

DOWNLOAD PDF THE MINEHEAD BRANCH AND THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

Chapter 1 : West Somerset Railway - Infogalactic: the planetary knowledge core

Our Railway, a true country branch line of the old Great Western Railway is full of fascination whether you are looking for a nostalgic ride back in time through lovely countryside or to study the railway and industrial heritage which our line preserves.

This prompted the promotion of a connecting line from Williton to Minehead and Porlock , a line designed to attract tourists to Exmoor. The line would enable the cheap import of coal from south Wales into Somerset. This first meeting had been dominated by people from Minehead, Wiveliscombe and Bridgwater but, on 1 August , a second meeting was held in Taunton. Brunel explained to those present the advantages of the different routes and gave some weight to the argument for a route to Bridgwater with a long tunnel under the Quantocks. He also suggested that the line should be continued to Minehead or Porlock but the meeting resolved to construct a railway only from Taunton to Watchet. Plans were produced as required by British law in November and the West Somerset Railway Company was incorporated on 17 August by an Act of Parliament to build a railway from Taunton to Watchet. The railway opened for passengers from Watchet Junction 2 miles or 3. Trains were operated through to Taunton railway station as no station was provided at the junction. In , before it was even opened, it was suggested that the WSMR should be extended to Minehead instead of the WSR and an Act of Parliament for this work was passed on 27 July but it was never constructed. This again failed to be built but a renewed Minehead Railway Act of 29 June finally saw the construction begin the following year. To break up the Trains ran as usual on Saturday 28 October but the track was lifted the following day and reopened for traffic on Monday afternoon. The platform at Stogumber was extended in , a new passing loop was opened in at Blue Anchor and, the following year, a second platform was opened at Minehead. A third loop was installed in , this time at Bishops Lydeard and the loop at Williton was lengthened in The mainline from Norton Fitzwarren through Taunton to Cogload Junction was increased from two to four tracks on 2 December and the junction station was enlarged which meant that it was better able to cope with the trains on all three routes. In , the platform at Stogumber was extended to accommodate longer trains and two further passing loops were opened. The following year saw the original single track doubled between Dunster and Minehead and the platform at the terminus was lengthened. The loop at Blue Anchor was also lengthened in , the line was doubled from Norton Fitzwarren to Bishops Lydeard in and the Williton loop was lengthened for a second time in Camp coaches made a reappearance in and were available to the public at both Stogumber and Blue Anchor from to ; the latter were kept on for British Rail staff holidays until However, Washford signal box was closed in and Minehead engine shed was closed in Norton Fitzwarren station closed on 30 October , after which passengers once again had to travel through to Taunton to change onto trains travelling west. Goods traffic was withdrawn from Stogumber on 17 August and from the other stations on 6 July after which British Rail transported any goods traffic by road from Taunton. The original turntable was removed from Minehead in by which time all trains were operated by diesels. In an attempt to make the loss-making line profitable, BR reduced the double track from Norton Fitzwarren to one track on 1 March and closed the signal boxes at Bishops Lydeard and Norton Fitzwarren. This left the branch with three sections Silk Mills to Williton; Williton to Dunster; Dunster to Minehead but still required seven staff per shift as there were three signal boxes and four level crossings. The line continued to make a loss so was eventually closed. The last train left Minehead on 2 January ; this was a Saturday and the following Monday 4 an enhanced bus service came into operation. This required a full-time two-week incursion of a permanent way team to clear the line pathway, before BR Class 25 diesel No. On 5 February , a Minehead Railway Preservation Society organised a meeting in Taunton and a working party headed by Douglas Fear, a local business man, was tasked with investigating how the line could be reopened as a privately owned railway. In May, a new West Somerset Railway Company was formed to acquire the line and operate a year-round commuter service from Minehead to Taunton alongside which a limited summer steam service could also run.

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A deal was agreed with British Rail to purchase the line with the support of Somerset County Council , however the council was wary of the lucrative Minehead station site falling into private hands should the railway fail. Instead, it purchased the line itself in and leased back the operational land to the West Somerset Railway Company plc. Minehead to Blue Anchor was the first section to see trains restored, opening on 28 March and services were extended to Williton on 28 August the same year. A new station at Doniford Halt was opened on the coast east of Watchet on 27 June to serve a holiday camp at Helwell Bay. Known as the Minehead Express, it was aimed at holidaymakers travelling to Butlins at Minehead. It left Minehead at These first ran on 20 July and operated on a total of 18 days, finishing on 27 August.

