Western Locomotive Association e-Newsletter – October 2026

The Western Memorial OBBO Tour Edition

On Thursday 10th September, after an 8-year gap, the last similar event having taken place in 2018, D1062 Western Courier was once again on OBBO duty at The Severn Valley Railway.

Hauling a single Great Western Railway Inspection Saloon, 23 lucky Western Locomotive Association members enjoyed nearly 100 miles of "1000" haulage, undertaking three return trips through the stunning scenery of The Severn Valley Railway, enjoying cab rides in both front and rear cabs, and a deluxe buffet lunch.

This year's Western Memorial OBBO Tour, with Western Memorial Headboard, was held to celebrate the lives of the late Greg Heathcliffe, Henry Coates and Chris Shields, who all made significant contributions to the Association through their work and legacies.

D1062 is seen below preparing for the day, reversing onto Observation Saloon 80969.



80969 was one of six 52-foot inspection saloons built at Swindon, ordered under FW Hawksworth's tenure as Great Western Railway CME. It entered service in January 1948 and as a departmental vehicle allocated to the Western Region it carried the number DW80969.

It later moved to the Scottish Region, where it ended service at Cowlairs, Glasgow in 1973.

80969 arrived on The Severn Valley Railway on 6th April 1973, having been privately purchased by a member of the Great Western (SVR) Association and was initially painted in BR all-blue livery and saw static use as the General Manager's office!

It received an overhaul in the summer of 1978 where the interior was stripped and re-varnished, while the plumbing and gas cooker were also overhauled. The exterior was repainted into Hawksworth era Chocolate and Cream livery and new carpets were fitted, with the overhaul being completed just in time for a return to service as an Observation Car at The Enthusiasts Weekend on 9th & 10th September 1978.

In March 2019 it was outshopped from Kidderminster Carraige Works after a light overhaul together with a repaint. 80969 continues in use today as an Observation Car, seating up to 23 people and is furnished with armchairs, settees and tables in the two saloons, which are separated by a corridor off which are found a toilet, small kitchen and guard's office. It is currently finished in GWR 1942-47 livery, with the coat of arms insignia flanked by 'GREAT' and 'WESTERN'.



Read on for full coverage of the day – it really was a day to remember and one we hope to repeat next year.



And of course, welcome to your October WLA e-Newsletter and your monthly update on all things WLA. As always a busy month to report, when isn't it so!

The other BIG news this month was the unexpected and sad news that our Chairman Roger Smirth has advised that he will be stepping down from the role for personal reasons. I have notified you all about this by separate email but please be assured, it is business as usual at the WLA and the process of selecting a new Chairman is already underway.

So, let's kick off with a picture submitted by one of our Woking Members of D1013 Western Ranger and D1062 Western Courier inside the TMD at Kidderminster, pictures like this always make me shiver a little and make me realise what a great job all the Working Members do. Read on full our usual Monthly News Update of progress that has been made.



Looking ahead (to tomorrow) and October brings us the Severn Valley Railway **Autumn Diesel Bash**, from Thursday 1st October to Sunday 4th October – this year featuring the SVR's home fleet of locomotives, and perhaps your last chance for hydraulic haulage in 2026.



So, it's also your last opportunity to be in with a chance to win some great prizes in **The Western Locomotive Association's Autumn Raffle – the draw will be taking place on Sunday 4th October at the Autumn Diesel Bash.**

For this year's WLA Autumn Raffle, we are offering some unique prizes.

First prize is a pair of Dapol 00-gauge Westerns - D1013 Western Ranger and D1023 Western Fusilier in the condition in which they double headed the Western Tribute Farewell Rail Tour on 26th February 1977.



As shown in the picture above, Ranger has its famous red plates and the Western Tribute headboard which is now owned by the WLA; and Fusilier has its domino head codes - fitted for its last few months in BR service.

Second prize is lovely diorama featuring a maroon SYP Western at a small country engine shed – pictures are shared later in the Sales Team Update.



Third prize is a superb A2 print, "Western Bufferstops" a pencil drawing of two Westerns at Kidderminster Town Station.

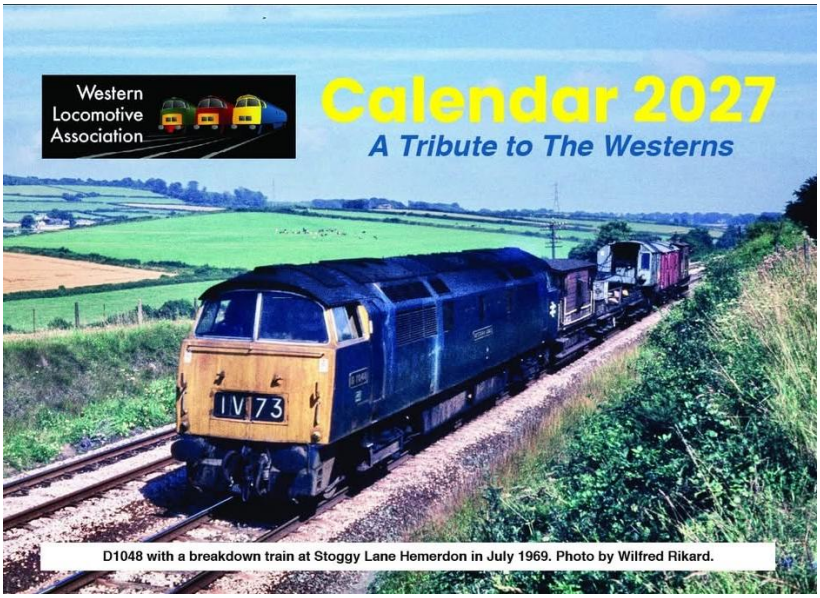
Purchase your tickets NOW online at www.westernlocomotives.com at Fundraising & Lottery - Western Locomotive Association **or come and see us on the WLA Sales Stand at The Autumn Diesel Bash.**

Also available now are our **2027 Western Locomotive Association Calendars**, which this year feature some of the great photographs that we have shared with your previously from Wilf Rickard.

To thank Wilf – we have sent him copies of the calendars, and he in turn has shared with us this fabulous picture of himself, taken in May 1969 at St Blazey Shed – looking a little younger and in his words, with slightly darker hair, in the company of D1023 Western Fusilier.



I advise you to order your calendars now as they sold out quickly last year, either by coming to see us at the **Autumn Diesel Bash**, or online at [Calendars - Western Locomotive Association]



This month, we start with a new batch of memories, this time from Chris Satchwill who has recently joined us as a Working Member and is spending as much time as he can at the TMD – he has some great memories, and so to whet your appetite, here is D1014 Western Leviathan, approaching Paddington 52 years ago in August 1974.



Also, this month, having shared the below image as part of our Presentation to The Wells Railway Fraternity (see Monthly News Update), I was delighted that some of the Working Members in the photograph were identified, although there are still some gaps to fill. So over to you all. The picture of course was taken at Swindon Works following the acquisition of D1062 in 1976, nearly 50 years ago, and seen below in 1977 before its departure to Devon.



From left to right, some of the names identified – Steve Parker, Dave Burrell, Geoff Cann, Tony Johns, Ian Gould, Goorge Russum, Richard Holdsworth, Rob Andrews & Graham Howell.

Whilst thinking of all those Working Members from 1976 / 1977 who made it possible for us to continue on with what we do today, I have to share the sad news of the recent passing of Steve Jackson following a long term illness which progressively worsened until Wednesday morning 23rd September.

Steve was a WLA member from 1975 and became a Committee member later that year as Publicity officer from 11th November 1975 to 5th November 1977 and then becoming the Editor of the 'Western Courier' house magazine from 5th November 1977 until 18th October 1980, introducing a new format and house style.

