



Western Locomotive Association e-Newsletter – February 2026

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

As always, a busy month after a slow start (cold weather at the start of the New Year having an impact on jobs that could be done), but fantastic progress made throughout the month – read on to find out more – a spoiler alert though - D1013 Western Ranger's "B" end bogie nearing completion and "B" end engine back in the locomotive's engine bay, and our two new MTU 538 engines approaching the UK and being delivered to the TMD early in February – but let's not give away all of the news and updates contained in this e-Newsletter!

And of course, the return of the [Western Lottery](#) which is being held throughout February – so purchase your tickets and be in with a chance to win up to 50% of the pot - [Fundraising & Lottery - Western Locomotive Association](#)

Let's kick straight off with a memory from over 50 years ago – in last month's e-Newsletter, we shared a picture of D1013 Western Ranger squeezed into the shed at St Blazey and this image prompted Stephen Taverner to share his picture of D1053 Western Patriarch in a similar "squeeze" on 10th July 1975 alongside a trio of Class 25s.



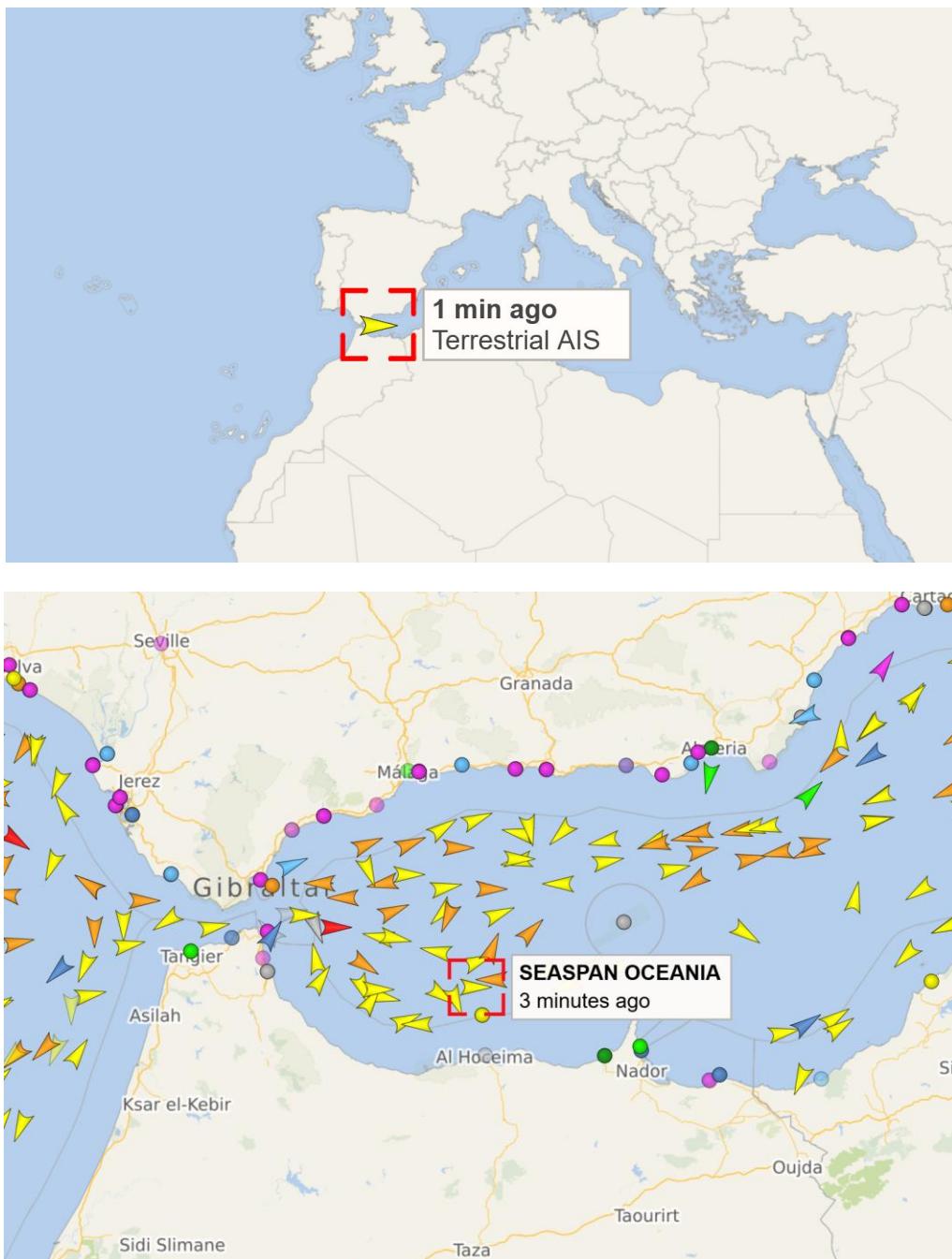
This month's big leap forward – D1013 Western Ranger again has 2 engines fitted, with the "B" end engine being re-installed on Saturday 17th January (what a birthday present for our Chairman who celebrated "Western Reliance on the same day) – see below "**Before and After**" images from the day from Dave Hewell and see News Updates for a full report.



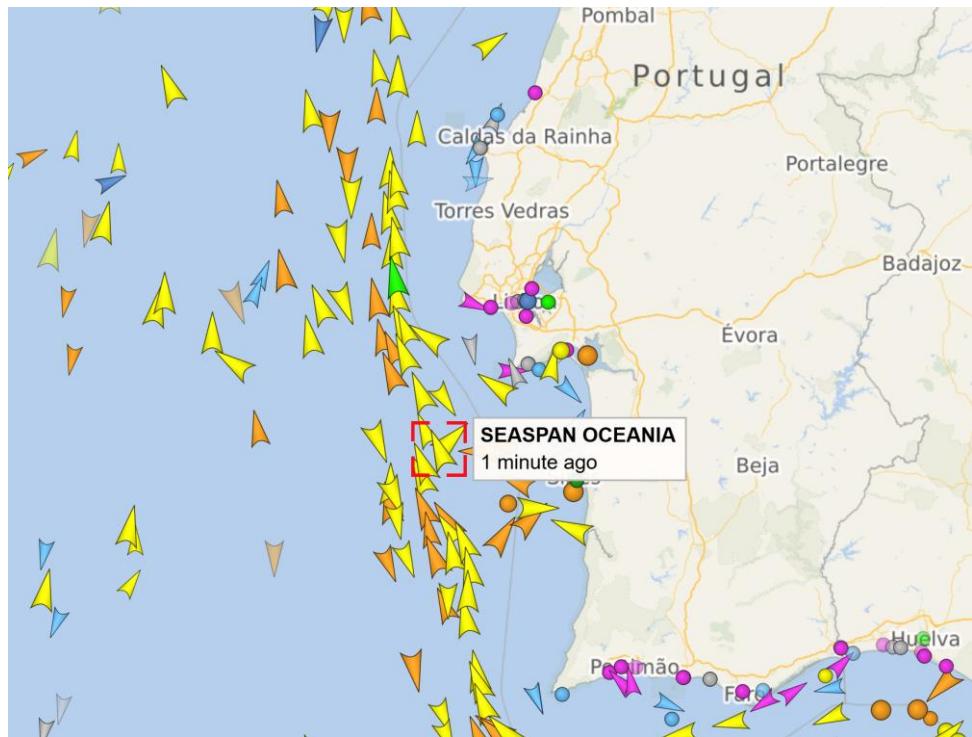
The big news last month was the acquisition of two MTU 538 engines that we found for sale in India and which, after some serious negotiating, we were able to purchase at a price that was too good to refuse.

Their progress update as at 27th January:-

The current position of **SEASPIN OCEANIA** is at West Mediterranean reported 1 min ago by AIS. The vessel is en route to the port of **Tanger Med, Morocco**, sailing at a speed of 2.1 knots and expected to arrive there on **Jan 27, 05:00**. The vessel **SEASPIN OCEANIA** (IMO 9286009, MMSI 563280800) is a Container Ship built in 2004 (22 years old) and currently sailing under the flag of **Singapore**.



And a quick update as at 31st January a midday – they are on their way and expected in Southampton on Monday 2nd February!



As the TMD is closed for access week commencing 2nd, delivery to the TMD is scheduled for Wednesday 11th February.

And finally, this month, back in 2013, D1062 Western Courier celebrated its 50th birthday on 6th May and ran with a celebratory headboard which was raffled on the day. The lucky winner very kindly donated the headboard back to the WLA in order to help us with fund raising, and I am pleased to say the headboard will feature in Crewe Railwayana's Modern Traction Auction which is being held from Friday 13th February to Sunday 15th February (and so includes February 14th – maybe a perfect Valentine's Day gift 😊)

D1062, with headboard is seen alongside D1013 at Bridgnorth.



And on arrival at Kidderminster.



RAILWAYANA AUCTIONS UK LTD
C.R.A.
CREWE RAILWAYANA AUCTIONS

Next Online Auction - 13th - 15th February 2026

QUALITY - RARITY - DIVERSITY
NOW CONSIGNING ITEMS - FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
CALL THE AUCTIONEER NEIL 01242 620020 or 07836 225711

We offer a collection service & delivery service from all corners of the UK

1141 1963 - 50 YEARS - 2013 WESTERN COURIER

3610 BULLDOG WARSHIP CLASS

3697 STRONGBOW WARSHIP CLASS

3726 6A5

3757 81E

5379 6A6

5610 82F

6416 6C

6639 83A

4129 84B

32519 12A

4028 84C

44861 15E

43612 24C

THE KING'S SHROPSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

TRYFAN

THE WAVERLEY

THE ROYAL DUCHY

PEMBROKE COAST EXPRESS

THE MID-DAY SCOT

WADEBRIDGE

1948 CREWE

1956 CREWE

502

KINCSKNOWE

HARLOW MILL

LISA

KIRSTEN

BRITISH RAILWAYS SOWERBY BRIDGE

213 SQUADRON

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

71000

FOR TRAINS TO CREWE AND THE SOUTH

PASSENGERS MUST NOT CROSS THE LINE EXCEPT BY THE SUBWAY

EST 30 YRS

EST 30 YRS

ALL LINES LEAD TO CREWE

ALL LINES LEAD TO CREWE

Free probate & insurance valuations on single items or whole collections

EST 30 YRS

ALL LINES LEAD TO CREWE

EST 30 YRS

ALL LINES LEAD TO CREWE

CLYDEBANK (CENTRAL)

BURNTISLAND

NOTTINGHAM

City of Bristol

RESIDENTIAL City of Glasgow

Enquiries contact the auctioneer Neil Booth on 01242 620020 or 07836 225711
Email: office@gwr1.com or office@railwayana.com. View our website: www.ukrailwayana.com

Railwayana Auctions UK Ltd, Toddington Grange, Toddington, Glos GL54 5DN

In this e-Newsletter

Features in this e-Newsletter include the following:

- News from The Chair.
- The Western Lottery
- D1013 – A Progress Update
- D1048 – A Progress Update / and other “historical” notes
- Monthly News Updates – an update on all that has been happening over the last month.
- Western Courier re-visited
- Sales Team Update.
- Whizzo Woods.
- Membership News.
- Book of the Month.
- Media Coverage.
- 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, January has been and gone, almost as quickly as the storms that seem to have battered the coast down in the South West!

Hopefully, our two 538 engines are safely secured on the Seaspan Oceania which is somewhere near Tangiers or Gibraltar when I last looked. It's actually quite exciting waiting to receive two 65 litre V12's and hopefully they're going to make two great future projects to convert them to MD655 specifications!