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Chapter 2 : Train Ride of the Week: West Somerset Railway – To The Trains

Under the Railways Act , the West Somerset Railway Company was finally amalgamated into the Great Western Railway but the Minehead branch, as the route was now known, continued to be operated by the newly enlarged GWR.

West Somerset Railway Route: Over the mile journey, passengers experience both the rolling hills and coastline scenery of the Somerset countryside. When departing from Bishops Lydeard, the railway travels through the rolling countryside of the Quantock Hills just beyond Exmoor National Park to Watchet. Once at Watchet, the tracks regularly stay within view of the Bristol Channel for the remainder of the journey to Minehead. Passengers can purchase single tickets, from one station to another, return tickets, from one station to another and back, or rover tickets which give visitors unlimited travel between all of our stations for one day. A new ticket, known as the weekly Freedom of the Line ticket, was recently introduced in and allows unlimited travel for up to 7 consecutive days across the railway. All the aforementioned tickets are available to purchase on the day from the booking office, or on the train from the Ticket Inspectors cash only. Rover tickets and Freedom of the Line tickets can be purchased in advance through the West Somerset Railway website, which can provide savings for visitors. Throughout the year, the West Somerset has numerous timetables throughout the year and operates up to 7 roundtrip services per day depending on the timetable of that day. For a full breakdown of the timetable, visit <https://www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk>. Arrive in style, at a pace that reflects the Castle in its early 20th Century heyday, with a special coach bus connection from Dunster station to the Castle entrance. The Quantock Belle operates on a limited number of dates and is extremely popular. Advance booking is therefore mandatory. A comprehensive bar service, including a varied wine list and soft drinks, is provided to your table by our attentive liveried stewards throughout the day and charged towards the end of your return journey. Vegetarian options, which are homemade, gluten-free, and dairy-free, is available as an alternative to all advertised menus, but the WSR must be notified at time of booking. The train arrives at Minehead at the end of the main course, where passengers can stretch their legs and breathe the sea air at the station. Dessert is served on the return journey, followed by a continuous tea and coffee service. On Sunday luncheon trains, the layover in Minehead is longer. The West Somerset Railway is also occasionally served by mainline steam train tours departing from London or Bristol. Getting to Bishops Lydeard: While not directly connected to the national network, Bishops Lydeard is a short distance from the Somerset county seat of Taunton. If driving, the M5 Motorway passes by Taunton. There are also brown tourist signs for the Railway itself, but following the signs for Minehead works as well. Instead of going into the village of Bishops Lydeard, remain on the by-pass until you see signs directing you to the Railway. There is a large free car park at Bishops Lydeard Station. Minehead is a long-time resort town and still features the Butlins Minehead Resort to this day, offering attractions for visitors of all ages. The Somerset coastal town is also popular for sailing, wind surfing, golfing, and hiking. The quality hiking is exemplified by the South West Coast Path. This path is the longest national pathway in the United Kingdom.

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Chapter 3 : BBC - Somerset - Coast - Point 1: West Somerset Railway

The West Somerset Railway is a branch line of the old Great Western Railway and runs from Bishops Lydeard station to Minehead railway station and goes through 8 more stations in between.

History[edit] Looking westwards in The station was opened on 16 July by the Minehead Railway. The railway was operated by the Bristol and Exeter Railway which was amalgamated into the Great Western Railway in The station was originally built with just one platform. The station offices were on the platform and a goods shed was opposite, while an engine shed was provided behind the platform. In a second track was added on the opposite side of the platform and a new signal box was brought into use. An iron hut was added to provide more accommodation but was removed in the s when the main building was extended towards the town. The next major alterations came in when the original single track line was replaced by a double line to cope with the heavy holiday traffic, and a new signal box built. The platforms were extended at the same time. The railway was closed on 4 January Bradley Manor on the new turntable The station reopened on 28 March as a heritage railway by a new West Somerset Railway. The goods shed was converted into an engine shed and extended in Meanwhile, the station building was altered to be used as offices, and a new ticket office provided. A new level crossing has been laid across the line a little beyond the platform end to carry a new relief road to the sea front, and the former Dunster signal box was moved to control trains at Minehead. A new carriage workshop was opened in near the Dunster end of the station, [2] The original turntable was removed from the station in , after steam trains and GWR Autocoach services were completely replaced by Diesel Multiple Units. A wide, single platform has tracks on both sides. The main track on the seaward side is platform 1, while platform 2 stops short of the stone-built station buildings. The old goods shed is opposite the station building and is now used as a locomotive workshop, and a newer carriage workshop is close by. Opposite platform 2 is the turntable, overlooked by a cafe operated by the railway. The buildings on the platform include a booking office and a shop selling souvenirs. The signal box is at the far end of the platform near the level crossing. Sidings on both sides of the station are used to hold stock, both operating vehicles and others awaiting repairs in the workshops.