He was also our TTI (Travelling Ticket Inspector) on the 20th November 1976, when we ran the Western Talisman rail tour from Kings Cross to York and back, a job well done as some dozen or so persons boarded at Kings Cross, without tickets, the already fully booked tour!.

His knowledge of individual Westerns and his ability to solve many 'unidentified' photographs of them was well known and it will be sorely missed.

Thanks to Mike Norris for sharing this sad news.

And to end this month's Introduction…

The Missing Nameplates from D1013…!

Matt Lodge has kindly written in to us to say that he has a set of original nameplates off D1013 Western Ranger!

His dad purchased the name and number plates from Collectors Corner in May 1978 for £567 - who remembers them all placed up against the wall for £200 each or so!.

His dad kept his with the red background and apparently, Ranger was the one he wanted! His mum and dad went down to Collectors Corner to fetch them ending up with Matt's mum travelling in a taxi with the number plate whilst his dad travelled back by train with the nameplate with passengers having to jump over it! Eventually his dad took the items back home by car, all the way to Blackpool. The display still resides at his parents' home as it remains his dad's pride and joy and Matt doesn't want to leave holes in the wall!

So that's one original set accounted for – anyone know where the other one is?!



In this e-Newsletter

Features in this e-Newsletter include the following:

- News from The Chair – the final "News for The Chair" from Roger Smith
- D1013 Western Ranger & D1048 Western Lady – A Progress Update (as available)
- Monthly News Updates – an update on all that has been happening over the last month.
- Western Courier re-visited
- Sales Team Update.
- Whizzo Woods – including this month "Offsetting my Carbon Footprint" by Mark Simmons Jenkins
- Membership News – membership this month reached 655 members – read all about it.
- 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

As I expect you might have heard by now, regretfully, for personal reasons, I have had to stand down as Chairman as at the end of September, although Paul requested that I do these notes for one last time! Anyway, at least I have the opportunity to say a big thank you to everyone who's supported the WLA over the last few years - it's certainly been quite a journey, its as if we've been on notch 9 all the way! You might have seen elsewhere some of things we've achieved and for the record, I list some of them here again:

- Setting up our own VAT and purchase ordering systems, with substantial VAT repayments.
- Getting to grips with Gift Aid with some more substantial repayments!
- Launching a new website incorporating online membership and an e-Commerce shop.
- The setting up our Trees for Life carbon off-set plan, a first in diesel preservation.
- The continued development of our successful sales operation.
- Generating some fantastic publicity in railway magazines, including front-page coverage.
- Establishing and developing our much-appreciated monthly e-Newsletters.
- Continued development of our much-acclaimed Courier magazine.
- The development of our storage facilities at Kidderminster TMD.
- The bogie overhaul project with significant fundraising for D1013.
- The gift/acquisition of D1048 with successful fundraising towards its bodywork repairs.
- The recent purchase of two Maybach 538 engines.
- The amazing support to our cause through generous donations and legacy payments.
- The introduction of a new legal framework with an updated Memorandum & Articles of Association.
- Growing the membership numbers from 243 to 660 in just six years.
- A significant increase in the number of Working Members.

Not bad for an organisation run entirely by volunteers, and something of which I am extremely proud to have been a part. A big thanks to Paul who's had to take over from Vice Chair, pending any applicants for one of the best unpaid jobs in diesel preservation! Of course, you should all know Paul, not least because of his excellent publicity for the WLA, including of course these wonderful e-Newsletters!

Although it's a sad time for me to step down as Chairman, I'm sure that this now provides an opportunity to build upon what's been achieved, where they'll be new opportunities, fresh ideas and plans to make the WLA even better than before! In the meantime, I will be around for the forthcoming SVR Diesel Gala, and I will remain as a Working Member, so I'll still be helping out as best I can from time to time!

Finally, I would simply like to say thank you. It has been a genuine pleasure working with you all, and I am grateful for the support, friendship and opportunities I have enjoyed during my time with the WLA. I wish the WLA, the Board, Management Committee and all its members every success for the future.

Thank you — it has been a pleasure.

Roger



D1013 Western Ranger Progress Update

See Monthly News for updates from this month.

D1048 Western Lady Progress Update

See Monthly News for updates from this month.

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

We start with an update from the end of last month…

Saturday 29th August

Member Andrew Royle spent a day at the SVR, arriving early, and managed to get D1062 and D821 almost to himself in the morning sunshine and before the afternoon rain.





Also, following Richard Holdsworths visit to the TMD on Saturday, checking up on progress made on Ranger since his last visit, Richard shared the following thanks…

“It was absolutely great to meet again and be in the company of Ten-Thirteen. And I want to say again, what fantastic work you all do, and keeping us all informed especially with the e-newsletters that you send out every month! I do hope that we can come over again (from Australia) although I hope it is later next year that you get Ranger back on track rather than earlier. We want to be there!

Thanks Richard and hope to see you both again soon.



Wednesday 2nd September

Alan made a start replacing the windscreen wipers on D1013 – straight away finding out that the ferrel (ferrule – a metal ring or cap attached to the end of a tool to strengthen it and to prevent it from splitting) on the "B" end second man's side wiper was seized on the wiper spindle and is preventing the removal of the wiper motor." It has been left soaking in WD40, fingers crossed.

The drivers side motor was swapped for an overhauled motor, but again, there was only half a ferrel on the spindle so a replacement will need to be sourced.

The removed motor was taken away for overhaul.

Friday 4th September

Painting progresses on D1013's bogie with new Working Member Chris, overlooked by both our locomotives.

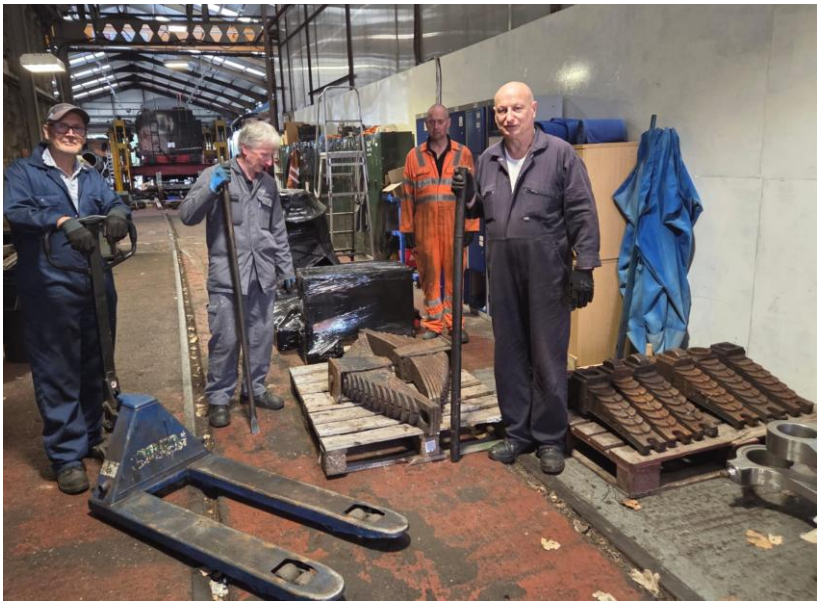


Saturday 5th September

Today's jobs – as D1062 is located on the side pit but is to be shunted off to allow the Class 50s to undergo an FTR examination – so a quick check on the oil levels in the final drives during this window of opportunity.

Also, with the OBBO taking place on Thursday 10th, all oil levels to be checked and topped up as required. All requests carried out by Alan BM although it wasn't possible to top up the coolant as the locomotive was positioned to far from the TMD air supply. Engines also barred over and batteries charged.

Present at Bridgnorth were Robin, Mark , Lyn, Paul M and Roger Fry – moving the springs from behind the spare bogie and paleting them ready for collection and delivery to Owens.





And a foot note from Alan BM, have you ever wondered what the insides of a wiper motor look like ?