As I'm sure you'll see elsewhere in this e-Newsletter, D1013 has now received its overhauled MD655 engine at "B" end, which is now safely bolted in, despite a bit of resistance. I won't bore you on how fabulous this engine sounded on the China Clay Railtour with D1056 on full bore all the way through Teignmouth, through the tunnels and through Dawlish station before easing off for the Warren! I'm sure it'll sound just a fabulous going up Eardington Bank – can't wait for that either!

In other news, D1013's bogie project for "B" end is coming along a treat, fitted with new springs and not far off completion, meaning that the bogie for "A" should soon be started. Amazing work going on there, something we should all be proud of. Of course, there's many other jobs looming to finish off D1013 and let's not forget the huge amount of winter maintenance work required for D1062.

Just recently, I sent out a reminder to the Working Members of what needs to be done, based on information provided by Darren and Robin, which is as follows:

D1062

- Inspection of bogies
- Oil change on "A" end transmission
- Replace fuel filler valves
- Change fuel filters
- Clean fuel strainer
- Clean cooler groups
- Clean all air intakes & filters
- Replace decompression valves on both engines
- Overhaul fuel pumps
- Cab repaint and general refresh of bodywork
- Air reservoir hydraulic test
- Air system recommission
- "A" end bogie D/A side compensating beam change (loco lift required)
- B1 Balanced Exam to be completed

D1013

- Remove Roof Panels, remove & replace roof bolts
- Remove broken boiler room window & frame, prepare for welding
- Prepare "B" end of engine fitting, refit and reconnect D1056 engine
- Complete Turbo project for D1056 engine
- Continue bogie work for both bogies
- Many other jobs to be listed (TBA)

Just recently, our Guidance Notes for Volunteers has been updated, following a review by the Board and Management Committee, and now include a Social Media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy. Just a few important and common-sense guidelines really, nothing too complicated!

If you're thinking of becoming a Volunteer or if you're one already, and not seen it yet, the document can be downloaded from our website at:

<https://westernlocomotives.com/guidance-notes-for-volunteers/>

Another document which has been updated is our Class 52 Drivers Manual. This was a document originally compiled by Derek Wright about 40 years ago, based on the original BR Drivers Manual plus Derek's knowledge as a Driver to make the document a bit more relevant and meaningful for our operations on the SVR. Since then, the document has been significantly updated, even more relevant to our locomotives and operations, and is now a useful document for trainee Drivers. If you've ever wondered about what's involved with operating a Class 52 from a Driver's perspective, the document can be downloaded from our website at:

<https://westernlocomotives.com/wla-drivers-manual-vs-1-9/>

Finally, I think you'll see that the pressure is firmly on us for the year ahead if we're to achieve what we've set out to do. There hasn't been a time in recent years where your support has mattered more - whether it be through membership, support for our sales, donations or hands-on work with our locomotives.

Any support you can give to the WLA, will be much appreciated, thank you!

See you on the Valley!

Roger Smith
Chairman



The Western Lottery

WESTERN LOTTERY

WESTERN LOTTERY 2026.

2026 SEES THE RETURN OF OUR WESTERN LOTTERY.

The lottery is held once each year, our first lottery in January 2025 raised a total of £2,650 with £1,325 going to the winners & £1,325 to our locomotives.

1st prize was £795.00 2nd prize was £331.25 3rd prize was £198.75

**The 2026 LOTTERY IS OPEN FOR ENTRIES FROM FEBRUARY 1st.
The draw will take place early March.**

**Just go to the Lottery Page on the WLA website & purchase your £25 ticket -
[Fundraising & Lottery - Western Locomotive Association](#)**

**You can enter as many times as you like!
The more entries the more prize money!**

50% of entry funds going to the Association and
50% is split between the 1st, 2nd & 3rd prize winners.

So, as an example if we have 100 entries, we raise £2,500

£1,250 goes to D1013, D1048 & D1062.

£1,250 to be won by members in Prizes, split as follows:

60% for the 1st prize - £750.00
25% for the 2nd prize - £312.50.
15% for the 3rd prize - £187.50.

You can win a big cash prize with the main beneficiaries being our 3 class 52s.

More chance of winning than the national lottery!

Many thanks for your continuing support - Mike Tromans. Fund Raising officer.

D1013 Progress Update

It's going to take a big effort from all concerned to get D1013 back into service ready for the big anniversary next year in 2027, but it is believed that this is possible with the Working Member team that the WLA have today.

The "Jobs List" and Gant Chart is in the process of being updated, with names allocated to specific tasks – and will be shared here.

We will need a great deal of TMD access and we have the support from the TMD in this matter, in order to allow the work to progress on D1013, and also to keep D1062 in traffic.

(The plan was to not do any major work on D1062 this winter, but we now know that we need to replace an equalising beam which is now work in progress.)

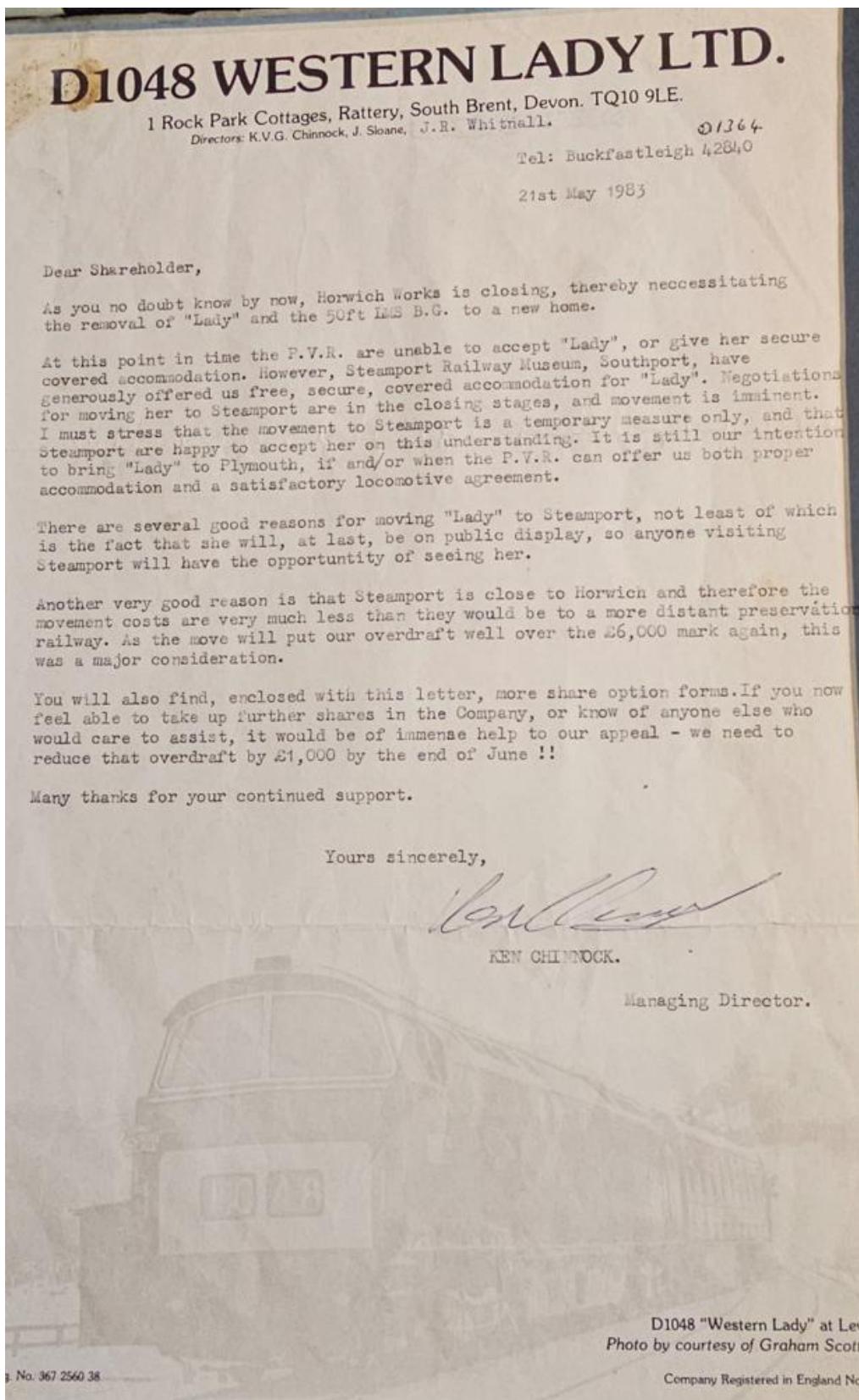
A new set of batteries for D1013 has been costed and an order placed, so that electrical testing can commence, and as reported in full in this e-Newsletter, "B" end engine is now back in the locomotive and connecting up can now commence.

The fitting of this engine has also freed up space in the TMD where we can now position our existing 538 power unit (and progress when other tasks have been completed.)

This then frees up some space for the storage of our imminent arrivals from India.

D1048 Progress Update

We have received the below interesting information this month from "Lady's" past....



News Update – January 2026 (All pictures supplied by Working Members)

A welcome to 2026 from Darren Shelmerdine

Thanks to all of our Working Members for all of your time and commitment given to the WLA during 2025. It was another hard year but well worth it with D1062 flying the flag with 100% reliability, D1013's overhaul progressing well and the assessment of D1048 indicating that she is in better condition than was suggested. The Working Membership has grown particularly with a young and enthusiastic youth team. Well done to all of you.

Looking ahead to 2026, well it looks exciting.

D1062 needs lifting but it's nothing that we have not done before.

Turning to D1013, if we can complete the overhaul in the next year as suggested, it will really put the WLA at the forefront for 2027.

Continuing the assessment on D1048 too is important.

The WLA is well placed as we move into 2026, with investment in engines, bogie parts and other items, securing the future of the locomotives.

Together we make a great team and I very much look forward to the year ahead.



Winter Maintenance

D1013 Western Ranger and D1062 Western Courier were due to be shunted into the TMD on Wednesday 3rd of Thursday 4th December.

Ranger was due to be placed on the Jacking Area and Courier on the Side Pit Lane

Ranger is due to be there until the end of December and then moved to Number 3 Road.

Courier is due to be there until Wednesday 10th December, but then returns to the Side pit Lane from January 1st for 2 months, after which Ranger will take her place until early April.

These are the current bookings – so we have a great opportunity to work on the locomotives.

A list of work to be carried out has been drawn up as follows:-

D1013

- Remove Roof Panels
- Remove broken oiler Room Window & Frame, prepare area for welding
- Prepare "B" End for engine refitting
- Continue Bogie Work – both "B" End and "A" End

D1062

- Inspection of Bogies – to be carried out Tuesday 9th or Wednesday 10th
- Oil change on "A" End Transmission
- Replace Fuel Filler Valves
- Change Fuel Filters
- Clean Fuel Strainer
- Clean Cooler Groups
- Clean all Air Intakes & Filters
- Replace Decompression Valves on both engines (ongoing with Youth Team)
- Overhaul Fuel Pumps
- Cab Repaint and general locomotive refresh

More tasks to follow....

Saturday 3rd January - No update to report (due to freezing conditions at the TMD.)

Wednesday 7th January

A team were gathered at the TMD with the main objective of starting to ensure that we have everything required to refit the "B" end engine into D1013.

Assuming all is well, the fitting of the unit will take place over the weekend of the 16th and 17th January (or 23rd and 24th January.)

