



## GWRT NEWSLETTER December 2018

### ED

To paraphrase a quote from yesteryear “That Was The Year That Was!” It seems only a few days ago that we opened to Broadway, and now it is all part of the “normal” running railway. Now there are lots more things to look forward to in 2019, including further developments at Broadway.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

*Roger Bush*

### GWRT Chairman

We are delighted to have received notification of yet another legacy, the fifth this year; we have already received two totalling over £212,000. Interestingly, at least two of them have been from people who are not members or shareholders. We cannot tell whether the legacies were given as a result of reading our legacy leaflet but we will continue to promote it; legacies are very important to GWSR as they enable the Plc (via Grants from GWRT) to achieve a lot more than our 'normal' budgets allow. If you are thinking of leaving a legacy to GWSR, please pick up a leaflet.

The Trust continues to work closely with the Plc to identify and assist with projects and purchases that fall within the Trust's remit ('To develop and maintain a railway museum for the benefit of the public'); we have recently approved a Grant for the purchase of a Tourist Second Open (TSO) coach, which has already arrived at Winchcombe. TSOs are becoming increasingly difficult to acquire at a reasonable price so this is a real bonus.

You will by now have received the latest Cornishman. For volunteers whose membership falls due in December, those on the second or third year of a three-year membership and all Life members will find their new membership card(s) in the envelope; for *all* volunteers whose Work Permit expires at the end of the year, your Work Permit renewal form was also in the envelope. The deadline for return of WP forms and, if applicable, membership renewals is **12th December**; this is to allow sufficient time for you to receive your new cards, bearing in mind the usual delays with Christmas mail. **Please don't delay** sending in your renewal and WP form; you can send a cheque for your membership to me at Toddington, place a cheque or cash in my mailbox in the office at Toddington or you can renew online via our website. You can also scan and e-mail your WP form but send it to your Head of Department, not to me; he/she will then forward your e-mail to me with his/her authority to renew.

*Glyn Cornish*

## PLC CHAIRMAN

I guess that I'm not the first to wonder where this year has gone. It seems only a few short weeks ago that we were all standing on Broadway station, whilst Lord Faulkner officially opened it for us. Much has happened since then. It's been a bit like riding a rollercoaster; having to deal with so many issues which arose unexpectedly, and which we had to respond to as they were unfolding.

One issue which has understandably caused considerable disappointment, is our decision to stop the issue of lineside photographic passes. The original decision was taken following a ROGS safety audit we arranged to have early in the year. It was strongly recommended then that we withdraw the passes for safety reasons. After receiving a number of heartfelt pleas from various people, we considered the matter again in detail during the year and tried to work out a system which would allow us to maintain all necessary safety procedures whilst allowing unlimited access to photographers. In subsequent discussion with the ORR, we were put on the spot and asked why we were considering reintroducing the passes, when they were such an obvious potential safety risk. It was explained to us in no uncertain terms that the ORR would not look at all kindly on any attempt by us to continue to issue such passes. So, regrettably we have had no option but to maintain our original decision. I hope you understand why we have been obliged to make it. I am very sorry if you feel aggrieved by this necessary decision. There are still a huge number of vantage points to photograph our trains from, without having to go lineside.

On a much happier note, you will be aware of the successful season we have had; a success which is entirely due to the hard work and commitment of each and every one of our hard-working volunteers. In 2019, it will be very much the same format as this year. We are not running earlier or later trains; we are seeking to ensure that we operate within sensible constraints, without putting anyone under pressure. The timetable will be tweaked but will be broadly in line with this years. Let's hope that all our passengers continue to want to travel on the best heritage railway in the country.

I guess it only remains for me to be one of the first to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year, and to thank you again for your support. We couldn't do it without you.

*Richard Johnson*

## ADMINISTRATION

### *Phone Calls about the Santa Specials*

We are well into the period of peak telephone calls about Santa Specials "My Santa tickets haven't arrived yet!" was a frequent concern expressed via telephone and email to the Administration office up until the first week in November. Even though it was clear on the website when ordering Santa Special tickets well in advance that they wouldn't be posted out until the month before December, nevertheless people rang the office wanting to know why their tickets hadn't arrived.