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Chapter 4 : blog.quintoapp.com :: Minehead Station Webcam

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West Somerset Railway Point 1: Minehead station is the headquarters of the West Somerset Railway WSR and is the largest station on the branch line, which takes steam trains inland to Bishops Lydeard near Taunton. The line was built to broad gauge and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. It was converted to standard gauge in one day in October 1825, along with the rest of the line, it was absorbed by the Great Western Railway. Later it became part of the nationalised British Railways. Beatlemania On 2 March 1964, the calm at Minehead station was shattered by the screams of hundreds of schoolchildren. Teachers at local schools gave in to demands for time off from the classroom, and a large crowd of excited teenagers gathered by the railway tracks. But what was the reason for all this excitement? They travelled to Somerset on a special charter train of five coaches from London Paddington. The crowds turned out at other stations down the line too, despite the route of the train being kept a secret. At Crowcombe, the film crew halted to shoot a little scene where the Beatles run along the platform shouting to a retired army officer. The end of the line British Railways closed the branch line from Taunton to Minehead in 1966 as part of the Beeching cuts, and almost all the facilities at Minehead station were removed. The WSR came to the rescue that same year. In the next few years, the WSR reopened the line bit by bit, starting from Minehead. By 1970, the line had been reopened all the way from Minehead back to Bishops Lydeard. At 20 miles, the WSR is the longest privately owned passenger rail line in Britain. During the summer, the railway employs 28 people, in addition to many volunteers. It carries 1.5 million passengers each year, and by the end of 2000 had transported more than three million people. Although the branch line is still connected to the national rail network at Norton Fitzwarren, you will need to catch a bus from Bishops Lydeard station to get to Taunton station; the line from Taunton is used on Gala Weekends and by charter trains though. The station canopy at Minehead is Grade II listed and, at 100 feet, is the longest such structure to have been preserved. On the far side of the tracks, you should see the old goods shed, which has been converted into a locomotive shed. Almost all of the tracks you can see have been installed since the railway was restored in the 1970s. The most recent thing to be built is the siding the other side of the carriage shed. This was added in for unloading stone to be used in the Minehead sea defences - we look at them later on the walk. All the signalling you will see is new. There was none at all in 1966 - the last signals were at Dunster. You might be able to see a wooden signalbox; it is the only wooden one on the line and was moved from Dunster by rail in 1970. Just beyond the far end of the station, you might be able to see a level crossing. This was opened in 1970 as part of the relief road Seaward Way, which brings tourist traffic from the main road A39 directly to Butlins and the seafront without it needing to go through the town. The walk continues on Warren Road. As you come out of the station, turn right and follow the seafront in the direction of Butlins.

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Chapter 5 : The Minehead Branch and the West Somerset Railway (Locomotion Pap | eBay