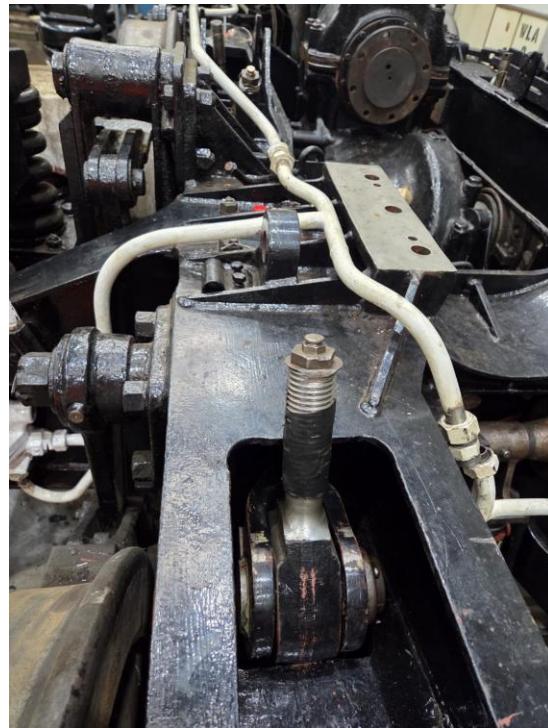
Following the fitting of the engine, it will allow us to remove the 539 unit from the wagon and move it into the TMD for conversion work, thus freeing up space for at least one of the 538's on the way from India, which are due to arrive early to mid-February.

Saturday 10th January - No update to report.

Wednesday 14th January

Equalizing Beams were refitted today by Robin and Mark on D1013@s "B" end bogie- amazing the job was completed in just 3 hours by the "A" team – great job done.





Thursday 15th January

The latest report was received from Coop who advised that despite the wintery weather for some, work behind the scenes was carrying on in the cold!

Twelve new injector boxes have been completed ready for filling with injectors requiring servicing, onward transport then awaits to Bridgnorth for treatment. The boxes will keep the serviced ones stored in prime condition for as and when required.



Work has also started on new battery boxes for D1048, the first one already being put together to use as a pattern, with most of the material now cut to size ready for assembly work to start.

The two different types of battery in use can be seen with the newer Hawker model to the right which are presently in D1048 awaiting transfer to D1062 when a team is available, only 15 more to complete!



Friday 16th & Saturday 17th January

Starting the report for this two-day session on Friday 16th & Saturday 17th January with the following update from Mark Perry.

The roof panel is removed from D1013 as the first task on Friday 16th.



The roof panel is carefully stored on the TMD floor.



A new oil pipe is fitted to D1013's "B" end Maybach prior to lifting.



It's now Saturday 17th and the engine is lifted...



The engine arrives at the awaiting engine compartment...



A careful watch to ensure that it is lowered into exactly the correct position.



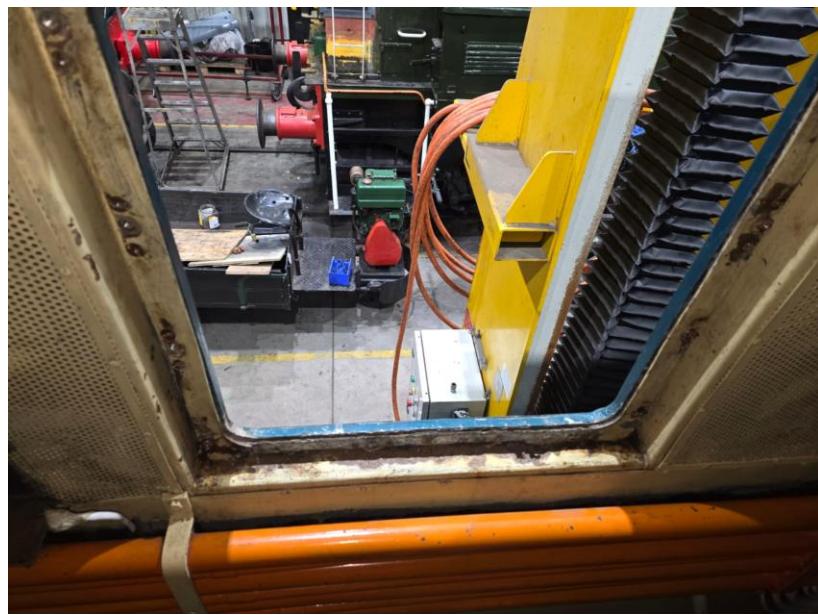
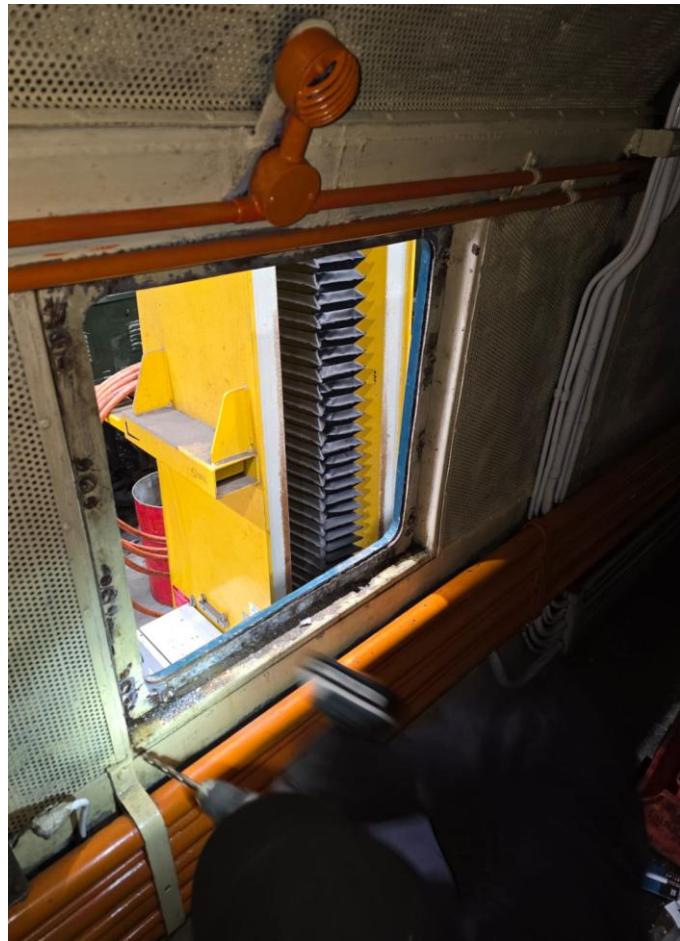
Safely in place.



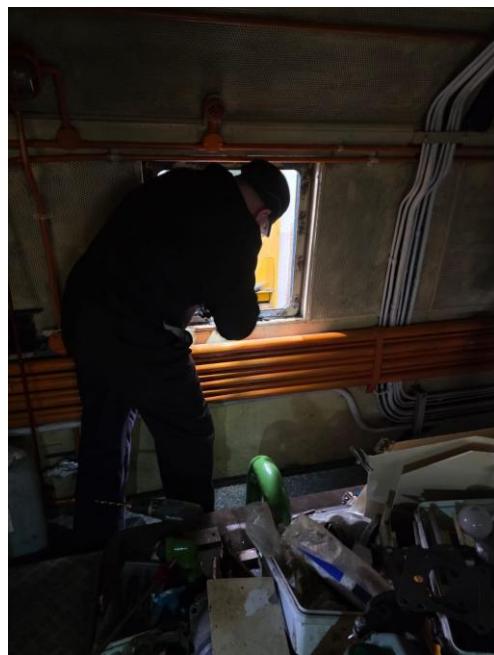
D1062 is shunted out of the TMD and is seen alongside D1015 and D1048.



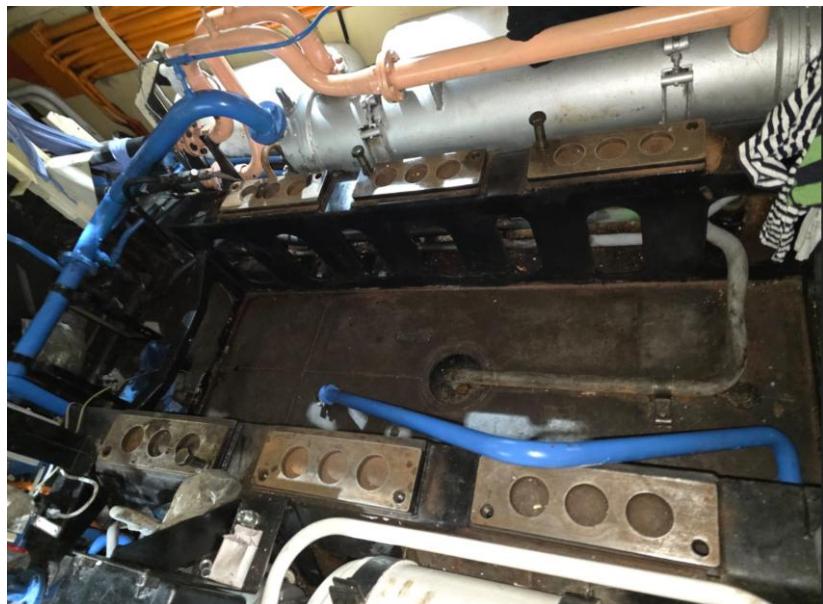
Some other photographs from the two days and worthy of viewing, starting with a different view of the lifting jacks from within the locomotive, captured whilst starting the repair work on the boiler room window.



Some more detailed pictures of that repair work...



Back in the engine room and awaiting the arrival of the MD655 Maybach Power Unit.



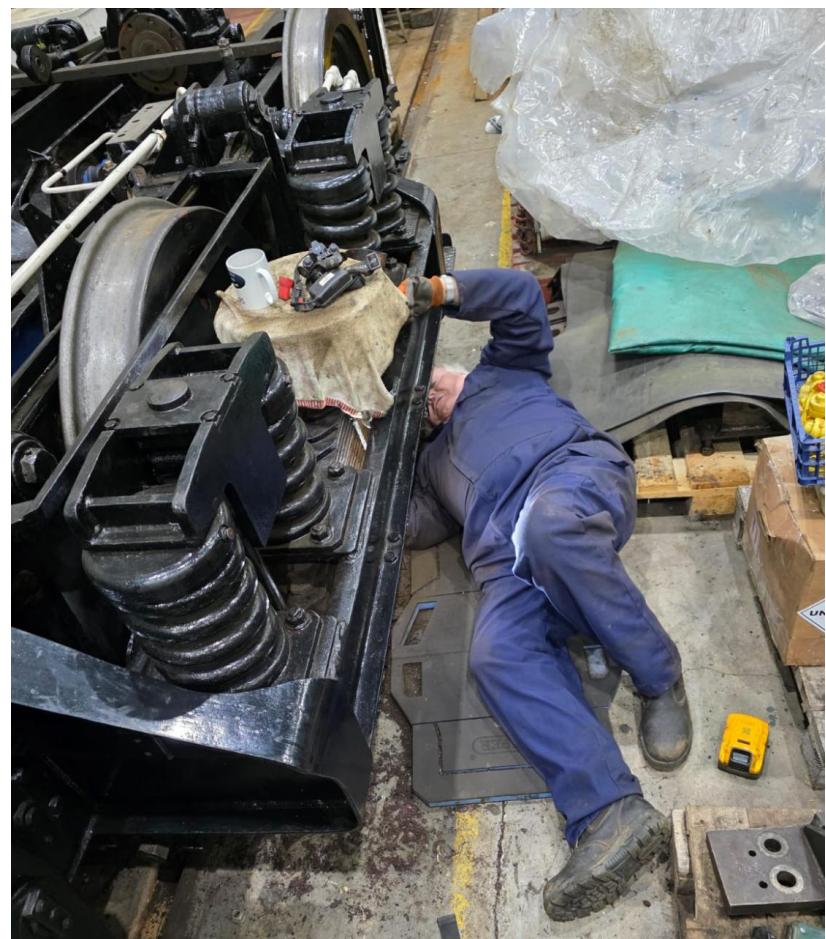
It all looks very straight forward when viewed in these pictures – but a great deal of work goes into making this all possible.