Two more motors serviced and ready for installation in D1013.



Meanwhile, at The Bluebell Railway, the Sales Team is out and about fund raising – and a great success it was with well over £1,000 raised.

Paul N, Mark SJ, Pater B and Dave H seen ready and waiting to serve !



And in case you are in any doubt as to where on the Bluebell Railway – Horsted Keynes was the place to be! Paul N now on camera duty and you know who getting in on the photograph.



And if there was any doubt about being at The Bluebell Railway, Class 73 electro diesel E6040 was there to remind us.



Other locomotives viewed – a rather sad looking Class 33 but receiving some much-needed TLC.



And it was “nice” to see a different Class 50 – 50 026 Indomitable, but at least on the company of The Severn Valley Railways 33 108.



Tuesday 8th September

Time for the WLA to go out on Tour again and present “The Highs and Lows of Preserving, Maintaining and Operating ~~Two~~ / Three Western Class 52 Diesel Hydraulic Locomotives.

This time to the Wells Railway Fraternity in the main hall at Wells Town Hall – a splendid venue, with an excellent turn out of over 30 people.



Peter Bamber and the WLA's Historian John Kite in the audience, providing back up as required, and an attentive audience.





Thursday 10th September – The Western Memorial OBBO

To start , a quick look into the past – 8 years ago on 8th September – 2018! D1062 seen at Arley heading north.



Back to 2026 and D1062 is seen having just reversed on to the Observation Carraige at the start of what was to be a great day.



The Western Memorial Headboard looked splendid.



Lots of smiling faces as we are about to depart on the first of three return trips up the valley, and a Class 52 overseeing events. What a view.



Maybe the best seat in the house, well apart from the seat at the front of D1062, all participants having the opportunity to join the driver and second man in the cab.



The view from the other end is not too either, as the locomotive and carriage accelerate up Eardington Bank.



Runing around at Bridgnorth – side by side.



I love the slight curve of the track as the locomotive approaches the end of the platform.



And heads under the signal gantry, before returning to take the OBBO southbound.





A classic overview, of a BR Blue Western, being overlooked by the “Boys in Blue.”





Caught on the phone, no doubt processing sales orders !



A tour of the TMD and yard was enjoyed by all, and lots of happy people pleased to see the progress being made on Ranger.



This view still looks bit odd !



And for those of you with a keen eye, what is wrong with the parking at Kidderminster, observed on the walk back from the TMD Tour ?

(How do the cars in the middle row get out?)



A couple more from such a memorable day…



The CLASSIC view at Hampton Loade.



Current Company Secretary, past Chairman and two valued WLA members enjoying the day.



The “Team Shot” at Bridgnorth.



And to finish the pictures that I took on the day – we find Paul N and Greg M giving the tea a miss and opting for something more “hoppy”. Jack B also joining us on the last run of the day, having been second man in the cab for the first two runs.



A number of those who joined us have also submitted several photographs & feedback to share with you. Firstly, Steve Charles caught D1062 running round whilst we were all walking to the TMD for a Depot Tour, perfectly timed as the teddy bear departed on a north bound service.



Paul James wrote -

Please could you pass my thanks to all the team that contributed to a fantastic day yesterday. The effort you guys and girls put into to make it a success was incredible. It has to be one of the best train days I have ever been on including my Courier DFE back in 2019. I think more importantly we made some new friends, built lasting connections and these will continue as we meet up at future gala events.

Looking forward to being back up at SVR in the next three weeks for the autumn diesel event and of course watching D1013 on the line in 2027.

Other great captures ….







Mr Peter Squire did comment – “why did it rain on my turn!” It all adds to the atmosphere and memory was the response.





It really was a case of superb views all day.





And to end, a final few from our x Chairman Mr David Langley, his favourite being D1062 and the Stairway to Heaven.





Saturday 12th September

All oils and fluids were checked on D1062 following the successful 100 miles of running with the OBBO, ahead of the final "A" Exam and underframe inspection of the season scheduled to be carried out on Wednesday 16th, followed by brake tests on Thursday 17th.

Wednesday 16th September

A faulty windscreen wiper receiving some attention by Neil, helped by Bobby.



D1062 paired up with D1013 in the TMD. Oils checked and topped up by Greg M and Paul N.



The BIG celebration of the day – Sally was passed out as a shunter – CONGRATULATIONS to Sally.

Bobby busy preparing the boiler room roof panel from D1013 ahead of painting.



Saturday 19th September

Focus today was Boiler Room and Watchman roof panels from D1013 – preparation and painting, and some much-needed attention to D1013's bodyside and much required preparation work.

Of course, bogie scraping continued, more brake rigging was stripped for cleaning and painting and the removal of the final small air receiver, as well as cooler group pipework refitting – a lot going on.

Those in attendance included Bobby, Marty, Sally, Andy K, Mark and Graham, whilst at Bridgnorth Ian and Robn were focussing on the turbo project and air testing equipment.

Wednesday 23rd September

The drivers side wiper at "B" end now working again – a vide does show this better !



Greg M also shared the following of Neil busy scraping the brake hangers and Bobby priming the roof panels of D1013.





Mark Perry also called in and recorded the following activity whilst Bobby was working in the roof panels, Greg & Neil were scraping and Robin and Mark were completing the “A” exam on D1062.



Much needed attention to the bodyside on D1013.





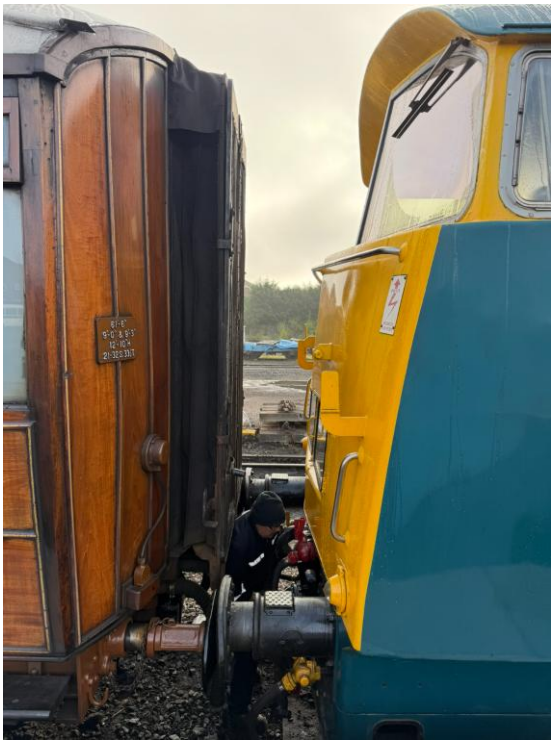


Friday 25th September

Our final Driver Foot Plate Experience of the year – so I few pictures to celebrate the last of a series of extremely successful days. We start with Darren & Mark seen preparing the locomotive for the day.



30 minutes later and D1062 is buffered up to the stock and ready to go.



Although a little overcast at the start of the day, a great time was had by all…



The mornings Drivers are seen waiting to receive their certificates…





The day is not just about the Drivers, who are allowed to bring guests with them and travel on the service – so it really can be a great family day out.



Awaiting the afternoon shift, Lead Driver Alan Berck May and Second Man Aeron are seen awaiting their guest Drivers.



Alan giving out certificates to the afternoon crew.



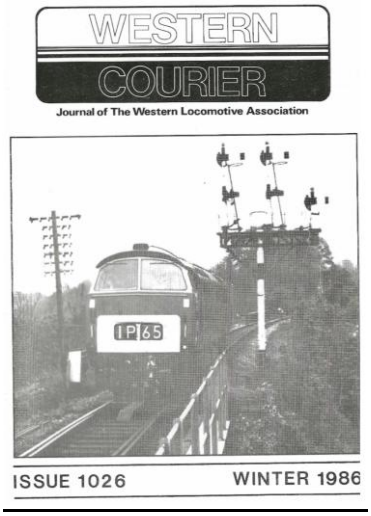
Saturday 26th September

Progress update to be reported on next month.