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This prompted the promotion of a connecting line from Williton to Minehead and Porlock , a line designed to attract tourists to Exmoor. There were three alternate options: The second and third options bypassed the WSMR, running directly from Watchet to Williton to follow the Donniford valley to Crowcombe, and then either: To Triscombe and via a tunnel through the Quantock Hills to Bridgwater. He had concluded that the starting point should be either Watchet or Porlock, then direct to Williton to follow the Donniford Brook as far as Triscombe. Brunel then gave the initial calculations on the required tunnel to reach Bridgwater, which being 70 to 80 chains in length would require 50 shafts to be sunk, and as it also required approaches with a 1 in 50 gradient, would be very expensive. In his conclusion, Brunel stated his preference as a route from Watchet via Williton to Taunton, stating it to be both cheaper and offering more development options to increase passenger loading. The first meeting had been dominated by people from Minehead, Wiveliscombe and Bridgwater but, on 1 August , a second meeting was held in Taunton. Brunel explained to those present the advantages of the different routes and gave some weight to the argument for a route to Bridgwater with a long tunnel under the Quantocks. He also suggested that the line should be continued to Minehead or Porlock but the meeting resolved to construct a railway only from Taunton to Watchet. Plans were produced as required by British law in November and the West Somerset Railway Company was incorporated on 17 August by an Act of Parliament to build a railway from Taunton to Watchet. The railway opened for passengers from Watchet Junction 2 miles or 3. Trains were operated through to Taunton railway station as no station was provided at the junction. In , before it was even opened, it was suggested that the WSMR should be extended to Minehead instead of the WSR and an Act of Parliament for this work was passed on 27 July but it was never constructed. This again failed to be built but a renewed Minehead Railway Act of 29 June finally saw the construction begin the following year. To break up the Trains ran as usual on Saturday 28 October but the track was lifted the following day and reopened for traffic on Monday afternoon. The platform at Stogumber was extended in , a new passing loop was opened in at Blue Anchor and, the following year, a second platform was opened at Minehead. A third loop was installed in , this time at Bishops Lydeard and the loop at Williton was lengthened in The mainline from Norton Fitzwarren through Taunton to Cogload Junction was increased from two to four tracks on 2 December and the junction station was enlarged which meant that it was better able to cope with the trains on all three routes. In , the platform at Stogumber was extended to accommodate longer trains and two further passing loops were opened. The following year saw the original single track doubled between Dunster and Minehead and the platform at the terminus was lengthened. The loop at Blue Anchor was also lengthened in , the line was doubled from Norton Fitzwarren to Bishops Lydeard in and the Williton loop was lengthened for a second time in Camp coaches made a reappearance in and were available to the public at both Stogumber and Blue Anchor from to ; the latter were kept on for British Rail staff holidays until However, Washford signal box was closed in and Minehead engine shed was closed in Norton Fitzwarren station closed on 30 October , after which passengers once again had to travel through to Taunton to change onto trains travelling west. Goods traffic was withdrawn from Stogumber on 17 August and from the other stations on 6 July after which British Rail transported any goods traffic by road from Taunton. The original turntable was removed from Minehead in by which time all trains were operated by diesels. In an attempt to make the loss-making line profitable, BR reduced the double track from Norton Fitzwarren to one track on 1 March and closed the signal boxes at Bishops Lydeard and Norton Fitzwarren. This left the branch with three sections Silk Mills to Williton; Williton to Dunster; Dunster to Minehead but still required seven staff per shift as there were three signal boxes and four level crossings. The

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line continued to make a loss so was eventually closed. The last train left Minehead on 2 January ; this was a Saturday and the following Monday 4 an enhanced bus service came into operation. This required a full-time two-week incursion of a permanent way team to clear the line pathway, before BR Class 25 diesel No. In May, a new West Somerset Railway Company was formed to acquire the line and operate a year-round commuter service from Minehead to Taunton alongside which a limited summer steam service could also run. A deal was agreed with British Rail to purchase the line with the support of Somerset County Council , however the council was wary of the lucrative Minehead station site falling into private hands should the railway fail. Instead, it purchased the line itself in and leased back the operational land to the West Somerset Railway Company plc. Minehead to Blue Anchor was the first section to see trains restored, opening on 28 March and services were extended to Williton on 28 August the same year. A new station at Doniford Halt was opened on the coast east of Watchet on 27 June to serve a holiday camp at Helwell Bay. Known as the Minehead Express, it was aimed at holidaymakers travelling to Butlins at Minehead. It left Minehead at The first of these trains ran on 20 July and operated on a total of 18 days, finishing on 27 August. The inspection found that several safety improvements needed to be made.

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Chapter 6 : Minehead railway station - Wikipedia

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28 March and services were extended to Williton on 28 August the same year. A new station at Doniford Halt was opened on the coast east of Watchet on 27 June to serve a holiday camp at Helwell Bay.

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Chapter 7 : WSR :: West Somerset Railway :: Old News

The West Somerset Railway (WSR) is a Template:Convert heritage railway line in Somerset, England. The freehold of the track and stations is owned by Somerset County Council; the railway is leased to and operated by West Somerset Railway plc (WSR plc); which is supported and minority owned by.