To start, the previous Wednesday, a team started working on Ranger and getting the locomotive ready to receive the power unit – bolts were first located for the engine mounts and for the engine to transmission cardan shaft. These were all cleaned and made ready for use. Tab washers were also located – small but essential. It was noted that a fresh supply of these will be needed as they are the same size as those needed on the bogie cardan shafts, and a good number are going to be needed for D1062 and D1013. The oil drain and priming pump were removed and have been delivered to our supplier for new ones to be manufactured.

Further work also took place in the boiler room window frame (seen above) in order to make it ready for welding.

Whilst all of this work was in progress, D1062's batteries were also charged and cooler groups cleaned.

Other pictures of activity follow, including Phil doing what Phil does best – scaping the more inaccessible parts of the bogie.



Coop had obviously been busy developing / creating new tools to make the lifting of batteries easier.



Additional work carried out on Saturday 17th – rainwater drain pipes on D1062 were blown clear and preheaters were tested.

“A” end preheater fired up perfectly, but “B” end failed to run and has a suspected electrical fault that will need investigation.

Turning back to D1013, springs were made ready for future fitment.



Recorded before the lifting of D1013's power unit, strange forces appeared to be at play and D1056 Western Sultan seemed to be making a bit for resurrection.

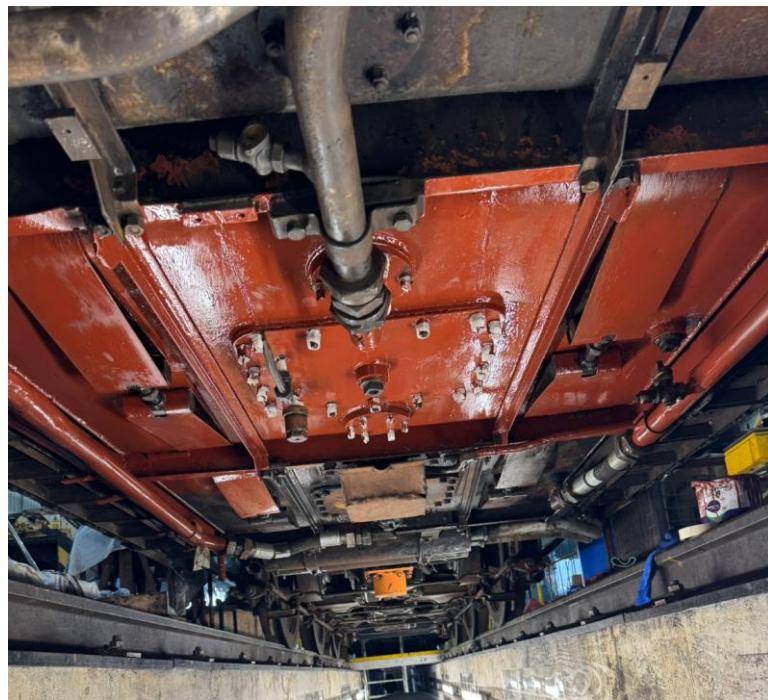
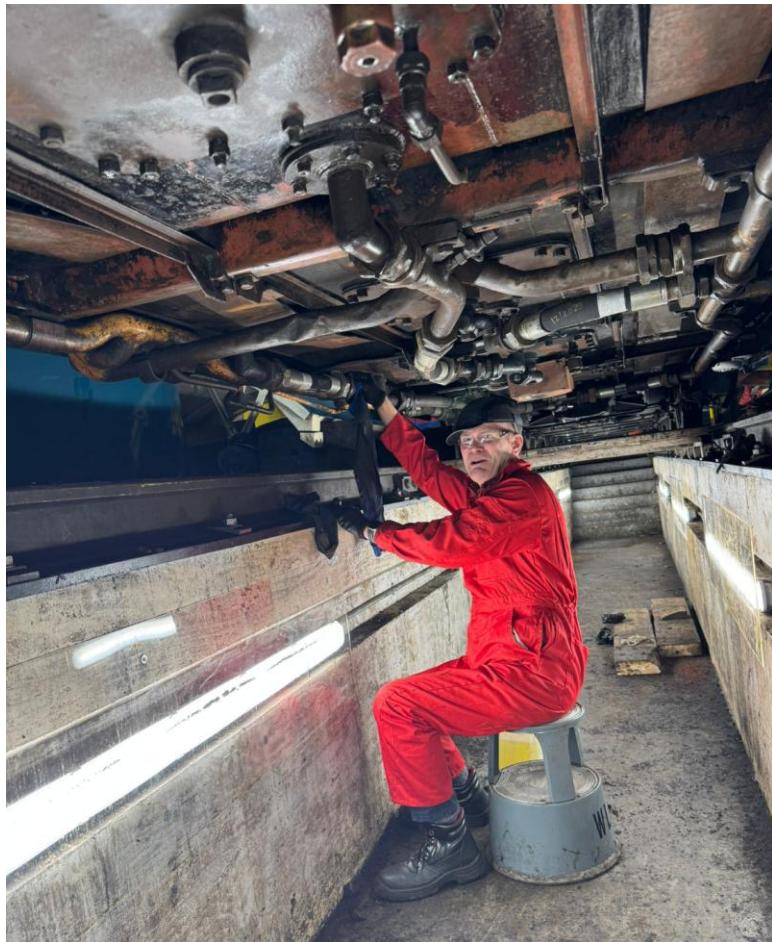


Forgetting now about D1056, some more images of the fitted power unit, looking very good back in position in the locomotive.





Let's not forget that work still needs to be completed underneath the locomotive and a big thanks to those persevering with this task. Superficially it looks clean, but before being primed, it still needs some more scraping and degreasing.



In summary, we have now made a great step forward in getting D1013's engine back where it belongs.

An overhauled Turbo and Injectors will be fitted at a later date to complete the engine.

Some small issues were encountered but mostly overcome, although we are going to have to lift the engine again slightly as one of the bearers hasn't lined up correctly and so we are not able to secure the fastening bolt. This is at the same location as where we had to do some re-tapping. But our overall objective is to do this **RIGHT** for the future.

The plan is that this will be done by the end of the month (latest).

As reported, significant underframe cleaning and painting has continued, equalising beams have been refitted to the bogie, and battery boxes have been made and are ready for use.

At Bridgnorth, work has continued on preheaters, and an equalising beam has been prepared and is ready for fitting on D1062 in February.

Other Jobs to be done this month include removing the bolts from the exhaust roof panel mounts as they need replacing. The (remaining) bolts from the boiler room roof panel also need removing, so that the panel can be removed for inspection of the bodywork and to help with future welding work. The four associated spring locaters need cleaning.

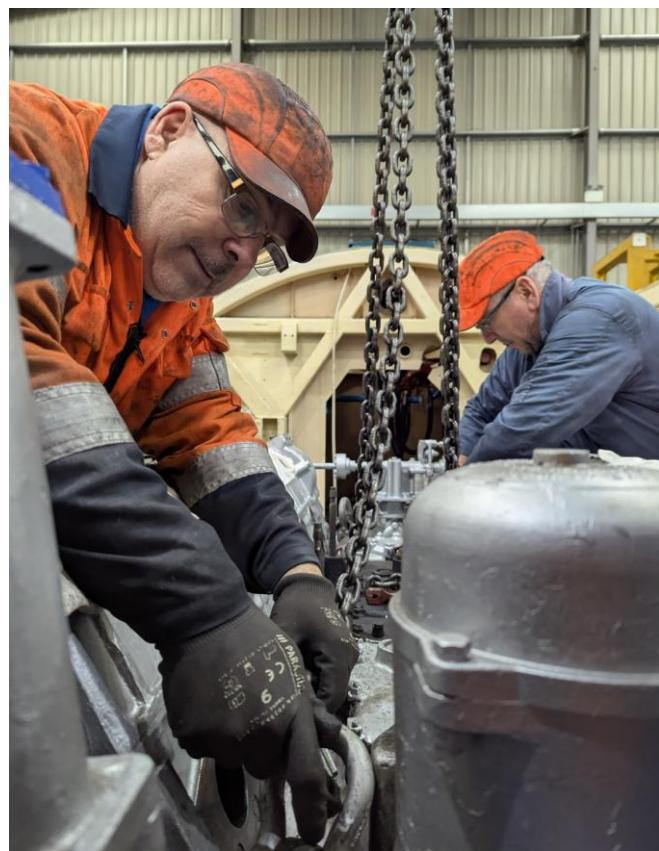


Friday 23rd January

Some fine tuning too place on Friday 23rd, ensuring the engine was perfectly positioned and secured. The engine was successfully lifted slightly and an errant bolt correctly located. The engine was then lowered and all bolts tightened down.

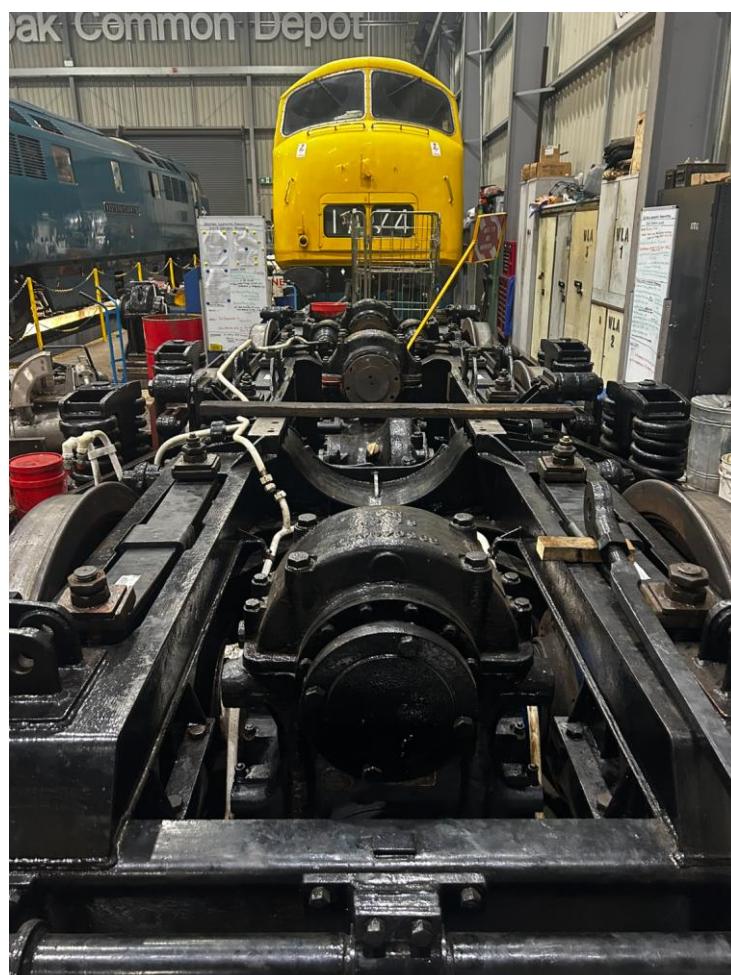
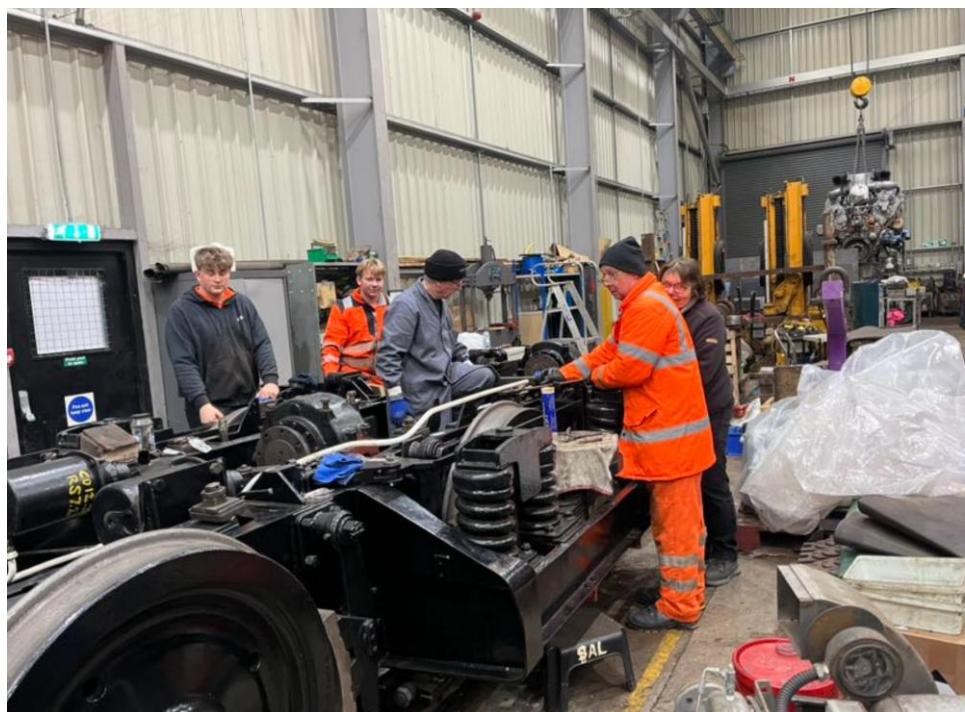