But now all the hundreds of tickets ordered have been sent out and the types of phone calls have changed. Firstly, there are the disappointed people who wanted to book onto a Santa Special but found the tickets have all been sold for the day they wanted to come. "We are desperate to come with our family to see Santa at the North Pole. Can you squeeze us on?" Sadly the answer has to be "No" if all the children's tickets have been sold. It's the number of children booked to see Santa per train that is usually the limiting factor – we keep it at just the right level for Santa to spend a reasonable amount of time with each family without resulting in an excessive delay for everyone. We think the number is just about right, but if we add to it the delays become unacceptable. So, we always try to find an alternative train

that a family can book for. However, if they can't change, then they can't go. The answer to the problem – Book Early.

Also, we get lots of people who want to change their bookings. The surprising thing is the numbers who simply booked a different day to the one they meant to book. And, of course, we get people whose circumstances have changed and who cannot make their original date. The nearer it gets to Christmas, the harder it is to find another suitable date and departure time as most of the trains become fully booked. But we do our best.

### *Condition of the Admin Accommodation*

The Administration accommodation next to the Flag and Whistle Café has deteriorated markedly over the past 12 months. Roofs have sprung leaks, floors have dropped and doors have had to be adjusted so they can be opened, closed and locked. Work is in hand to overcome these problems.

### *Marketing & Commercial*

#### Printed Timetables and 'Your Day Out' Handout

The first of next year's printed timetables are back from the printer, 270,000 copies of the timetable having been ordered by Commercial Director Colin Fewell. The aim is always to have them available to hand out on the Santa Special trains. What isn't generally known is just how long it takes Colin to get the contents of the leaflet agreed. The planning for the 2019 timetable started in June with identifying school holidays, half-terms and bank holidays and trying to fix all the Special Event dates. Consultations also started about trying to find solutions to the various issues identified with running trains this year. Issues considered included how to reduce the total number of special events, how to reduce the overcrowding on the first train from Cheltenham Race Course, and whether we really need three steam trains running on the non-event days that are expected to be really busy? At last all that has been sorted.

And now planning is underway for the Your Day Out free handout for next year. It's a feature that goes down extremely well with our passengers – everyone who purchases tickets is offered a booklet which contains the timetables, a map of the line, some information about the history of the railway and details of what is available for them to do at each station. For next year we are thinking about increasing the size of the booklet from 8 to 12 pages to accommodate more Broadway details and some information about the cost of running the railway. We had 25,000 booklets printed for 2018 and it looks as though we could run out just before at the end of the season. With the extra passengers visiting us to experience the joys of travelling in the Cotswold Hills, an even larger print run of Your Day Out booklets will be needed for 2019.

### *Philip Moore*

#### BRIDGES

Going to be a close finish to be ready for this Saturday (December 8<sup>th</sup>)! Latest information click [Civil Engineering](#)

#### CARRIAGE CLEANING

The main running season has ended, but before the cleaning gang can hibernate for two months there is the little matter of turning out for three Mondays in December to give the

Santa coaches the necessary treatment and do battle against present wrappings and mince pie pieces.

This involves cleaning the choc/cream set, the DMU and two coaches stabled at Toddington as refreshment carriages for the DMU operation. Also there are the maroon coaches stabled at Winchcombe for the month, and some of the gang are sent into exile to clean them without the luxury of the nice warm Toddington waiting room to retreat to. They deserve an extra Christmas bonus for that!

After the cleaning session on 17<sup>th</sup> December, the trains will operate for twelve days up to New Year without the benefit of our tender loving care. So please forgive us if the carriages aren't at their sparkling best. There is one clear day for us to clean, but as that's Christmas Day there might be some resistance to trying out the "three-line whip" on the team!

Thanks to our computer 'wizard' we now have a spreadsheet showing which carriage exteriors were cleaned on any particular Monday. It is very useful in particular for us to see the gaps between cleans on coaches A&B in each set. When hostilities resume in the Spring we will have to apply some cleaning therapy to coaches A&B in the maroon set, as the sheet shows they have clearly missed out on exterior cleaning. There are various reasons for this, but the main one is inaccessibility. The North Siding is too far away for our hoses!

*John McMillan*

## CARRIAGE & WAGON

Firstly a warm welcome to Richard Fairhurst who has joined the Works part of C&W. Congratulations to Ian Stroud on passing the initial part of his 03 shunter exam which allows him to shunt the yard.

Initially the offer of two SKs from the NYMR had us very excited, but as time progressed it seemed that this was fading away. However, by chance Dave Hancox spotted that the Buckingham Railway Centre (Quainton Road) had a complete TSO for sale and, after a visit by Richard Johnson, John Hamer and Dave, we were able to acquire it. Although it has three boarded up windows and the toilets removed, being in effect an abandoned project these were stored inside the coach. TSO 4867 duly arrived and is now in the Barn having repairs to the south end, both to give our metalwork team a project and to halt the slight collapse due to the crash pillars being cut away at the base. With the Santa train loco available at Winchcombe during the layover periods we can test both the vacuum and steam heating.