Convert heritage railway line in Somerset , England. The WSR plc operates services using both heritage steam and diesel trains. It originally opened in between Template: In it was extended from Watchet to Template: Stnlnk by the Minehead Railway. Although just a single track, improvements were needed in the first half of the twentieth century to accommodate the significant number of tourists that wished to travel to the Somerset coast. The line was closed by British Rail in and reopened in as a heritage line. It is the longest standard gauge independent heritage railway in the United Kingdom. Convert between Minehead and Template: During special events some trains continue a further Template: Stnlnk where a connection to Network Rail allows occasional through trains to operate onto the national network. This prompted the promotion of a connecting line from Williton to Minehead and Porlock , a line designed to attract tourists to Exmoor. There were three alternate options: The second and third options bypassed the WSMR, running directly from Watchet to Williton to follow the Donniford valley to Crowcombe, and then either: To Triscombe and via a tunnel through the Quantock Hills to Bridgwater. He had concluded that the starting point should be either Watchet or Porlock, then direct to Williton to follow the Donniford Brook as far as Triscombe. Brunel then gave the initial calculations on the required tunnel to reach Bridgwater, which being 70 to 80 chains in length would require 50 shafts to be sunk, and as it also required approaches with a 1 in 50 gradient, would be very expensive. In his conclusion, Brunel stated his preference as a route from Watchet via Williton to Taunton, stating it to be both cheaper and offering more development options to increase passenger loading. The first meeting had been dominated by people from Minehead, Wiveliscombe and Bridgwater but, on 1 August , a second meeting was held in Taunton. Brunel explained to those present the advantages of the different routes and gave some weight to the argument for a route to Bridgwater with a long tunnel under the Quantocks. He also suggested that the line should be continued to Minehead or Porlock but the meeting resolved to construct a railway only from Taunton to Watchet. Plans were produced as required by British law in November and the West Somerset Railway Company was incorporated on 17 August by an Act of Parliament to build a railway from Taunton to Watchet. The railway opened for passengers from Watchet Junction Template: Convert west of Taunton to Template: Stnlnk on 31 March ; goods traffic commenced in August. Trains were operated through to Taunton railway station as no station was provided at the junction. Stnlnk , on 8 June but branch line trains continued to operate through to Taunton. In , before it was even opened, it was suggested that the WSMR should be extended to Minehead instead of the WSR and an Act of Parliament for this work was passed on 27 July but it was never constructed. This again failed to be built but a renewed Minehead Railway Act of 29 June finally saw the construction begin the following year. To break up the Template: Convert of single track, a passing loop and second platform were installed at Williton, [2] Template: Convert from the junction. RailGauge broad gauge was converted to Template: RailGauge standard gauge in Trains ran as usual on Saturday 28 October but the track was lifted the following day and reopened for traffic on Monday afternoon. The platform at Stogumber was extended in , a new passing loop was opened in at Template: Stnlnk and, the following year, a second platform was opened at Minehead. A third loop was installed in , this time at Template: Stnlnk and the loop at Williton was lengthened in The mainline from Norton Fitzwarren through Taunton to Cogload Junction was increased from two to four tracks on 2 December and the junction station was enlarged which meant that it was better able to cope with the trains on all three routes. In , the platform at Template: Stnlnk was extended to accommodate longer trains and two further passing loops were opened. The following year saw the original single track doubled between Template: Stnlnk and Minehead and the platform at the terminus was lengthened. The loop at Blue Anchor was also lengthened in , the line was

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A deal was agreed with British Rail to purchase the line with the support of Somerset County Council , however the council was wary of the lucrative Minehead station site falling into private hands should the railway fail. Instead, it purchased the line itself in and leased back the operational land to the West Somerset Railway Company plc. Stnlnk and Taunton, but the line was slowly reopened as a heritage railway. Minehead to Blue Anchor was the first section to see trains restored, opening on 28 March and services were extended to Williton on 28 August the same year. A new station at Template: Stnlnk was opened on the coast east of Watchet on 27 June to serve a holiday camp at Helwell Bay. Stnlnk on a couple of days each week. Known as the Minehead Express, it was aimed at holidaymakers travelling to Butlins at Minehead. It left Minehead at Brcs and powering the five coaches. The first of these trains ran on 20 July and operated on a total of 18 days, finishing on 27 August. West Somerset Railway map Template: Kml The route is described from Minehead towards Taunton. Features are described as being on the left or right of the line for passengers facing this direction of travel, therefore the right side of the train is generally on the south or west of the line. Minehead to Watchet Communities served: Stnlnk is situated on the sea front close to the town centre. The platform has a track on each side and the old goods shed , which is now used for locomotive maintenance, is situated on the north side between the platform and the beach. On the opposite side of the station is a turntable and the station cafe. Sidings on both sides of the station are used to hold stock, both operating vehicles and others awaiting repairs in the workshops. Convert from Minehead the line crosses Dunster West level crossing and enters Template: A footpath leads from the east end of the platform down to Sea Lane to save a long walk round along the road. The line then continues across the concrete channel of the River Avill onto Ker Moor and along the edge of the beach [21] to reach Template: Convert from Minehead and the first passing loop. Approaching the station, the old goods yard is on the right [4] and three camp coaches are kept here where volunteers working on the railway can stay overnight. At the western end of the platform, a signal box overlooks a level crossing on the road from Blue Anchor to Carhampton. After turning back towards the north east, the line reaches the second highest point on the line at Template: Convert from Minehead and has a single platform on the right. JPG The platform at Watchet is on the right of the train but the station building is unusually set back from the line and faces Taunton, a hangover from its construction as the terminus of the original West Somerset Railway. The old goods shed is opposite the platform and now houses the Watchet Boat Museum. A footbridge crosses the line at the Minehead end of the station and a foot crossing leads across the track at the other end of the platform which gives access to the harbour for train passengers. Passing under the Watchet to West Quantoxhead road, the line turns southwards