Wednesday 30th September

The main event – the distribution of your October e-Newsletter.

Western Courier



D1062's visit to Landore Open Day – Part 1

By Tony Wilmore

D1062 Western Courier has not exactly made a habit of venturing out onto the metals of the other railway, you know, the one on the other side of the fence at Kidderminster. The last time was in May 1980 when it left the Severn Valley Railway for a journey to Rainhill and the Liverpool & Manchester Railway celebration. On that occasion there had been plenty of advance notice before the event, plenty of time to get the locomotive ready and the support crew organised. With D1062 returned safely to the Valley, it promptly blew-up an engine in 1982 and didn't run for what seemed like ages and people that was the end of Western Courier, it would never run again, but it did!

During the spring of 1984 I received a letter from the British Railways Board requesting that D1062 be made ready for a month-long exhibition at Swindon Works in April 1985. As you know, this never happened. So, no main-line trip for D1062 this year, or so we thought.

Then, on 8th September I received a request for D1062 to be exhibited at the Old Oak Common Diesel Depot Open Day to be held during the following weekend. By Tuesday, however, plans had changed and D1062 was no longer required as D1015 Western Champion was to perform the honours. Even though D1062 was not going to London, British Rail arranged to visit Bridgnorth on Friday 13th September and inspect D1062 and to carry out an ultra-sonic axle test. This was done and the locomotive was passed fit to travel.

During the following weekend it transpired that D1062 had been requested for the Open Day at Landore Diesel Depot, but we didn't really believe that it would happen, bearing in mind the Old Oak Common request the previous weekend.

On Tuesday I received a phone call from Alun Rees, SVR Chief Engineer, and he told me that D1062 was definitely going to Landore, being steam hauled by 6960 Raveningham Hall and due to leave Bridgnorth on Thursday 19th. A lunch-time departure from Kidderminster would take us to Hereford for a stop-over of several hours, followed by an overnight jaunt to Neath for an exhibition there before carrying on to Swansea. A whole host of frantic phone calls arranged a support crew for both the outward and return journeys, and the many and varied preparations were put in hand. The locomotive had been well greased in readiness for the Old Oak Common trip so there were no problems there, but it was filthy. Nothing for it but to give it a wash before we left, so the outward support crew (Julian Ogle, Robert Andrews, Robin Jones and myself) met at Bridgnorth VERY early on Thursday morning and set to work, the job being completed by 10.00am. In addition, a comprehensive supply of oils and lubricants were loaded aboard along with a few spares that might come in useful. All stored in the vacant boiler room with our sleeping bags and the like.

Just before our planned 12.00 departure from Bridgnorth, BR announced a change of plan! If D1062 was to be steam hauled, it would either have to travel unbraked or have an engine running at all times as the steam locomotive could not work D1062's air brakes directly. Somebody in the upper echelons of BR had found out about this and it was promptly ruled out, so we were to be diesel hauled from Kidderminster to Swansea. We left Bridgnorth with 6960 propelling D1062 (one engine running to supply air for the brakes being worked via the vacuum system by 6960) and had an uneventful trip to Kidderminster where 6960 left us, crossed over onto BR and disappeared towards Worcester. And there we sat, until about an hour later a later and a whistling sound was heard and 20 041 and 20 082 appeared. They crossed over onto SVR metals, backed down onto the run-round loop where D1062 was waiting and hooked on. A brake test showed that all was well, so the whole ensemble reversed out onto BR in pouring rain and we were off towards Worcester at the regulation 45 mph.

What struck all of us immediately was the superb smooth ride that D1062 gave us on welded rail, the first time any of us had experienced it. A quick check around inside, the first of very many, showed that all was apparently well.

The sun came out as we approached Worcester and we slowed down as we approached the tunnel where D1055 Western Advocate came to grief. With the Choppers whistling well, D1062 passed through without incident. A solitary train spotter on Worcester station couldn't believe what he was seeing but wrote all the numbers down anyway! Onwards through Cheltenham to Gloucester where we were looped at Horton Road Junction. The 20s were detached and disappeared towards Birmingham and 47 131 was attached to take us forward. This particularly fine machine with wonderful flats on one axle strummed us through Gloucester Station (rare track : centre road) and along the banks of the River Severn, familiar territory perhaps?

Forty-five miles per hour is the sort of speed I like, slow enough to admire the scenery and fast enough to actually get somewhere in reasonable time. We kept 45 mph all the way through Chepstow, Newport (centre road), Cardiff (centre road), Bridgend, past Margam Yard and we eventually came to a halt on the station avoiding line at Port Talbot where we sat for 15 minutes or so to let an HST enter the double track section to Swansea ahead of us. As we approached the viaduct at Swansea we slowed down and got the "feather" for Landore Depot. Onto the fuelling point, we had arrived, the first Class 52 at Landore for eight years, The 47 hooked off and a group of admirers gathered in the fading light. "Does it go?" they asked. "Of course it does" we replied, so we started "B" engine and the depot driver drove it from the fuelling point to the main servicing shed.

The timings for the outward journey were as follows :-

Bridgnorth			Depart 12.20	Propelled by 6960
Kidderminster Town	Arrive	13.18	Depart 14.28	Locomotives 20 041 + 20 082
Kidderminster Junction	Arrive	14.29	Depart 14.34	
Droitwich	Pass	14.50		
Worcester	Pass	14.59		
Norton Junction	Pass	15.03		
Cheltenham	Pass	15.34		
Gloucester Horton Rd	Arrive	15.44	Depart 16.00	Locomotive 47 131
Gloucester	Passs	16.02		
Lydney	Pass	16.28		
Chepstow	Pass	16.39		
Caldicot	Pass	16.49		
Severn Tunnel Junc.	Pass	16.50		
Newport	Pass	17.07		
Cardiff	Pass	17.29		
Bridgend	Pass	17.56		
Port Talbot	Arrive	18.14	Depart 18.31	
Landore TMD	Arrive	18.53		

To be continued….

Sales Team Update

Well, 1st October is the first day of the SVR Autumn Diesel Gala and by coincidence the day that you will receive this newsletter (or maybe even one day early!).

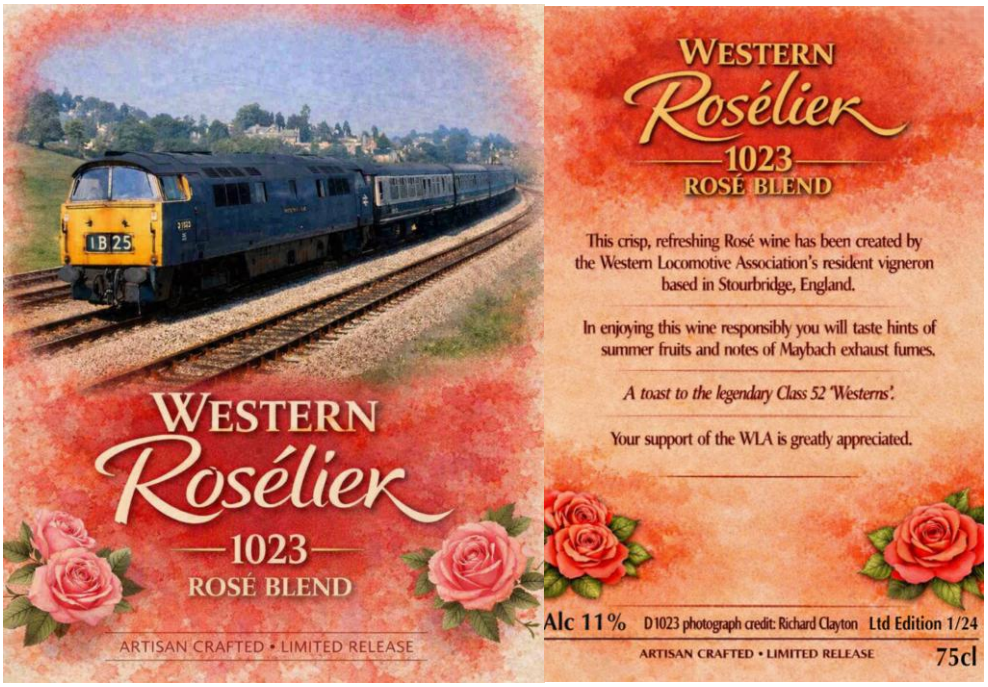
We are launching a range of Tribute merchandise in recognition of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the WESTERN TRIBUTE Railtour which ran on 26th February 1977. We of course must have a celebratory Tribute Badge as pictured and to give you a taster of what also will be on offer, additional pictures include a bar runner and a t-shirt . There will also be a mug and coaster, a pint glass, a whisky glass, and many other items. Don't worry if you can't make it to this Gala as we will have all of these items at the Spring 2027 Gala and many of them are already available from the online store - [Shop - Western Locomotive Association]