Just look at the concentration on the faces of Darren & Mark.

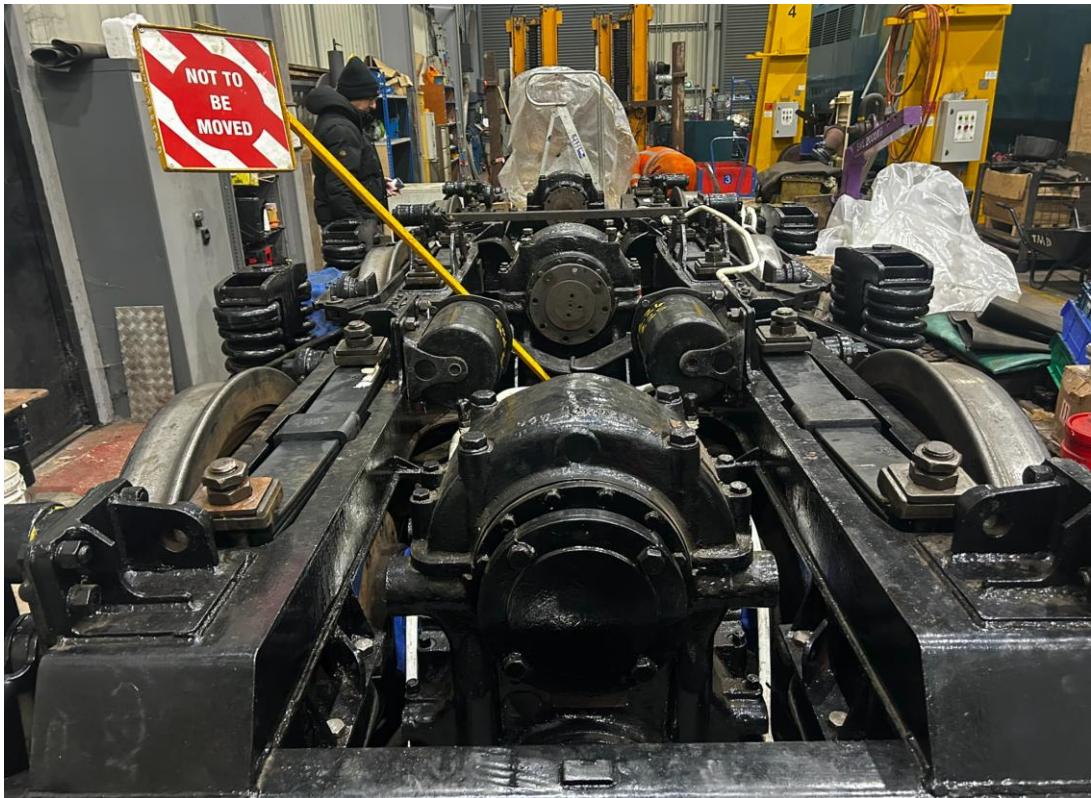


Saturday 24th January

Saturday 24th saw the “Spring Team” busy refitting the leaf springs to D1013’s “B” end bogie.



As can be clearly seen, the bogie will soon be ready to go back under the locomotive, with the refitting of the Intermediate Drive (and the Cardan Shafts at a later date) scheduled for early February, allowing us to then start on "A" end!



The Boiler Room window was also finally removed in its entirety ahead of the welding work being carried out on the corroded sill.



And a final view of that engine secure back in Ranger's engine bay and awaiting further attention.



Thursday 29th January

Some TLC for D1062 Western Courier at the end of the month with a start made on the refresh of the locomotive's cabs.



Our chairman busy at work with a paintbrush.



One other job identified that needs to be completed prior to the refitting of Ranger's "B" end bogie is to clean the threads of the lifting eyes, particularly the one on the second man's side.

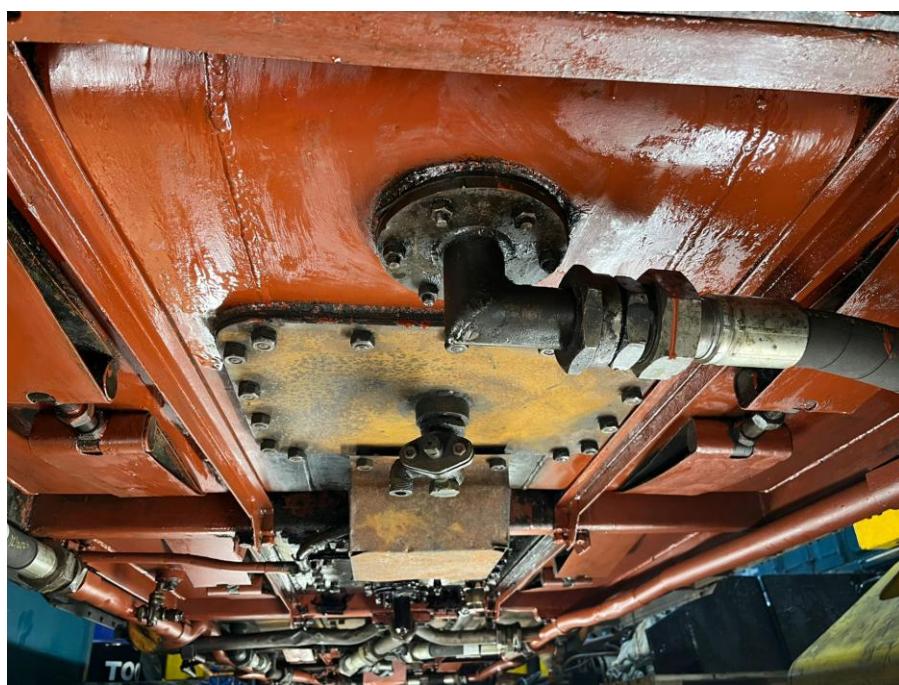


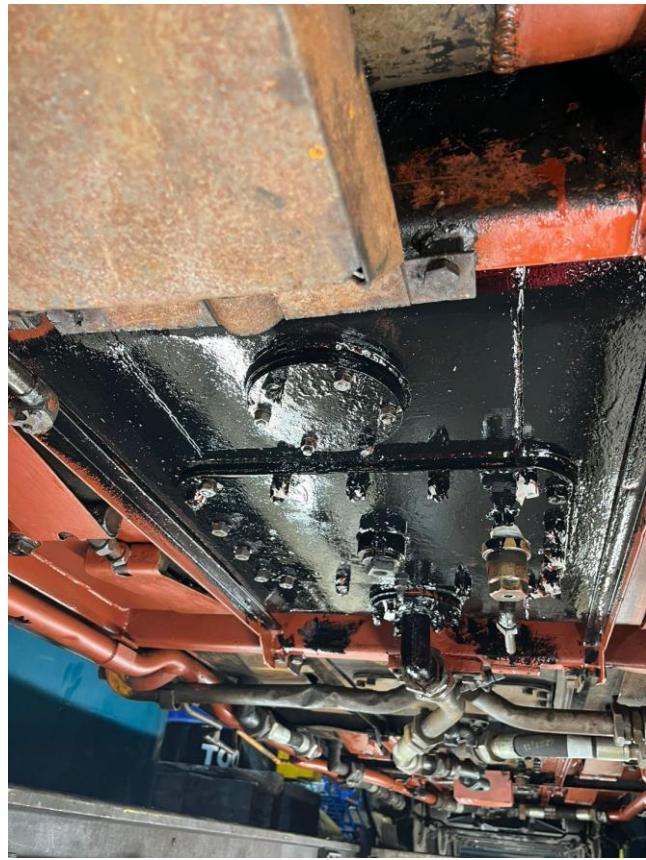
Alan was also busy refitting wind screen wiper motors – a tricky job but the first one complete!



Saturday 31st January

Back under D1013, further progress was made by Dave





At the Bridgnorth end of the line, another preheater has been overhauled and is ready for testing (when the weather improves and the team can get outside!)...



One of Ranger's engine room doors was prepared for painting by Richard...



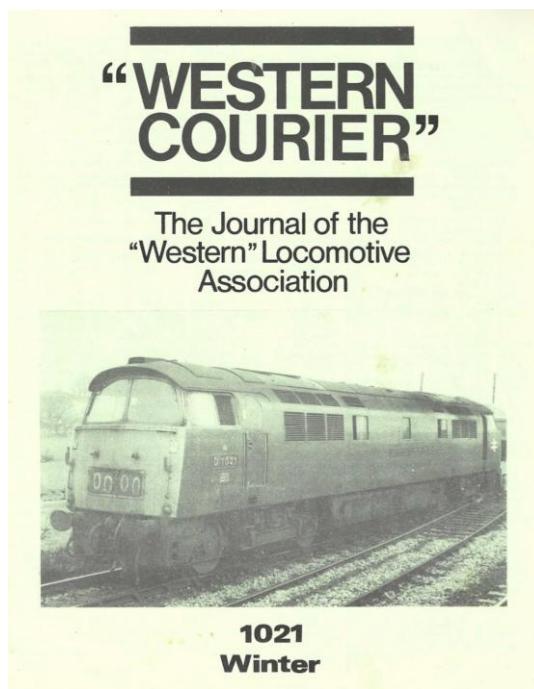
And two temperature sensor devices were made for the checking of flue and water temperatures when the preheaters are tested.



And to end the month on a high, back at Kidderminster, Coop has almost completed the assembly of new battery boxes for D1048 Western Lady, just awaiting a coat of paint.