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[21] and passes the concrete platform at Template: Stnlk , which is on the left of the train Template: Convert , is near the midpoint of the operational railway and the second passing loop. The main station building is also on this platform, as is the oldest signal box on the line which stands above the level crossing. This sees little road traffic as most crosses the railway on the A39 road bridge that stands just beyond the end of the passing loop. Passing close to the village of Bicknoller , it crosses the Macmillan Way West , a long distance footpath. This station unusually has its platform on the right of the train but the station offices are on the left. Convert from Minehead, it reaches the summit of the line at Template: This is another passing loop but the down platform on the right is signalled to allow trains to run in either direction; [4] the original platform was on the left of the line and so the main buildings are all on this side of the line. Locomotives are kept in a secure compound on the left at the Taunton end of the station. Both platforms are signalled for running in either direction and most trains run from the one on the left, [4] although the original buildings are all on the right.

Chapter 8 : West Somerset Railway

The West Somerset was extended to Minehead in by a nominally separate company (the Minehead Railway) although in practice all the operations were run from the start by the Bristol and Exeter. It was constructed throughout to the broad gauge of 7 feet and a quarter inch but was converted to 4 feet 8 and a half in

News from June No to make another whirlwind visit in late summer A busy two weeks on the Minehead Branch for the newest standard gauge steam locomotive has just ended. But already the locomotive is booked to make another visit to West Somerset in the school summer holidays and will be operating trains over the twenty miles of line between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead. And the loco is also expected to haul trains during the Late Summer Weekend event. The exact running times for Tornado will be confirmed shortly. The vehicle has been out of use for some time. Keith is sure WSRA members will be welcomed. As part of this process and in the interest of strengthening the WSR Safety Management System, so eliminating any confusion with respect to health and safety, some volunteer groups now managed by the Association are becoming a Company responsibility. Volunteer Recruitment, Trackers, and Cutting Back have already been recently transferred. Existing Association budgets for these groups will continue to be supported by the Association until the end of the year when the Company will then take over this small financial responsibility encompassing it with the Companies budget. Two classic books about the Minehead Branch are being reprinted. Regarded as the definitive history of the line, the book has been lightly revised and includes two further maps and 15 new photographs. The famous small blue steam engine, star of childrens books, radio, television and film, will be in action at Minehead Station whilst his larger friends, the bigger steam locomotives, bring passengers from Bishops Lydeard and other stations along the line. All passengers get the chance to ride behind Thomas on short journeys in and out of Minehead Station throughout the day. Other entertainment during the day out includes free vintage bus journeys around Minehead, starting from outside the Station, and shunting demonstrations by smaller engines including Captain Baxter at Minehead. On the platform there will be shows during the day by Professor Popcorn and a Punch and Judy Show, plus quieter places where the children can colour drawings, listen to stories or watch DVDs featuring their favourite characters. And of course, Sir Topham Hatt, better know as the Fat Controller, will be there presiding over the day. During July and August the In addition Hymek no D will operate the diesel diagram in the Thomas weekend, disguised as no D Nos , 88, , and are also expected to run. In order to support the local charity Go Commando an Autocoach will be run at various times with travel being supported by passenger donations. Testing of these systems can progress when the tender is complete and coupled. The tender has had some major work requirements. The tender springs as supplied did not meet the specification and had to be returned to the supplier for correction at the suppliers expense. These are expected to be returned before the end of June. The brake cylinders supplied and installed were not fit for use and we have had to source replacements from India. By kind permission of the owner of Taw Valley we have been able to use two new spare cylinders from that loco which will be replaced when the cylinders on order from India arrive in approx six weeks time. Air brake testing will still need to be carried out. Main line operations depend on a series of further commissioning tests being successful and we will keep you advised of progress. It will be Captain Baxter from the Bluebell Railway. During the Thomas Weekend the built Captain Baxter will spend his time at Minehead shunting the yard. One other item of news about this event - it now seems unlikely that Fergus will be able to attend because some planned maintenance has taken longer than expected. These two works plates have been donated to the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust to specifically be sold to raise funds for the Heritage Carriages Project. Bids will be accepted for each plate individually. The closing date to receive bids is 12 July Bids should be submitted to info wssrt. LNER no Tornado will now work service trains on 21, 22, 23, 28, 29 and 30 June, heading departures from Bishops Lydeard at Standard fares apply on each day Tornado is running. No will also feature in a series of driver experience days. The Marines were also presented with a