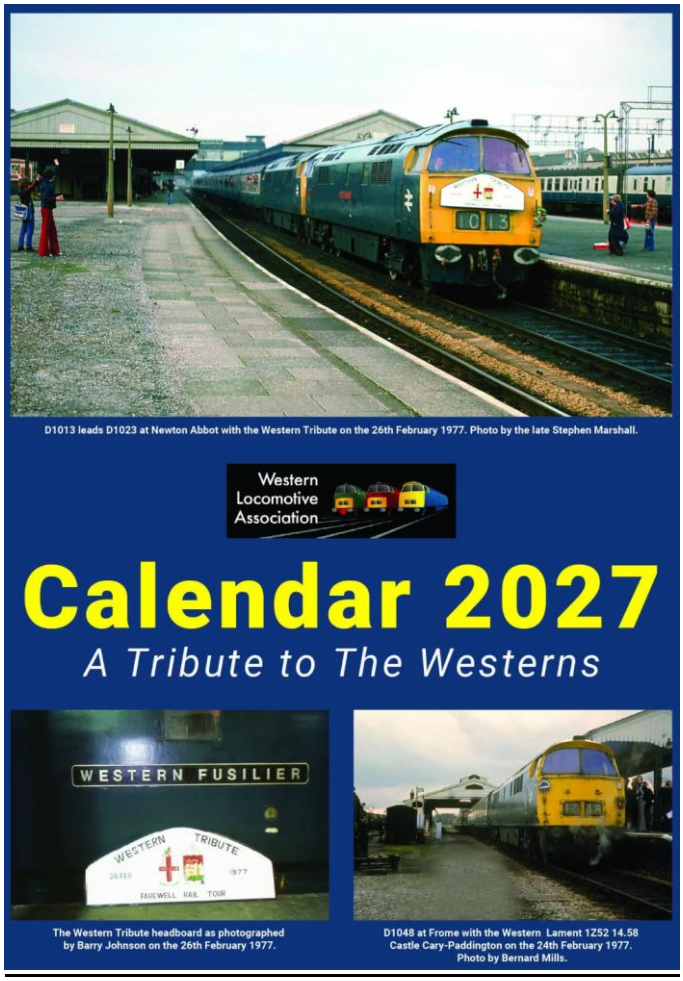


Our venture into alcoholic beverages went well with our Western Mayblanc white wine being very well received earlier this year so we are going to develop the theme further. The great thing about consumable merchandise is that once you've drunk it, you just must have another! Our resident vigneron, Greg Mullis has produced “Western Rosalier” which will be on sale at the Gala along with “Western Tribute” which is a bottled Pale Ale from Bewdley Brewery and just the thing to test drive your new Tribute pint glass. As you would expect, our stand has a Temporary Event Notice licence from Wyre Forest District Council to avoid the Sales Officer being locked up.





John Kite has again excelled himself with the 2027 calendars which I think are his best ever after no less than sixteen years. The theme is “A Tribute to the Westerns” and with the support of well-known photographers, John has produced two crackers which will be available at the Gala as well as from the online store.





You already know that I will not be standing for re-election as Sales Officer at the AGM in November. After eight years of successful growth supported by a great team I am ready to hand over to Dave Hewell, who will be standing for election at the AGM, ably assisted by Paul Northcott who will take charge of merchandise and the online store. I will continue to be a member of the Sales Team and will look after raffles and events.

Talking of raffles, I want to ask for your help in deciding what we should do about raffles and lotteries going forwards. The table below gives details of ticket sales over my time as Sales Officer and gives some food for thought. The prizes do have an effect on ticket sales and the suggestion from a member to offer cash prizes in Spring 2021 has been very successful. Unsurprisingly the Masterpiece Models O gauge model offered as first prize in Autumn 2022 resulted in the highest ticket sales and the highest ticket sales in any year. So, I would like your feedback on what would be attractive prizes to offer going forwards? I appreciate that we are living through difficult times and that disposable incomes are reduced. Should we go for a different format, for example the online raffle a few months ago for the limited edition 00-gauge Dapol model of Courier in maroon SYP was very successful with negligible costs.

I would really appreciate your comments and suggestions to help us work out the best way forwards.

Year	**Detail**		**Ticket Sales**
2019	Spring	DFE/FR	£2,827
	Autumn	D1013 numberplate	£1,995
			£4,822
2020	Spring	DFE/FR	£4,435
	Autumn	D1017 numberplate	£2,570
			£7,005
2021	Spring	Cash	£3,810
	Autumn	D1053 set	£4,030
			£7,840
2022	Spring	Cash	£3,275
	Autumn	Masterpiece D1013	£5,100
			£8,375
2023	Spring	Cash	£2,315
	Autumn	Queen set	£4,140
			£6,455
2024	Spring	Cash	£3,285
	Autumn	Bufferstop Wizzos	£3,540
			£6,825
2025	Spring	Cash	£2,917
	Autumn	DFE	£3,245
			£6,162
2026	Spring	Cash	£2,355
	Online Courier		£908
	Autumn	Tribute - estimate	£2,000
			£5,263

Whizzo Woods

At the end of January, we have **632 trees** in Whizzo Woods, an increase of 23 trees 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/



Offsetting my Carbon Footprint

By Mark Simmons Jenkins

As not only a member of The Green Party, but also a District Councillor for The Green Party in Mid Devon, I thought it was time to offset my carbon footprint on my days out at heritage railways, and for other journeys such as holidays, especially those where I was flying.

As The Western Locomotive Association allows you to buy a tree for "Wizzo Woods" for just £6 to offset their carbon footprint (as running a Class 52 Western diesel locomotive burns 1 gallon of diesel per every mile), I decided a little over a year ago that I would buy a tree for Wizzo Woods every time I rode the trains at not only The Severn Valley Railway, but also at any other heritage railway. As part of the WLA Sales Team, taking our sales stand increasingly to other venues, I have visited many heritage railways and of course have ridden many trains over the past 18 months or so, as well as helping raise valuable funds for The WLA to keep our loco's running, and to offset the cost of Rangers ongoing overhaul.

So, each day I have ridden the trains, I have purchased from our website a tree for Wizzo Woods to offset my carbon footprint. I have also purchased trees for any trips I have done abroad via flying , and also a tree for any trip I have done whilst on holiday, such as coach or boat trips.

Although I have now decided not to fly any more, I am still going abroad, I'm off to Italy in October, but via train. I am doing a Rail Tour of Tuscany, Florence and Pisa. Although I have lowered my carbon footprint by not flying, I will continue to purchase a tree for Wizzo Woods for each journey undertaken, whether that be by train in the UK or Europe.