We were delighted when the NYMR finally agreed to loan Carmine & Cream liveried SK 24808 and SK 25488 for a 10-year period. They should arrive before Christmas and, as both are runners, our reserve capacity has been restored and we can get back to refurbishment cycling. We are also acquiring five wheelsets which will be a boon with our continual programme of bogie refurbishment and desire to keep the riding quality of our coaches as good as we can make them.

With the Barn extension and associated electrical work completed, it's good to be back to our normal Works configuration with room to move. Our reinstated Paintshop trestles are filling up again with items awaiting painting and varnishing. A space has been left in the Paintshop to enable the Woodwork Team to construct the new large serving counter for Broadway Station Cafe.

Planned for spring/early summer next year is an upgrade to our fire alarm system to enable out-of-hours call monitoring. The disastrous fires at the Mid Hants and Churnet Valley

Railways occurred when staff weren't present. One hopes that this would never happen here so the more protection the better and to our pleasant surprise the installation will cost a lot less than we had envisaged.

On to our current restorations and the pressure is on to get both BCK 21092 and TSO 4986 ready for next season, in particular the March Race meeting where in addition to our two main sets, the 3rd Rake will be in use for the first time on Gold Cup Day. TSO 4986 will replace FK 13329 at the end of the Chocolate & Cream rake, with the latter moving to the 3rd Rake. BCK 21092 will replace BG 81039 in the 3rd Rake and further increase the passenger capacity and we will then have three 8-coach rakes. BSK 34929 is also progressing albeit behind the other two because of their higher priority. The new open seating area at the south end will be panelled in oak. Bob and Pete Webb, our regular flooring contractors, have been booked to do all three restored coaches. Time will be tight but we still hope to get RMB 1808 in for what will now be a very rapid repaint and some door fixes.

DMU 51405 had to be mothballed because of the priorities above and returned to Toddington where it will have a change of engine. We will finish its refurbishment next year. Also scheduled for next year is CK 7221 for which some work has already been done, and of course some quick refurbishes when possible.

The re-roofing and general repair of the LNWR van (FOWS tools store) is now well underway with all the old uneven roof planking removed. The horse box will also be brought in when it can be extracted from the far siding.

Our very busy Maintenance team, who work every Friday, have conducted the annual buckeye exam for the Maroon Rake and all was fine. The rake itself has a list of repairs required which we also hope to do during the closed season. Meanwhile the good work continues to keep our rakes in good working order.

Mark Young's GWR trolley has been rebuilt by Derek Clark with help from the Woodwork and Metalwork teams and looks really good. The planned second trolley is now underway.

Finally, on behalf everyone at C&W I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy and successful 2019.

*Dave Clark*

## CHELTENHAM

Our weekly blog provides excellent up to date news plus humour on our activities at Racecourse station.

If you've been reading our blog, you'll have seen it's been "more of the same" at CRC. There are no special projects ongoing at the moment and most of our time is spent on routine tidying up of the estate. The amount of "pine straw" and other tree debris being removed to burning sites has been more than usual this year, whether caused by the hot weather or by storms. One fine day during the winter closed period, some brave person will have to ignite these bonfires, having informed the fire service in advance to avoid unnecessary attendance by the brigade. Our objective is to have the station always looking clean and tidy for our customers, which is somewhat challenging if it happens to be wet and windy on our work days.

We continue to "fettle" the donated corrugated iron shed. It now has a water tap and electric supply and most of the new "skirt" is finished. Other members are still burning off several

layers of old paint down to bare metal. We still hope to source and install a metal framed window on the signal box side in due course.

C & M have excavated both post holes for the replacement disabled gates alongside the proposed picnic area. One hole has been concreted ready to receive the (rather heavy) post. The other hole is awaiting a solution to the problem of a land drain broken into during excavations – this appears to run from the racecourse into our property so more investigation is needed to find out what else may be happening up and down the boundary.

Work continues on the frontage of the ticket office before the weather gets too damp for materials to dry out. Dave G continues with the lengthy task of redecorating the staff room in the ticket office building, the first time it's had a lick of paint since the station reopened.

GCC contractors Amey have been on site most of the past week, drilling test boreholes regarding a proposed cycle/foot path alongside the road.