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copy of the nameplate. The Railway is laying on a special train on 18 June taking the Royal Marines and their families from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead for a day out at Butlins. For reservations call Our Wednesday trains are hauled by heritage diesel locomotives. Click here for the leaflet cover. More correctly the loop will be re-instated at the south end returning to the situation before when British Railways shortened the loop and removed part of a bridge over a stream. The new works involve a new bridge over the stream, new points positioned beyond Williton Bridge , rebuilding Williton Level Crossing to accommodate double track and re-signalling the new layout. It is planned to start work on the new bridge in November and the remaining works in January and February As ever, funding is a critical part of the project and the Railway are asking shareholders and supporters to make consider making financial contributions to help fund this important work. The first Dunster Shuttle will depart from Minehead at Ale by rail was once one of the staple traffic for the railways of Britain down the years. The beers were be loaded onto the The event runs between At present timings are approximate and may be subject to slight changes. There will be street entertainment and music as well as a display by the Fire Brigade, flight simulators, marching band and Morris Men, subject to final confirmation. The West Somerset Railway will run a special timetable on this day to ensure as many people as possible can travel by train to Minehead for this special event. The timetable will be confirmed shortly. LNER A1 class no Tornado is due to arrive on 19 June and will operate trains on 21, 22, 23, 28, 29 and 30 June, heading departures from Bishops Lydeard at The opportunity to drive the newest mainline steam locomotive will be on 20, 24 and 27 June only. There will be four available places per day and each participant will get to travel 80 miles with the locomotive - and driving and firing it for forty of them. Class 08 no D hauled five loaded ballast wagons along the entire length of the most southerly chord of the Triangle between Barnstaple Junction and Orchard Junction. A short trip was made on 7 June but the next day three trains dropping ballast en route. Another important stage of the major project at Norton Fitzwarren which will soon see the completion of the outer triangle leaving only the East Chord which requires about yards of track to be laid. Originally built to Watchet to serve the harbour there and later extended to Minehead where in later times many thousands of holidaymakers would arrive to enjoy a week by the seaside. This new enlarged edition has been thoroughly revised and updated, the story brought up to date, making this edition 48 pages larger than the first edition, with almost more images. Since the s the line has been in the hands of preservationists and the author takes a look at what has been achieved since that time. This seem to be a limited reprint - the shop at Minehead has just copies available from Friday Just before the Rally weekend on August , the Severn Coast Express will run on the Friday evening for exhibitors. The entertainment on Saturday will be a high class group. However please note that the organisers are very keen to hear from those wishing to volunteer for general duties at the Steam Fayre and Vintage Rally - please contact us here by email. Williton Station Master Martin Hope reports "We have been informed today that despite the valiant efforts of the Williton Station Maintenance Team the footbridge will not be completed in time for public use during the Mixed Traction Weekend. The Project Manager John Parsons has stated that several parts required to enable the Independent Assessor to visit Williton to allow a decision to be made to open the bridge to the public are missing and they will not be available to be fitted before the weekend. Photographers will not therefore be allowed access onto the footbridge during the Mixed Traction event. It is now planned to officially open the footbridge in July and further details will be posted in due course on this web site. No less than ten diesel locomotives will shine the rails during the event, including four Class 59 locomotives visiting courtesy of Mendip Rail. The event will be all diesel traction except for "one steam round trip on the Saturday and Sunday" [source: WSR] although please note there are actually two round trips by steam departing at 12pm and 3pm from Bishops Lydeard on those days. The general public are advised against travelling on anything but the lone steam train as, despite the technically accurate but rather misleading event title, this is clearly a diesel gala. The stand was so successful that 3, promotional packs made up of timetables and special event leaflets were given out. And Thomas flags and colouring posters were handed out to help promote the forthcoming Thomas event. The flags also work as a great advert for the stand with people flocking from all over the site to get their flag! The

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show allows face to face promotion of the railway to both existing and potential new customers. BR W no Odney Manor, currently nearing the end of a major overhaul, will soon be renamed Norton Manor in honour of the officers, the men and the women of 40 Commando, who are close neighbours of the Railway and based at Norton Fitzwarren. Representatives from locally based 40 Commando will gather with senior WSR officials at Minehead Station on 17 June to witness the unveiling of the new nameplates on the locomotive. The following day, the Railway is laying on a special train for the families and members of 40 Commando for a day out in Minehead. West Somerset Railway General Manager Paul Conibeare said of the two days "40 Commando have been neighbours of the West Somerset Railway since and we have worked well together ever since. As is well known 40 Commando recently returned from Sangin in Afghanistan, where sadly they sustained a number of casualties and losses amongst their officers and other ranks. The Railway felt that with No due to return to service with us this year we should take the opportunity to commemorate the Battalion and its sacrifice with a locomotive nameplate that also continues the naming traditions of the Great Western Railway.