Western Courier



Over the Alps (in Devon)

Tim Robertson

My first recollections of the attractive Barnstaple to Torrington branch started ten years ap in 1969 when I went to boarding school in Bideford. I became aware that just across Bideford's famous long bridge was a long-closed station. Having always loved Devon and its railways, I decided to make this a regular 'escape' on Sunday afternoons. At the time I had no idea whether trains still ran. Approaching the platforms. from a public footpath crossing I soon saw the glinting steel, betraying frequent passage of trains. But, on a Sunday — surely not ? Anyway, at the time school was the last place I wanted to be and I sat quietly on what was the site of the old waiting room on the up platform. Bideford once boasted a passing loop now the line is single throughout from Barnstaple to Torrington. It was about three hours later, and much wetter (it had started to drizzle) that I was convincing myself that the slow droning noise approaching from the Barnstaple direction was a helicopter. Well, I was wrong. Suddenly the nose of a North British Class 22 appeared from under the road overbridge. I was thrilled and the driver popped his horn and waved cheerfully at the rather bedraggled figure grinning gleefully on the platform. The loco ambled by – but with no train. How strange I thought. I wondered if the '22' was going to spend the night at Torrington shed ready for the milk next day. I stayed put getting wetter and wetter and was rewarded an hour or so 'later by the return of the '22' with a rake of clay trucks now hurrying by en route to the sidings at Exeter Riverside. The last wagon swayed out of sight and it was time to return to college. Anyway, I was determined that this would not be my last visit to the railway and it certainly was not.

My next excursion was to be to Instow station. Until early 1979 the gated level crossing, semaphore signals and London and South Western signal box were all fully operational. Now, alas, the signals and gates have gone and the box is closed although attempts are being made to preserve Devon's last working L.S.W.R. box. Back to the story. February 1969, another Sunday and as I arrived at Instow having walked along the road from Bideford, I

was happy to see smoke coming from the signal box chimney and the signalman in residence. I wondered how long I would have to wait for I had to return for evening meal and I was "out of bounds" anyway. An hour later and the little bespeckled figure in the box was suddenly on an ancient telephone enquiring as to the whereabouts of the freight. This happened twice then magically, a whirring and rattling and the equally ancient gates swung open. The wickets were locked by lever and the main gate teeth popped up to prevent the gates swinging back into the path of the oncoming train. The 'home' came off and a cheerful little figure emerged onto

the token exchange platform of the box. He gazed intently down into the gloom of the short tunnel which leads to the station — but nothing seemed to happen for minutes, then the familiar nose of a Class 22 appeared and ambled across the crossing drawing a rake of van fits and milk tanker wagons bound for Torrington. It was all over too soon and I had to go back. Those were the days when Sunday working was almost a certainty. Now it is one train Monday to Fridays — if that. I enlarge on this fact at the end of the article as you will see.

I made Instow a regular and forbidden Sunday afternoon outing. My "Out of bounds" remained a secret. However, I was once stopped by a police motorcyclist who thought I might be running away from school! Otherwise all went well. Once I was delighted to see two trains on a Sunday going to Torrington. One Warship hauled and the other a Class 22 as usual. Now both these locomotive types are extinct.

As the title suggests, the line is unusual and qualifies for the title of "Alps". In railway terminology, any branch that is twisting and tortuous, such as this one. The branch leaves Barnstaple's former Junction station and runs next to the river Torridge estuary before arriving at the closed Fremington station. Sidings here still occasionally sport a rake of scrap metal filled open wagons. The smell of the adjacent abattoir can be quite overpowering at times. Fremington had, until a year or so ago, signal box a good fifteen feet off the ground. The box itself was approached up a flight of stairs. As the line curves sharply at this point from both directions, it was necessary to give good views of all approaching trains. After closure in the mid-sixties to all passenger traffic and removal of signalling equipment, the box stood forlorn but the old lever frame and bare wires where block and telecommunications apparatus once stood remained intact. Only three months before it was demolished, the local permanent way trackman allowed me up (at my own risk naturally) the disintegrating steps and into the tall box. The wind whistled across the estuary through broken window panes, and alarming gaps in the flooring gave vertigo, making views to the ground below. The legend "I'm dead now" was daubed on the wall. I think it referred to the box and not an intrepid explorer.

The next station along the route is Instow. The line passes the long disused sidings serving the large power station at Yelland. What a waste of a readily available private siding for unloading coal traffic. Also the amphibious research station is passed. Its buildings cut across the line and protection is offered by a manually operated pair of metal gates. The line at this point is often covered by sand blown from nearby Instow dunes. Shortly after, the line turns and plunges into a short tunnel to emerge at the level crossing and former station, now owned and used by the local yachting club. Luckily, still intact, the station once sported a passing loop and sidings but alas they are but a memory of former importance. Before the station buildings were bought, I remember being very grateful to use the 'Gentlemen's'. The urinal still flushed regularly despite the fact the station had closed over ten years previously and was unused. I actually found a yellow roll of paper bearing the immortal words "Railway Executive Property". The waiting rooms were at that time in a reasonable state of preservation. It is worth mentioning that the up distant signal for Instow was over three quarters of a mile from the box. A jolly hard pull to clear this one I imagine. Now (August 1979) it is no longer, replaced by the standardised distant warning plate for an open level crossing.

Continuing, the line skirts the estuary of the River Torridge as far as Bideford. When the long bridge collapsed, in part, some years ago a shuttle service of trains was run from Barnstaple to help ease the severe transportation problems then existing. BR filmed the '50p' train sequence on this scenic section for the television advertising campaign to launch the Family Rail Card scheme. Just about the only Sunday traffic in recent years.

Just before the railway goes under the main road at Bideford, the site of the old goods siding complex is noted. A decaying hut is all that remains now and plans for the site include a housing complex. One siding ran along the quay enabling direct unloading and loading from ships anchored here. Bideford station has already been described so no further explanation is necessary except to say that on one photographic mission I arrived to find stones wedged between the rail joints and bricks and wood piled onto the rails by vandals. I hastily removed the stones and debris before a Class 25 clattered through at a good 25 m.p.h. The local ganger was most grateful and told me he too had found the work of criminally minded louts here.

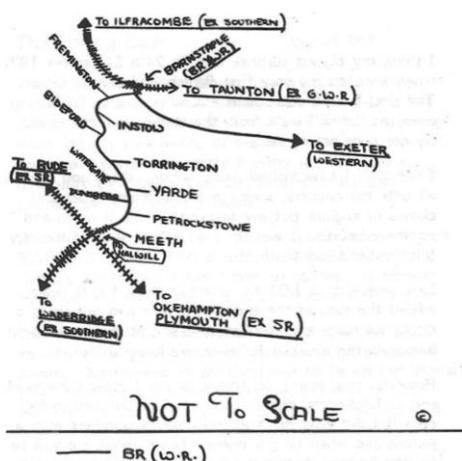
After leaving the station the line descends steeply and hugs the River Torridge before crossing the second of five iron bridges before the journey ends at Torrington. It is on this bridge that fishermen trespass regularly in the evenings to set up their tackle. However, the train took its revenge one Sunday when the Lea Valley Rail Club charter train, "Atlantic Coast Express" shattered their peace. A mad scramble by surprised anglers and luckily for them they lost only their rods and bait into the river.

Torrington station is reasonably well preserved with various sidings still in existence. Sadly, as this article is written, the purpose built I.C.I. fertilizer depot (next to the former milk loading dock), constructed less than five years ago is to cease despatching rail loaded goods. The palletised fertilizers will now revert to road transport, lumbering through the congested roads using up precious oil and adding to the displeasure maybe of some residents. Despite protests from myself, the local M.P. and British Railways, I.C.I. explained that they have been forced to revert to road transport for various reasons. Hopefully a loss of traffic will not endanger the lines future.

Although the branch line proper ends here, a twisting and scenically attractive mineral line continues onto the china clay works at Meeth. Still despatching an "acceptable" amount of clay traffic. The line itself is a real rarity and twists to and fro on its meandering route. A few charter specials have negotiated the extension to Meeth where gricers can detrain and splatter in the slurry that lies everywhere.

As the line leaves Torrington, it crosses the River Torridge yet again. The first station reached is Watergate Halt. Then on towards Yarde, Dunsbear, Petrockstowe and finally Meeth. The truncated line once extended on towards Halwill Junction. Now the end of the line is signified by a derailed tank wagon and a bungalow more or less blocking the course of the trackbed. It was estimated that before the line closed to passengers, the number travelling on a given week between Halwill and Torrington could be as few as six. It is strange to remember that the 'North Devon and Cornwall' line was not opened up until 1925 between Halwill and Torrington and is not shown on the pre-grouping maps. Now the line sees one train Mondays to Fridays (conditional) hauled usually by a class 25.

It would be unfair to finish without a mention of the vigorous efforts being made in North Devon to get the Barnstaple to Bideford section re-opened to passenger traffic. Let us all hope the plan is not thwarted by any further reduction in freight traffic or the usual reluctance of the monies to appear.



Sales Team Update

As I announced at the AGM, it is my intention to step down from the position of Sales Officer over the next eighteen months or so.

We have a fantastic Sales Team and talking to them it became obvious that the Sales Officer role should be broken down and I am pleased to say that two of the existing Sales Team have agreed to take on new jobs. Dave Hewell will become Sales Officer designate and take over as Sales Officer during 2027, standing for election at that year's AGM; & Paul Northcott will work with me initially to learn how the Online Store works and how we source merchandise and again take over this role during 2027.

I will not be disappearing by any means but starting to take more of a back seat after eight years during which time we have substantially increased sales and fundraising. I will continue to run the WLA Raffles and WLA Lottery and still be an active member of the Sales Team.

I am delighted that John Kite has also agreed to continue as our Calendar supremo, after all he has only done fifteen years so far!

Our other Sales Team members will still be very much involved and we are always on the lookout for more people to join us having fun and making money for our locos.

In the last newsletter I gave details of several new books coming this month - the second and third volumes of the "Paddington to Penzance" trilogy by Bernard Mills which are both due to be published in late January which is much earlier than I expected.

All three books are now available from the online store with a special offer for anyone buying all three, here are the details of the two new books:-

Paddington to Penzance during the Diesel Era follows the course of the Great Western Railway's main line from London Paddington to Penzance through a wonderful selection of colour images from the renowned railway photographer Bernard Mills. The images cover a period of more than 50 years and date back to the mid-1960s, with the primary focus being the diesel-hydraulic era of the 1970s.

The second book in the trilogy explores the GWR's route from Taunton to Plymouth. From Taunton, the line heads south to Exeter, before hugging the Exe estuary and running along Dawlish sea wall. The line turns inland to pass through Totnes and Ivybridge, before arriving into Plymouth.

The third book explores the GWR's Cornish Mail Line from Plymouth to Penzance. Leaving Plymouth, the line crosses Brunel's spectacular Royal Albert Bridge and enters Cornwall. Passing through pastoral farmland, the line reaches Cornwall's only city, Truro, before passing through former mining country to reach the coast at Penzance.

Both books are divided into three chapters, each covering part of the route - full details in the online store.

PADDINGTON TO PENZANCE DURING THE DIESEL ERA

PART 2 - TAUNTON TO PLYMOUTH



BERNARD MILLS

PLATFORM
5

Hot on the heels of our new "Three Loco Badges" introduced last month is a new badge featuring a single loco - head on in blue FYE. It has two butterfly clips which attach to two pins, rather than the more traditional long pin, and holds the badge very securely.



The Sales Team are starting to prepare for the 2026 season and would appreciate any ideas you might have for new merchandise, just email sales@westernlocomotives.com

As always we need more diesel books, especially hydraulics, models and ephemera to sell at events and would be very grateful for any donations you can make.