If you think this is a good idea, why not join me in doing the same and offset your carbon footprint every time you do a diesel or steam gala - purchase a tree from our website at just £6, for every day you travel, or if funds are tight, buy just the one for every weekend. Also let your family and friends know about this scheme, you never know, you may persuade them to purchase a tree or two as well, and let's get Wizzo Woods up to a thousand trees ahead of schedule.

A Tree in Whizzo Woods!

Since 2021, the WLA has taken the initiative to become the first diesel preservation group to become carbon neutral with a "Corporate Grove" at Trees for Life, supporting wild forest revitalisation in the Highlands of Scotland.

Forming an important part of the WLA's Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Policy, the objective is to plant a sufficient number of trees to cover our carbon footprint, which has been achieved every year, since the scheme began.

At the time of writing, we now have 616 trees in Wizzo Woods, wouldn't it be great to not only hit the sales team target of 650 by the end of 2026, but to smash it, so buy a tree to offset your carbon footprint, let's fill Wizzo Woods.

Membership News

Membership at the start of this month reached **655 members** although this has now increased further to our 2026 target of 660 – see below !

However, even 655 is a fantastic number as back in 2020, membership stood at just 243 members, so our growth has been quite spectacular or +170% in 6 years!

Of course, the number 655 is associated by many with the Bristol Siddeley Maybach MD655 engine made under license for the "Westerns", an example seen here at Swindon Works on test, almost 52 years ago.



WLA Hits Target with 660 Members! (Reported on 9th September)

The Western Locomotive Association is proud to announce that it has reached its membership target of 660 members for 2026 — and it is only 9th September!

Increasing membership has been an essential part of the WLA's strategy over the past six years.

Back in 2020, membership had dwindled to just 243. Today, that figure has risen dramatically — a fantastic achievement and a testament to the continued support for the WLA and its work.

As part of this strategy, the WLA introduced a more flexible approach to membership alongside the traditional methods of payment by either standing order and cheque. Over the last few years members have been able to join online through the WLA website, with memberships automatically renewed (if desired) using credit card payments via Stripe.

The WLA has also introduced Gift Membership, allowing members to purchase a membership for a friend or family member as a special present.

And, in an effort to encourage more younger members to get involved, Junior Membership is available for just £1.00 for anyone under the age of 18.

Growing the membership is vital to the future success of the WLA. As well as generating valuable subscription income, a larger membership provides greater opportunities for shop purchases, donations, Gift Aid and, importantly, hands-on help from an increasing number of working members.

And there's no time to relax! According to the WLA Business Plan, the membership target for 2027 is 700 members.

That's particularly significant as 2027 marks 50 years since the last Westerns were in British Rail service — so there's plenty to look forward to and plenty of reasons to be part of the WLA!

If you know someone who you think would like to become a WLA member, please share this address with them:

https://westernlocomotives.com/membership-account/membership-levels/

Thank you for your continued support — and here's to reaching 700!

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 renew your membership in three ways:

- Payment by Credit Card (via Stripe) from our website – www.westernlocomotives.com
- Re-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

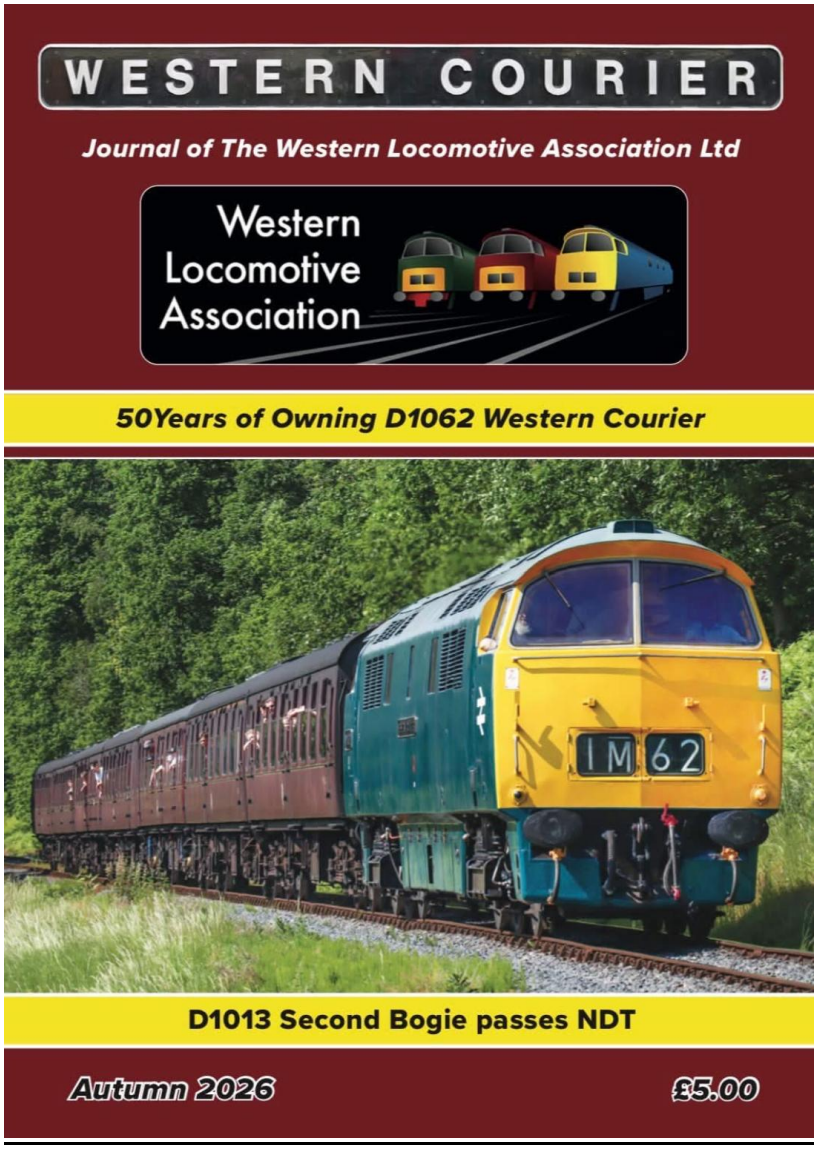
One of your objectives is to continue to grow our membership, so please continue to talk to your friends and colleagues and tell them all about the WLA and what we do and see if they are interested in joining, they will be made very welcome.

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/ or contact me at wp.finch@icloud.com