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Chapter 9 : West Somerset Railway - The longest Heritage Railway in England. | West Somerset Railway

Name: West Somerset Railway Route: Minehead to Bishops Lydeard, Somerset, United Kingdom Overview: Operating on a former Great Western Railway branch line, the West Somerset Railway is the longest independent heritage railway in the United Kingdom.

The town of Watchet on the Bristol Channel Coast in England has a history dating back over years, during which time its harbour was in regular competition for trade with its neighbours at Minehead, Dunster, Bridgwater, Dunball, Highbridge and others in the direction of Bristol. Trading patterns fluctuated as the harbours were improved, were hit by storm damage or suffered from the periodic outbreaks of piracy. Local business men and dignitaries in the West Somerset area began to promote the West Somerset Railway in and engaged Brunel as their Engineer. The biggest delay, as was often the case with Victorian railway building, was obtaining the land at a price that the Railway could afford. The West Somerset was extended to Minehead in by a nominally separate company the Minehead Railway although in practice all the operations were run from the start by the Bristol and Exeter. It was constructed throughout to the broad gauge of 7 feet and a quarter inch but was converted to 4 feet 8 and a half in Minehead was being developed by local businessmen into a holiday resort town to garner a share of the growing enthusiasm for seaside holidays or day trips to the seaside. The Bristol and Exeter was absorbed by the Great Western Railway in and as the holiday traffic continued to grow so station facilities, particularly platform lengths grew. This was done but there were often major delays, passengers were loaded into carriages that otherwise stood idle for the rest of the year and the experience often sent them to car show rooms on their return. However the harsh economic reality was that whilst the Minehead branch line of British Railways, as it had been after nationalisation in , made money in the summer it lost it for the rest of the year. The local passenger trade was being lost to the bus services and private car ownership was growing whilst freight traffic was also fading away despite cargos of esparto grass for paper making being shipped into Watchet and taken forward by rail to a paper mill at Hele and Bradninch near Exeter. That to Chard went in , Yeovil followed two years later and the route to Barnstaple ceased to see trains in Trains continued to Minehead but in all school travel was switched by Somerset County Council from rail to road and that tilted the financial scales once and for all. The line closed at the start of January However with the prolonged time taken for the line to close plans had turned to keeping it open as a private concern. Negotiations took over five years but at Easter reopening began with trains running between Minehead and Blue Anchor. By services were running over the 20 miles of line between Minehead and Bishops Lydeard, a village which is 4 miles by road from Taunton. The intention of the new WSR was to run all-year round diesel services between Minehead and Taunton with some steam services as an additional tourist attraction. However there were problems from the start. The first stumbling block was that as an accident of transport history in South West England local bus drivers were members of the National Union of Railwaymen and the NUR were afraid that a revived WSR would take business from the local bus routes. To compound matters the rapid expansion of the WSR revival meant that the Company had out grown its financial strength and was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. The industrial steam engines purchased were unsuited for 40 mile round trips at the head of passenger trains and the diesel railcars were suffering reliability problems too. The track which would have given WSR trains access to Taunton station was torn up and new signals were positioned on the track bed. A new Board came into place and sadly nearly all the paid staff were made redundant. The winter services went, plans of trains to Taunton were shelved, and a new focus on developing the line as part of tourism and leisure came into place. Matters remained tight and Somerset County Council showed enormous faith in the future of the project by their support but by the corner was turning. More suitable steam engines were entering traffic and passenger numbers began to rise. As income grew it also became possible to improve the infrastructure of the line. Steadily these changes have been reversed although the process continues to this day with the current fund-raising project being the

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re-instatement of the full length of the passing loop line at Williton. This work is carried out in line with the practice of the Great Western Railway wherever that conforms with modern safety standards. Today the Railway carries over , passengers a year making it one of the largest attractions in South West England. There are some 50 paid staff and a key input from volunteers and trains run on selected dates in all months outside the main season throughout the year and daily from early April to early October.