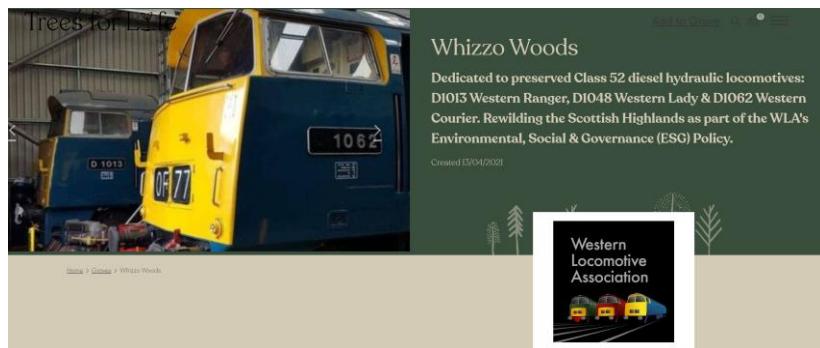
Best regards
Peter Bamber
Sales Officer

Whizzo Woods

At the end of January, we have **542 trees** in Whizzo Woods, another great increase over last month – but we still have a long way to go to achieve 1,000 trees. We are determined to get there and we will be even more “enterprising” this year with our initiatives!

Thank you all for your continued support for Whizzo Woods.

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/>

Membership News

Thank you to you all for your continued support. Please all remember to renew whenever you receive a reminder 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 persuades one other person to join, we will double our membership! So, step up to the challenge and help us to achieve our objective of doubling our membership.**

We are also always looking for new “Working Members” to come and help us with our work on the locomotives, and with all of the other essential associated work carried out both 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

See Sales Team Update

**PADDINGTON
TO PENZANCE
DURING THE
DIESEL ERA**

PART 3 - PLYMOUTH TO PENZANCE



BERNARD MILLS

PLATFORM
5

Media Coverage

Railways Illustrated – February 2026

NEWS | Heritage

Deltic engine runs for the first time in 44 years



55009 Alycidon receives PU430 at Barrow Hill on November 17. Once connected, it meant all three DPS Class 55s had both power units operational for the first time since 1997. Alex Stojanovic

THE DELTIC Preservation Society has returned a fully overhauled Napier 18-25 engine into 55009 *Alycidon* on November 17 and in doing so has achieved two major milestones.

First is PU430 has worked successfully for the first time in 44 years after £45,000 was spent on overhauling it. Just as important is all three DPS Class 55s – 55009, D9015 *Tulyar* and 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier*, are now back running on two engines, for the first time since 1997.

The DPS bought this engine along with four other spares in 1982, soon after the withdrawal of the Class 55s by BR and it has lain dormant until it was decided to reactivate it due to failures of other operational units fitted to three locos.

The engine required returning the phasing case to zero hours, where the huge gear wheels and bearings were overhauled by Compact Orbital Gears of Rhayader. It also had overhauled generators, 18 overhauled fuel pumps, 18 injectors and replacement of all the oil and coolant hoses.

The same work is being undertaken on the society's other 'low hours' power unit, PU423, which last ran in 1981 while fitted to 55007 *Pinza*. It failed with coolant loss on 55007's last BR working, the 08.07 York-King's Cross on December 30, 1981.

PU430 replaces PU451 which failed in 55009 during a visit to the Nene Valley Railway in 2024. Having been

fitted, the engine was successfully started on December 10.

Merritts Machinery Logistics was employed to undertake the lifting out and in of the 13-ton Napier units. PU451 will now be repaired by the engineering team led by Pete Stojanovic. The drive to the main generator has become disconnected.

With 2,633 running hours recorded, PU430 is one of the lowest hour units owned by the society. It was last operated in 55008 *The Green Howards* which ran in BR service until December 30, 1981 when it arrived in the capital on the previous night's 1E48, 21.20 Aberdeen-King's Cross 'Night Aberdonian' which it took over from Edinburgh.

The loco was due work the following day on the 14.03 King's Cross-York, but failed with flat batteries and instead it was condemned that day.

A GoFundme appeal is being run to help finance this power unit overhaul. If you are able to donate any sum, large or small, please follow the link below. Each and every £1 raised is very much appreciated and goes directly to the overhaul costs; <https://gofund.me/d8ee09371>

In other DPS news, 55019 is scheduled to have extensive maintenance at Barrow Hill, following its return from an extended stay on the Great Central Railway. D9015 is booked to be taken to the GCR in 2026 for running in tests.

Christmas comes early for WLA – but delivery is delayed!

THE WESTERN Locomotive Association revealed it has successfully bought two MTU 538 V12 engines – the more modern successor to the Maybach MD655 engines, two of which are fitted to each Class 52.

The WLA has D1062 *Western Courier*, which is operational, D1013 *Western Ranger* undergoing overhaul, and has recently acquired D1048 *Western Lady*, which has been assessed and found to be in far superior

condition than previously thought, vastly improving its chances of being restored in the fullness of time.

The 538 engines purchased are marine versions of the MD655 but more durable and better quality all round, so much more likely to last much longer. However, the WLA will only make use of the engines from the heads of the block down, in effect converting the engine to an MD655 specification with replacement

camshaft boxes, intercoolers and turbocharger – thereby keeping the same power output and, of course, the same Maybach sound!

The engines were purchased from Narayan Marine Tech in India, prepared and ready for shipping before Christmas, but it will understandably take a while for the engines to reach Kidderminster TMD, although they are expected to arrive early in the new year. They will then be placed into store.

The WLA already has one 538 engine in store, ready to be converted for the A-end of D1013 but adding these two 538 engines to add to its spares pool, which will ultimately end up in its locomotives, will help keep the Class 52s running for many more years to come.

Main line-registered D1015 *Western Champion*, owned by the Diesel Traction Group, already has a 538 engine it.

Rother Valley launches appeal for shed and staff facilities

The Rother Valley Railway Heritage Trust has launched a £350,000 appeal to complete its terminus for the line from Bodiam. Phase one of the development at Robertsbridge Junction is nearing completion: the £500,000 station building is externally complete and fitting-out is underway.

A Transport & Works Act Order to reopen the line from the Kent & East Sussex Railway's Bodiam terminus to the main line at Robertsbridge came into force in 2023. Sleepers and level crossing equipment are being stockpiled to

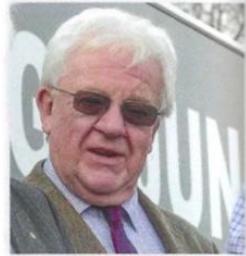
be laid on the missing two miles from Northbridge Street across the A21 bypass. Although parcels of land still need to be acquired, the trust aims to have the line open in 2028, in a fully-funded £6m project.

Phase two of the Robertsbridge development – for which the appeal has been launched – includes building a shed, fuelling points for locomotives, staff rest and washroom facilities, and public viewing areas.

Rother Valley Railway Chairman Mike Hart said: "The new facilities at Robertsbridge will not only

serve as the western operational hub of the extended railway but as a lasting legacy of what can be achieved through collective effort. Outstanding progress has been made, but we now need everyone's help to finish the job. These new facilities are crucial to ensuring Robertsbridge is ready to welcome its first passengers when the extended line opens in 2028."

The trust has launched four new packages for monthly donors: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Bronze costs £30 per month. See rvr.org.uk/fundraising



Mike Hart: facilities will be a "lasting legacy". Tony Streeter

'Western' future secured with replacement engines

Christmas came early for the Western Locomotive Association (WLA), but it'll take a while for the 'present' to be delivered...

The group has bought two MTU 538 V12 engines, the successor to the 65-year-old Maybach MD655 power units fitted in the WLA's three Severn Valley-based Class 52s, Nos. D1013 *Western Ranger* (under major overhaul) D1048 *Western Lady* (a future restoration) and D1062 *Western Courier* (operational).

The engines are a marine version of the MD655, but "more durable and better quality all round and so much more likely to last a lot longer", says WLA Chairman Roger Smith.

With each 'Western' having two power units, they are critical for the locomotives' long-term operational future. However, the WLA will only make use of the engine from the heads of the block downwards, converting the engine to MD655 specification with replacement cam boxes, intercoolers and turbo charger – thereby keeping the same power output and the classic Maybach noise.

Diesel Traction Group-owned and main line registered No. D1015 *Western Champion* was fitted with a pair of non-modified 538 engines in 2013 after its MD655s failed, providing a sound comparison.

Bought from Narayan Marine Tech in India, the WLA's engines are expected to reach Kidderminster Traction & Maintenance Depot in the New Year. They will initially be stored.

The WLA already has a '538' engine in store, ready

to be converted for the 'A' end of No. D1013. "These two '538s' added to our collection, will ultimately end up in our locomotives keeping the Maybach music alive for many more years to come", adds Mr Smith.



◀ Ready to be wrapped in protective enclosures, before shipping from India, the two secondhand MTU 538 engines that will 'keep the music alive' in the WLA's 'Westerns'. WLA



Keighley's winter blues

◀ Evoking memories of BR branches in the 1970s, the Keighley & Worth Valley-based Class 101 DMU made up of Nos. 5C1803 and M51189 was used on trains in the pre-Christmas period. The 'Met Cam' rolls downgrade between Haworth and Oakworth on 30 November, with the 13.55 from Oxenholme to Keighley. Andrew Rapacz

This is NOT the end of News!

Want to know more about what's happening in the world of preservation? Turn to our main line section *One-Zulu* on pages 50-55 – and our full *Running Lines* digest on pages 79-86.

Preserving... the p

In the final part of our 'green' trilogy, **Gary Essex** explains ways to make our lines more environmentally-friendly – and how we pay for them.

Previous articles in this series have looked at environmental issues on our railways, how weather patterns surrounding climate change are affecting our operations, and how our activities can partly be mitigated by the benefits we provide to society. Now we consider what railways can do to minimise our impact and provide improved natural habitats, as well as how we protect ourselves from extreme weather events.

The basic premise with environmental issues is to reduce our impact. That means using less resource and making sure the resources we do use are produced and transported in the most environmentally-sustainable way. More widely, it means ensuring our activities have minimal negative effects on the natural world.

In our consumerist economy we usually disregard the simplest action – using less – as this doesn't contribute to economic growth (the same growth that has caused many of the problems).

However, heritage lines are pretty good at reusing resources. After all, we restore items that many people would have scrapped years ago. Generally, we build our infrastructure for the long term, using traditional building methods combined with modern techniques.

Most railways are taking steps to improve their environmental impact, whether small (such as introducing recycling bins) or large (things like the North Yorkshire Moors or Vale of Rheidol bringing in oil-firing locomotives to reduce lineside fire risk and CO₂ emissions).

What should we do?

Yet how do we decide what we should do to lower our impact? As noted last issue, a good first step is devising and committing an environmental/sustainability policy. The Heritage Railway Association has guidance on its website, and produces briefings on issues from minimising smoke pollution to protecting habitats and watercourses.

“The Western Locomotive Association is the country's first diesel group to go carbon-neutral”

GARY ESSEX...

... is a writer and photographer specialising in railways and sustainable transport. Having previously been a volunteer at the GWSR, he now lives within earshot of, and volunteers at, the SVR (see www.randomrailways.com)



► **Carbon-neutral diesel-hydraulic!**
The Western Locomotive Association supports restoration of the Caledonian Forest, to offset its emissions. The group's No. D1062 *Western Courier* is at Arley on the Severn Valley Railway in 2023, the year that marked the 60th anniversary of the locomotive's completion at Crewe. *John Whitehouse*

Trackside – February 2026

net

► The 'Den' at Boston Lodge, built in the 1850s as a carpenters' shop and recently restored as part of wider works at the site. Railway preservation is characterised by the use of traditional building methods for the long term – but the Ffestiniog Railway's engineering headquarters are also now powered using solar energy.

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways



Western Locomotive Association acquire additional power units

The Western Locomotive Association has had an early Christmas present, having purchased two MTU 538V12 engines, which are the modern successor to the Maybach MD655 fitted in the 'Westerns'.