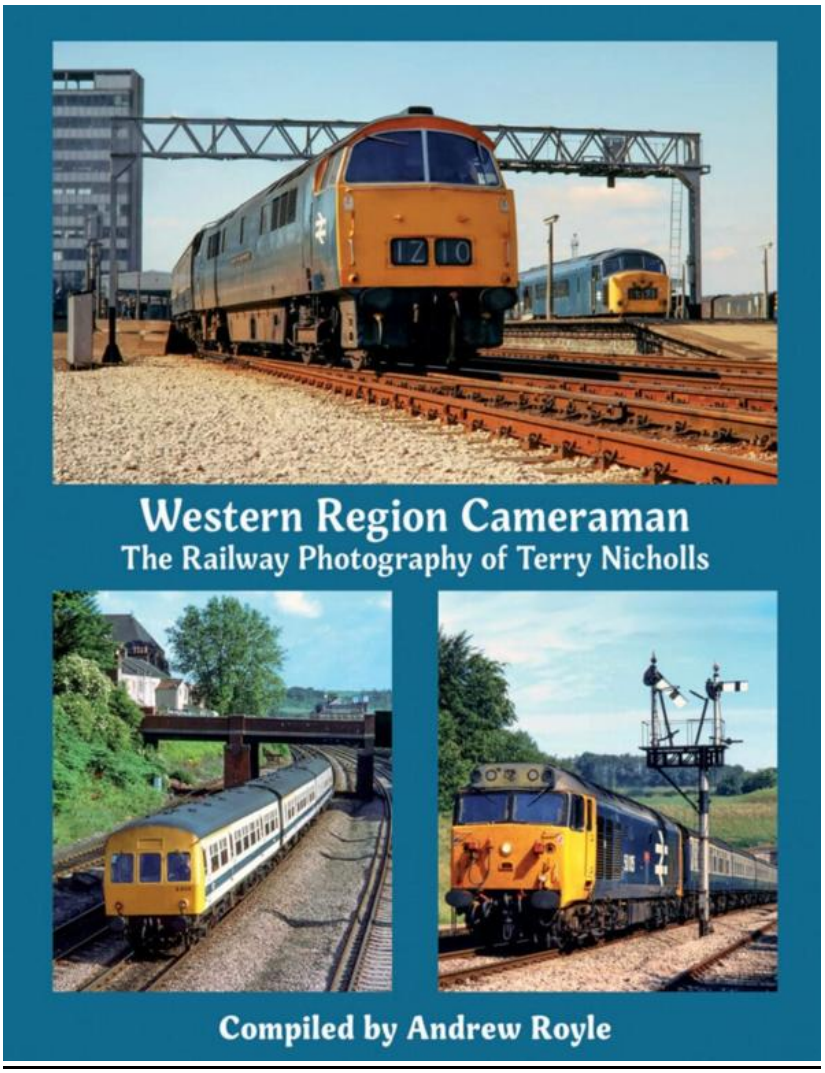
Book of the Month

The Autumn 2026 issue of Western Courier Magazine has been sent out this month to all of our members – hopefully you have all received your copy by now.

Additional copies will be available on the Sales Stand at The Autumn Diesel Bash and from our website.



And for a second month, as it really is too good to miss…



Following the end of steam on British Rail, most railway photographers found their activities restricted to stations and viewpoints outside the railway boundary. However, those who were within the railway's employ could get around this difficulty and Terry Nicholls was one of them. Working in the control function in the Bristol area also meant that he enjoyed inside information about special workings. Some of the results of that can be seen within this book, covering as it does the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s when blue was very much the colour but variety in motive power could still be found across the Western Region.

Available from our on-line store @ [Western Region Cameraman, the Railway Photography of Terry Nicholls - Western Locomotive Association]

Media Coverage

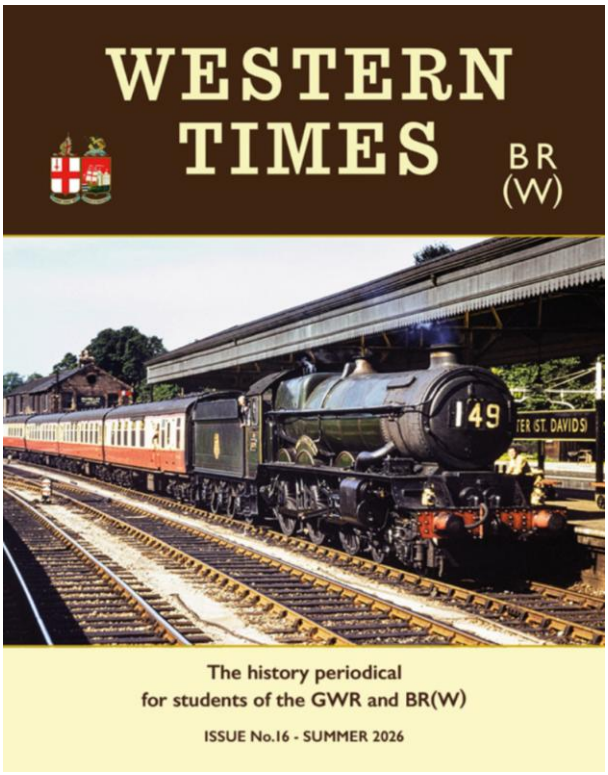
Railways Illustrated – October 2026

A front cover spread !



Western Times – Issue Number 16, Summer 2026

Our lead article in this issue details the rescue for preservation of a locomotive directly from Swindon, in this case iconic diesel-hydraulic No. D1062 Western Courier, by WLA Member Andrew Royle.





SAVING A WESTERN

ANDREW ROYLE

Cast your mind back to the year 1976, alarmingly now half a century ago. It is perhaps the year most widely remembered as having one of the warmest and driest summers in living memory, though it was also, of course the last full year of diesel hydraulic operation on British Rail. Up until that time, the notion of railway enthusiasm largely meant 'steam locomotives' to the general public, but I would suggest that this was the time in which an interest in diesels (and later electrics) also came to the fore.

The phasing out of the hydraulics had been going on for several years but it was not until the first 'Westerns' were withdrawn (in 1973) that many woke up to what was being lost; the older generation were still mourning the end of steam but now the same thing was starting to happen with certain diesels. It became clear that many younger enthusiasts were not just going to follow the Westerns' final operations in earnest (which they were doing increasingly throughout 1976), they were also determined that at least one locomotive should be kept for posterity. The National Railway Museum had made indications that they would take a Class 52 but nobody wanted to rely on that actually happening – memories of past lost opportunities persisted, the LMS-built No. 10000 in particular. A museum-kept Western might not be a working one either, and it seemed this prospect would not be good enough for most who admired these distinctive locomotives.

British Rail had issued several 'final' dates for Western operations, only for events to ensure these were rolled back again, but it became clear that after the summer timetable there was every chance that the last withdrawals might come before the end of 1976. That the remaining locos endured into early 1977 surprised no-one! BR though, did seem to have the knack of withdrawing useful motive power just prior to an upturn in business.



Above: Destined to become the chosen one. No.D1062 *Western Courier* entering the twilight of its British Rail service life, is captured hauling the 1E21 10.25am Penzance-Bradford at St Austell on Saturday 11 May 1974. ***Bernard Mills.***



Above: It was thought that one of the last locomotives in regular service would be an obvious candidate for preservation, but this was initially not the case. Here No. D1015 *Western Champion* stands at Swindon Works on Sunday 26 June 1977. ***Bernard Mills.***

The Western Locomotive Association (WLA) had been formed in 1974 to secure a working example for preservation and it was during 1976 that their efforts were coming to a fruition. Interest from the enthusiast fraternity served the WLA well in their fund-raising activities. A target figure of £8000 to be raised had been quoted at one stage (such a small figure it seems by today's standards, though a much tougher prospect back then) and they were keen to get themselves into a position to bid for an engine before the end of main line operations, if at all possible.

Whilst all kinds of speculation went on as to which Western still in service might be chosen to be saved, in the event it was one which had been withdrawn some time previously that became the favoured option, though this decision was (perhaps wisely) kept quiet until the deal with BR was done. What some may have overlooked was that the final few locos running would likely be kept in traffic at minimal expense, a while after their last full overhauls and were therefore likely to be in quite a run-down condition.

Predictions that the class would be confined to freight and secondary duties proved wide of the mark with repeated sightings of them on Class 1 duties to the West Country and South Wales, to Cheltenham and to Birmingham New Street. It was occasional services to the latter (via Oxford) which the writer observed in his home town of Leamington Spa as a very young spotter. On a good day, two or three Westerns might be rostered on any of four particular return workings from Paddington to the second city. If you were really lucky, one might also appear on the Cowley-Bathgate car train to Bescot yard, taking British Leyland Allegros, Maxis and Marinas from Oxford to Scotland. The day when a Class 50 was first used on a train to New Street, I knew that the end was approaching.

