at the 2019 AGM and during my term have registered the company for VAT and opened a savings account to help make the WLA's finances go as far as possible to help secure the future of our locos.



Engineering Project Co-ordinator – Darren Shelmerdine

It all started with that Hornby model of Western Courier, well that and a run behind Western Fusilier on the Dart Valley Railway. In the '80's I always borrowed my Brother's Rail Enthusiast magazines in the hunt for any news on Westerns. Having mithered my father to take me for a day trip to the SVR, we attended one of the Western Weekends and finally, a trip behind Courier.

Some years later at the '92 Diesel Gala, I asked for a Membership Form only to be told "You can have one next week when you come down and give a hand". A conversation was struck and yes, the following week I attended Bridgnorth. The rest I suppose is history, being a Working Member ever since.

My first role on the Committee was Working Members Rep, then Vice Chairman, Chairman and then on to my current position of Engineering Project Co-ordinator. Working on the WLA's locomotives is certainly in my blood and I'm proud being part of a fantastic team.



Maintenance and Standards Engineer – Robin Jones

I became fond of Westerns whilst train spotting at Birmingham New Street in my early teens and was intrigued by the sight, sound and smell of these dirty, battle-scarred diesel hydraulics belching out acrid fumes as they exited the London tunnel onto platform 1. There was nothing else quite like them at the time.

I was already a volunteer on the SVR when the two locos arrived at Bridgnorth so asked Derek Wright if I could get involved with their preservation and the rest is history.

I started my railway engineering career in 1979 qualifying as Category 4

Fitter/electrician at Bescot TMD and spent several years maintaining a plethora of diesel electric locos as well as assisting with the last BR overhaul of class 98 steam locos in Aberystwyth MPD.

I later transferred to Tyseley depot in Birmingham spending most of my time in the main line shop lifting locos and DMUs before being promoted to Principal Technical Officer and helped to support the introduction of the new diesel hydraulic sprinter fleet. I also gained valuable knowledge from the old boys who had worked on the class 52s when they were new to the Birmingham area in the 1960s.

After taking a few years out from the WLA to raise a family, I joined National Express Midland Metro engineering team, before returning to West Midlands Trains as Technical Support Manager maintaining the class 323 EMU fleet and resident 08 shunters.

My current role within the WLA is to ensure that we maintain 1013 & 1062 in a professional manner by working to an approved exam plan which is compliant with statutory regulations governing the safe and reliable operation of our locomotives.



Membership Secretary – Paul Tucker

I was born in Torquay in 1958, educated at Homelands Technical School, and have spent my whole life in Torquay and Bristol. Always interested in railways (in the earliest known picture of me, I'm holding a toy engine), also most other forms of transport. Like all small children back then, raised to think "steam good, diesels bad" but soon put right by those nice "Big Red Diesels", although it did take a few years before I could pronounce "Western Viscount" correctly!

I worked as a Civil Servant, and am now enjoying the best part of my working life – retirement! This allows much more playtime.

I've been a WLA member since fairly early on, joined the Committee in the 1990s and took over as Membership Secretary in about 2002.



Sales Officer – Peter Bamber

I joined the Railway Club at school in early 1972 and classed the 400'ers within a few months helped by the fact that the playing fields were next to the WCML just south of Preston.

In July '72 we had a family holiday in Torquay and I managed to spend two days on Newton Abbott station which was much better than the beach!

First Western was D1019 Western Challenger at Torquay and first for haulage D1039 Western King from NA to TQ. I was hooked. I managed to see all bar D1066 Western Prefect which was good going for a lad from Lancashire and the last one I saw was D1022 Western Sentinel.

We'd gone down to Bristol to travel on the brand new HST's to Swindon and back and were waiting for our train back Up North on a dreary November evening. Expecting a Peak or a Duff, we were ecstatic when 22 appeared on our train.

It got better when we called into Gloucester expecting an engine change and she ran round – Lickey here we come.

I never went to Swindon after seeing Warships and Hymeks in the scrapyards in 1974. I briefly joined the WLA in 1977 but what prompted me to re-join in 2018 was seeing the pictures of Courier in blue and the advert for a Sales Officer came just at the right time as I was contemplating retirement. The rest is history.