The engines acquired are a marine version of the MD655 but more durable and better quality all round and are likely to last a lot longer. However, the Association says it will only make use of part of the engines, specifically from the heads of the block down, in effect converting it to an MD655 specification with replacement cams boxes, intercoolers and turbo charger, thereby keeping the same

power output and the Maybach sound! The engines have been purchased from Narayan Marine Tech Pvt Ltd in India, and have been prepared ready for shipping before Christmas, although it will be into January, before they arrive at Kidderminster, where they will be placed into store.

A further 538 engine is already owned and in store, ready to be converted to go in the 'A' end of preserved No. D1013 Western Ranger, but with the additional acquisitions, the operational future for the WLA owned 'Western' fleet is secured for many years to come. The Association is also responsible for Nos. D1048 Western Lady and D1062 Western Courier.

PRESERVATION

David Russell

February 2027 return for Western Ranger?

WLA sets target for completion of 'Western' overhaul

THE Western Locomotive Association has announced its aim to return No. D1013 *Western Ranger* to traffic on February 26, 2027, exactly 50 years to the day since the locomotive took part in the 'Western Tribute' farewell tour with No. D1023 *Western Fusilier*. This was the final train operated by a 'Western' prior to the withdrawal of the last examples by British Rail, which also meant the end of Diesel Hydraulic locomotive operation on BR.

No. D1013 is currently being overhauled at Kidderminster on the Severn Valley Railway, and the

owning group felt it needed an 'aiming point' for the completion of the work.

The WLA says it is embracing the challenge, and to quote Chairman Roger Smith, "with 60 weeks to go, the pressure really is on!" It is more than 16 years since No. D1013 last ran; it was stopped for overhaul and a re-wire in October 2009, and work on the 'B' end bogie is nearing completion. Work to finish it includes fitting the equalising beams, new leaf springs, refitting the intermediate gearbox and the fitting of new drive shafts.

TWO MTU ENGINES ACQUIRED

In another development, the Western Locomotive Association has purchased a pair of MTU 538 V12 power units, which are the successor to the Maybach MD655 engines that were fitted to the 74 'Westerns'. The WLA already has one such engine in store, ready to be converted for the 'A' end of No. D1013, and these two additional power units will, in due course, be rebuilt to MD655 specification. The WLA will only make use of the engines from the heads of the block

down, in effect converting the engine to an MD655 specification with other components replaced. Similar work has already been carried out on an MTU 538 power unit fitted to the Diesel Traction Group's No. D1015 *Western Champion*.

The two engines have been bought from a shipping company in India, Narayan Marine Tech Pvt Ltd, at what has been described as a very favourable price. At the turn of the year, they were enroute to the UK on board container ship *Seaspan Oceania* in the Gulf of Oman. ☐

COACH NEWS

MK.1 FO RETURNS TO MAIN LINE

FORMERLY used in the Gloucestershire-Warwickshire Railway's 'Elegant Excursions' dining train, MK.1 FO No. 3091 is, after more than 30 years, back in main line service. Now part of the Locomotive Services fleet, it emerged from Arlington, Eastleigh on December 1 and was included in the formation of a private charter from Paddington seven days later.

HST PROTOTYPE PROGRESS

WORK to return HST TS No. 4235 – originally built as prototype car No. 42002 – to service is being undertaken by 125 Preservation at Arlington, Eastleigh. A retention toilet tank from a Class 442 has been fitted and new pipework put in place in advance of installation of a toilet and skirt sides.

MK.1 BCK MOVEMENTS

FOLLOWING attention at Carnforth and a subsequent move to Wishaw on November 20, Mk.1 BCK No. 21240 has been moved to the former Fencote station in Herefordshire for use as a holiday let.

Another Mk.1 BCK, No. 21268, has arrived at Midsomer Norton from the West Somerset Railway following its purchase by the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust. Its acquisition will enable BSO No. 9267 to be returned to the NYMR.

'Deltic' engine started for first time since 1981

RECENTLY fitted to No. 55009 *Alycidon* when it underwent a power unit swap, an engine which last ran in December 1981 was started for the first time in almost 44 years on December 10. The engine (power unit 430) last saw use in No. 55008 *The Green Howards*, and has, over the past two years, had £45,000 spent

on it to return it to action. It has received refurbished injectors, fuel pumps, hoses, and a "zero hours" phasing case overhaul, along with overhauled main and auxiliary generators.

It means that all three of the DPS Deltics now have two operational power units; a further engine, power unit 423 which came

out of No. 55007 *Pinza* and also last saw use in December 1981, is also being reactivated at Barrow Hill. Once this is complete, this will provide a spare operational power unit. Work is also to be carried out on the engine recently removed from No. 55009; this failed in May 2024, with the drive to the main generator becoming disconnected.

Brighton Belle to be tested at Derby

IN a change to the earlier proposal which would have seen the rebuilt Brighton Belle unit tested on the Merseyrail network, the four-coach set it to be moved to Alstom, Derby for trial on the mile-long test track which has third rail capability. Gauge clearance work to enable the set to be hauled from Locomotive Services' Crewe depot to Derby is being undertaken and it should move in the coming weeks. The change of plan comes as a result of the third rail testing line at Chester depot being presently decommissioned.

Another preserved EMU which has recently operated on Alstom's test track at Derby is the Class 507 Preservation Society's No. 507001. On December 8, it was used to carry invited guests of Alstom, as part of a celebration of the success of The Greatest Gathering event in August, at which the '507' was displayed.



Under the auspices of 'Twixmas' operations, the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) used its Class 107 DMU on December 28, running services from Ruddington Fields to the A60 Bridge by the Brush Works, Loughborough. The set, formed of DMCL No. SC52031 and DMBS No. SC52005, leaves Rushcliffe Halt the first train of the day, the 11.00 ex-Ruddington Heritage Centre. CHRIS MILNER

MULTIPLE UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

'101' LEAVES NYMR

PURCHASED by Retro Railtours boss James Palmer in late 2024, former North Yorkshire Moors Railway Class 101 DMSL No. 51511 was moved from Pickering to Railway Support Services' Wishaw yard for temporary storage during December in advance of it undergoing cosmetic restoration. Along with partner DMBS No. 50204, the set is planned to be

converted into camping coach-style accommodation and will eventually be located at a site by the East Coast Main Line.

'CALDER VALLEY' UNIT BACK IN TRAFFIC

DECEMBER saw the return to service of one vehicle from the three-car Class 110 set based at the East Lancashire Railway. DMCL No. 51842, which received

replacement vacuum cylinders and mechanical repairs during 2025, was paired with 'bubble' car No. 55001 and used on Bury to Heywood services over the festive period. The other driving car from the '110', DMBC No. 51813, also required new vacuum cylinders, and was lifted in November for this work and repairs to its bogies. The set has been out of traffic since 2021.



Like us on Facebook
facebook.com/
RailExpressMag



Follow us on X
@ralexpress

Severn Valley Railway News – Running Dates & Events

Something to look forward to....



[Home](#) / Spring Diesel Festival

Thursday 14 – Sunday 17 May

The annual Spring Diesel Festival returns – the biggest diesel event around!

What to expect at the Spring Diesel Festival? Our four day diesel festival will feature both guest and home-fleet locomotives operating a busy timetable between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth. If you love diesel, this is the place to be! Ride behind every locomotive, visit The Engine House at Highley to break your day, or sample the finest real-ales in our pubs, as you experience the Severn Valley at its loudest!

We'll be updating this page with more detailed information a bit closer to the date.



 Dates from 14-17 May

Prices:

Adult, from	£40.50
Child (4-17), from	£27.00
Small Family, from	£67.50
Large Family, from	£108.00
SVR Member, from	£27.00

[BUY TICKETS](#)

Important Information:

- One, two, three and four day rover tickets available.
- Tickets can be purchased in advance, saving 10%, or on the day from station Booking Offices.
- Day Rovers are the only ticket type available, short journey and single tickets are not available.
- Passengers can occupy 1st class seats without being charged a supplement.
- SVR Shareholder and working members passes – valid.

Member's Forum & Gallery

“Memories”

Thanks this month go to Andy Collett who has shared the following “memories with us – of Class 52 images from 13th January 1974 and a visit to Swindon, and also an image of my favourite locomotive from February 1974.

Andy also promises to share additional images on the coming months, so look out for Pioneer, Sentinel, Empress, Explorer, Crusader, Talisman, Marksman, Princess, Dominion, Cavalier, Viscount, Chieftain, Ambassador and Lady in future e-Newsletters.

Enjoy!

D1073 Western Bulwark seen on the Stabling Point at Swindon.



D1020 Western Hero in the Con Yard.



D1019 Western Challenger inside the Works.



D1018 Western Buccaneer outside of the works, with colleagues.



D1017 Western Warrior, again outside of the Works.



And D1019 Western Invader on the Stabling Point.



And now for the February 1974 capture of D1001 Western Pathfinder on the 24th of the month, on the Stabling Point and enjoying the sunshine.



And some more memories from Wilfred Rikard:-

"

I have been a long-time fan of our beloved Western Locos, and in one of your recent newsletters you asked if anyone wishes to share any memories.

I have a collection of memories taken since 1968, at various locations in the West Country, London and Birmingham and many more.

I have attached a very random selection. See what you think."

The first two were at an Open Day at Laura in October 1972 (the Western is of course the one with the yellow front !) and D1000 with a model D1000 in Desert Sand, on the window ledge.





The third was on board train with D1053 passing through Dawlish station 11th February 1974 with one of the notorious storms was in full rage. This was the last train of that day through to Paddington from Plymouth, which was a relief to me, as I was going to work at Reading West Junction yards in TOPS.



The fourth one of D1001 at Laira Junction for shed



The fifth one D1023 on show at Laira MPD at around 0300am prior to another Open Day. The lighting was not kind to its livery.



& for the last two months we have shared the below from Ian Marshall, read again as FURTHER update below has now been provided by our HISTORIAN – this time an apology:-

"I am currently sorting through my late father Brian's colour slide collection which includes a lot of railway subjects. For most of his working life, he was a relief signalman, initially in the Exeter area and then from 1966 in the Chichester area so was often "in the know" regarding any special or unusual workings and able to take shots both sides "of the fence."

I was aware from a friend who has now passed that a Western had worked to Brighton on a BR special in the seventies and have come across the attached slide in my father's collection. Unfortunately, no details of the working or locomotive are noted, just a date of June 1972. The shot is of the train eastbound passing Chichester "B" Box. I have always understood that the locomotive did not work the return train, instead being left in the siding between Platforms 2 and 3 at Brighton, the unconfirmed reason being given as lack of driver hours to cover the return working. I do not know how or when it did return home.

I have searched the internet for further information without success (including Six Bells Junction and Track Record Press / Western Research.)

Please could you publish the shot and enquire whether any member has any further details."

The initial response from our "Historian" – "Regards the special working to Brighton in 1972, I believe that the locomotive was D1073 Western Bulwark – there is a photograph of it at Brighton and the reason it didn't return was because it apparently failed and so remained at Brighton for the next few days."

"An update on the Western working to Brighton. It appears that I am not a very good historian & the locomotive is actually D1037 Western Empress."

Here is D1037 Western Empress seen at Brighton, and dated July 1972 – thanks to John Vaughan and ©www.railphotoprints.co.uk for this picture.



Closing Notes and Book Ends

A blast from the past this month.....

Thanks to Peter Wilcox for this memory of a youthful Peter refuelling D1062 from 1st April 1979 – also thanks to Peter Lindsey who allowed its initial sharing on social media.



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

<https://westernlocomotives.com/>

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

Registered Office: 5 Prospect Place, Millennium Way, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8HG, United Kingdom
The WLA is a registered charity – Number 1115058