The official line from BR at the time was that should anyone wish to spend their hard-earned cash on an unwanted diesel locomotive, then that was their affair. They could not expect any favours in that process and there was certainly no prospect of any such entity being permitted to haul special trains on the national network (despite the recent relaxation of the ban on steam); once the item was bought, it would be up to the new owner to pay for its removal to another site (on a preserved railway) and then restore it at their further expense i.e. no freebies from the taxpayer-funded railway. Unofficially, it was a rather different story, not least because many railwaymen at Swindon and from the wider Western Region were somewhat bitter at the way in which their locomotives were being cast aside as so much scrap metal. They were also upset at the manner in which Swindon Works was clearly being run down and set up for closure with the loss of many skilled jobs. It was further proof of that independent spirit living on, years after the Great Western Railway had ended.

Severn Valley Railway News – Running Dates & Events

Our next public operating will be at The Severn Valley Railway Autumn Diesel Gala from Thursday 1st October to Sunday 4th October.



What to expect at the Autumn Diesel Bash? The four-day diesel festival will feature 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 the railway's pubs, as you experience the Severn Valley at its loudest!

The Stars of the show

- Class 14 D9551
- Unique Class 17 'Clayton' D8568
- Class 20(s) (hopefully a pair, numbers to be confirmed)
- Class 33 33108
- Class 42 'Warship' D821 'Greyhound'
- Class 46 46045
- Class 50s 50033 'Glorious' plus one other (TBC)
- Class 52 'Westerns' D1015 & D1062
- Class 108 DMU

All locomotives appear subject to availability and operational requirements and may be changed without notice.

The full Diesel Locomotive Roster for October is as follows: Available at SVR-2026-Diesel-Roster.pdf

Thursday	01-Oct	Autumn Diesel Gala	All Available
Friday	02-Oct	Autumn Diesel Gala	All Available
Saturday	03-Oct	Autumn Diesel Gala	All Available
Sunday	04-Oct	Autumn Diesel Gala	All Available
Wednesday	07-Oct	Table A N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Thursday	08-Oct	Table A N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Saturday	10-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Saturday	10-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Sunday	11-Oct	Table B S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Sunday	11-Oct	Table B N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Wednesday	14-Oct	Table A N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Thursday	15-Oct	Table A N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Saturday	17-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Saturday	17-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Sunday	18-Oct	Table B S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Sunday	18-Oct	Table B N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Wednesday	21-Oct	Table A N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Thursday	22-Oct	Table A N1 Diagram (Two Return Trips)	DMU
Saturday	24-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Saturday	24-Ocy	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Sunday	25-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Sunday	25-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Monday	26-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Monday	26-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Tuesday	27-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Tuesday	27-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Wednesday	28-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Wednesday	28-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Thursday	29-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Thursday	29-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Thursday	29-Oct	Ghost Train Diagram 1	D8568
Thursday	29-Oct	Ghost Train Diagram 2	20048
Friday	30-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Friday	30-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Friday	30-Oct	Ghost Train Diagram 1	D8568
Friday	30-Oct	Ghost Train Diagram 2	20048
Saturday	31-Oct	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Saturday	31-Oct	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU
Saturday	31-Oct	Ghost Train Diagram 1	D8568
Saturday	31-Oct	Ghost Train Diagram 2	20048
Sunday	01-Nov	Table C S3 Diagram (One Return Trip)	46045
Sunday	01-Nov	Table C N1 Diagram (One Return Trip plus HY)	DMU

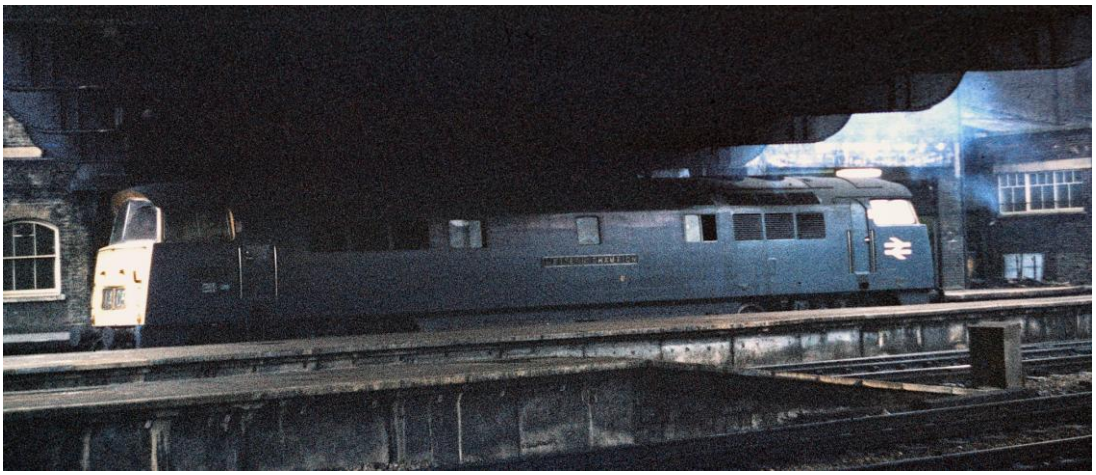
Member's Forum & Gallery

"Memories"

This week we start to share the memories from new Working Member Chris Satchwell – they truly do take you back in time and have NEVER been seen before.

Below is the first batch, with more to come in the next few months…

We start with D1015 Western Champion seen at Paddington in March 1974.



D1022 Western Sentinel at Paddington in August 1974



D1022 Western Sentinel and D1063 Western Monitor at Paddington in August 1974.



D1062 Western Envoy, and unidentified Class 50 at Paddington in August 1974.



D1054 Western Governor at Paddington in August 1974.



D1069 Western Vanguard and a Brush 4 at Paddington in August 1974.



D1048 Western Lady – our very own, at Paddington in August 1974.



D1014 Western Leviathan at Paddington in August 1974.



D1011 Western Thunderer & D1059 Western Empire & a Brush 4 in May 1975 – guess the location and the member of staff 😊



D1049 Western Monarch at Old Oak Common in May 1975.



D1011 Western Thunderer and an unidentified Western at Old Oak Common in May 1975



D1011 Western Thunderer at Old Oak Common in May 1975



WLA Member Colin Wilkes visited The Severn Valley Railway on 16th August and has sent in the following to share with you all :–

Good morning Paul

I managed a day on the SVR on 16th August intending to have a ride behind Courier.
When I got to Kidderminster what do I find but both Courier and Champion working, a mini Western-Fest!
I enjoyed a ride to Bridgnorth behind Courier followed by the return behind Champion.
In both cases I found a seat in the first carriage behind the loco.





Also shared this month by Clare Johnson, Keith's memories of an amazing day on his Driver Footplate Experience on 14th August. "Thanks guys for making it such a memorable day for him."





We end this month with another image from Andy Calett –

“ I’ve just discovered another image of D1062 - taken at Swindon in December 1972.

1972 was the first year I started taking 35mm colour slides. Before that it was all B&W because that was a lot less expensive.

This photo would have been one of the last few taken with my Russian Zorki camera. From the beginning of 1973 I was using a Pentax.

Still, it’s pretty good, especially considering I was only 15 years old and still at school. Definitely good enough for the Western Cameraman website!



Closing Notes and Book Ends

Looking ahead to next month and the next big celebration.



The “Jolly Boys” (Peter, Dave, Paul & Mark) whilst out and about at The Blubell Railway on 5th September seemed to get a little confused when they spotted 1001 – confusing it with D1001 Western Pathfinder !



& Mr Bamber was caught on camera again on Thursday 10th September during The Western Memorial OBBO by WLA Member Peter Squire.



Peter Squire was also captured on the same day 😊 (Pay Back says Mr Bamber)



To end, we return to The Bluebell Railway and a hydraulic “vision” spotted in the windows of the Class 73 E6040.



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 November

https://westernlocomotives.com/

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

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