Editor – Mark Perry

My interest in Westerns began in 1969 when my family moved to the wonderfully named Lickey End, just outside Bromsgrove. After school I would cycle up to Vigo which was about two thirds of the way up the famous Lickey Incline. It was here I saw my first Whizzo D1034 Western Dragoon. Highlight of my spotting days was getting a cab ride around Birmingham New Street in D1027 Western Lancer, which became my personal favourite.

My interest was rekindled in the early 1990's when I joined the WLA and spent a short time as a working member at Bridgnorth. However this was short lived the arrival of children curtailed most of my railway activities.

There was still the odd visit to the SVR and Open Days at Laira and Bescot. Then in 2007 while at Ford, they offered every employee £200 towards a 'learning experience'. So, in the June I drove Ranger guided by the late Derek Wright. Amazingly they let me do it again the following year.

I then re-joined the WLA and have been a member ever since and have tried to attend as many Diesel galas and running days as I could. The family then treated me to another driver experience day with D1062 this time. In 2020 With other commitments easing and early retirement taken I wanted to get more involved with the WLA. At this time they were looking for an Editor for Western Courier. I volunteered and my first issue was in Spring 2021. I also started as a working member, helping with the team to keep our locomotives operational and learning the vagaries of our magnificent machines. I hope to carry on both these duties for many years to come to let others enjoy the sights and sounds that have enthralled me since those days by the side of the Lickey Bank.



Legal Officer – Jonathan Sandiford

My interest in railways in general and the Western Region in particular developed as a child when each summer we would make the long rail journey from Manchester to Cornwall, to see family and for a holiday.

My grandfather was a gang leader working on the railway throughout Cornwall and I developed a love of the Western Region and her unique locos. I decided to volunteer with the WLA during the dark months of the Pandemic because I wanted to give something back from a legal point of view, and for a break from my day job in criminal law.

Charities Officer – vacant – see separate document.



Working Member Officer – Lyn Jones

I grew up in Reading and got interested in buses at an early age and as I got a bit older my interest expanded to trains. We travelled around as a family on DMU's mainly. My first experience on a heritage railway was at the Mid Hants around the age of 9. I began volunteering with the WLA in 1983 and that was when I attended my first Western Weekend. I was the first woman second man on the SVR in the late 1980's. I took a break from volunteering while my children were little and have been volunteering again for the last 15 years. I did a year as Sales Officer and then a couple of years after that I became Working Members Rep.



Working Members Officer – Marty Kent

I guess it was all my grandfather's fault! Little did he realise what he started back possibly in 1974 when he first took me aged 4 to a layby East of Sonning Cutting to watch the trains from the safety of his car. It was these visits, though too young to take numbers, I noticed there was type of locomotive very different in appearance to the rest. Over the next few years during holidays, Sunday afternoons were spent at this location. I probably saw half the fleet but guess will never know. Things changed as they do and it was the late 80s before I returned.

I first joined the WLA in 1986 and this was when I first started to volunteer. Circumstances however changed at home with marriage, kids, a job as a coach driver, and then caring duties. I never anticipated it would be 30 years until finally I started volunteering once again in 2019, and then being elected on to Committee early 2020 as Working Members Officer.

Since returning I have discovered it not just about the locomotives, it's forming friendships which has given me the opportunity to help with the sales stand. Again this has given me the opportunity to meet members and potential members and see for myself the support for our wonderful locomotives.



Fundraising Officer – Mike Tromans

Mike is the newest member of the Management Committee team, having been co-opted in April 2024, subject to approval at the next AGM.

Being a WLA Working Member, Mike is well known within the WLA and was previously associated with much of the preparation work to make D1048 Western Lady presentable for the SVR's Autumn Diesel Bash, held in 2023, which involved a complete repaint.

Based on previous experience, Mike put forward a comprehensive list of ideas to help raise future funds for the WLA and he states "...we need to seek out tried and tested methods of fund raising whilst at the same time delving into new, innovative and maybe even unorthodox ways as we move forward with this. Using existing and developing technologies will certainly play a major part."

www.westernloco.com

The Western Locomotive Association Limited is the owner of D1013 Western Ranger and D1062 Western Courier on the Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth, Shropshire and is a Company Limited by Guarantee Registered number 3873466

Registered office: 5 Prospect Place, Millennium Way, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8HG The WLA is registered as a charity under number 1115058