Christmas lights have been put up on the station buildings and the booking hall was similarly adorned including a decorated tree, ready in time for the now virtually sold out Santa trains. A pity that hardly anybody will see the booking hall, as apart from collecting online tickets, there's no need for customers to go in there. Hopefully there'll be a flood of passengers between Boxing Day and New Year's Day!

Routine maintenance of the platforms, ramp, gardens, embankments, fences and track bed continued throughout the period. After last winter's snow blizzards, we've taken the precaution of acquiring a small push-along "salt spreader" to deal with frost and snow on the platforms. That probably means the winter will now be rather mild with lots of rain – watch this space as to whether the spreader ever gets used. John's veg garden is now planted up with onions and broad beans - we all look forward to a share of the produce in due course!

We send our best wishes to Bill Britton, who's had another spell in the "CGH penitentiary" (his expression, not mine) and hope to see him return soon.

*Dave Tomlin*

## CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

We said goodbye to one of the team (Ken Walker) who decide to retire and take life a bit easier from now on, but within a week we had a new replacement which for this department is quite something.

Our old enemy water has started to impede on our main planned jobs, so some are having to be rescheduled over the next few weeks. What has been completed recently are the two holding boxes for the ramps at Winchcombe, the installation of the acoustic panels in the ground floor room of the Tim Michelle building which should cut down the noise levels which were found to be pretty loud and painting of all the new fence panels and gates in protective paint before installation at Cheltenham. The two gate posts for CRC have been repaired and also painted then transported to Cheltenham ready for erection. The old fence line was removed to make way for the new but put up quite a fight with brambles and old wire causing a few choice words. More paving slabs have been acquired and now the stock is around 400 this was achieved by collecting in 3 trips 130 in one day.

One job that has been outstanding for approx. 35 years is now virtually finished, this was the damaged brickwork on the back wall of the waiting room on platform 2 at Toddington.

A new modesty screen has been made to go across the doorway into the gents at Cheltenham, this to stop the rain getting into the doorway and making the floor slippery to walk on. This should be in situ by the end of the year. A new door for the same should also be in place.

Frosted bricks by the entrance to platform 1 at Toddington have mostly been replaced thus eliminating tripping hazards.

Our main job now which has to be completed by the new year is to prepare an area for the new accommodation units, this involves preparing the pads for them to rest on, new waste systems, new water feed and new electrics and a new path way to each unit. Then replacement of fencing around the smaller play area to finish off.

On the water front we have 4 leaking roofs to fix - 2 on a temporary basis, 2 permanently. And so it goes on.

Merry Christmas one and all.

*Pete Dickenson*

## DIESEL DEPARTMENT

Christmas is fast approaching and that means that the department temporarily reawakens from its winter maintenance routine for the festive season – however, unlike other departments, we only have a small part in operations with a couple of Green timetable days (Boxing Day and New Year's Day) sandwiching the Mixed Traffic Gala (29/30 Dec). EE Type 3, D6948, is scheduled to work on all days due to its capability for heating coaches and, for the Gala, will be joined by EE Type 1, D8137; Class 37, 37215 and, Class 45, 45149. The DMU is also partaking in the festivities being involved in the Santa Specials and on Blue timetable days between Christmas and New Year.

Mainline locos not involved in the festivities have now been winterised meaning end of season exams and maintenance in readiness for the 2019 season. This includes increasing the strength of their antifreeze to prevent frost and cold damage. The process can also allow the identification and rectification of any faults that crop up during more thorough examination. Those involved over Christmas will have antifreeze strengthened but exams and heavy repairs will wait until the New Year.

This time of year also gives us the chance to review the year's operations. 2018 was a bumper year for the department, just as much as it was for the rest of the railway. Our main gala and Autumn running weekend saw large increases in the number of visitors and the amount of revenue brought into the railway and department coffers – despite the weather trying its best to ruin it all. Our locos ran with near 100% availability with only two failures throughout the year – 45149 (Traction Motor/Electrical Short) and 37215 (Flat Batteries). We did have a few issues with crewing which meant a few last-minute roster changes, but these did not impact the timetable and all timetabled services were run. Our Driver Experience Days were well patronised with all bar one being sold out even before the running season started. Our Class 26, D5343, made a number of successful visits to other heritage lines including the Mid Hants and the North Norfolk Railways.

Planning for 2019 has already begun in earnest with the new timetable having already been released. It sees the DMU being utilised on 'off peak' Red timetable weekends. We also see more 'peak time' Green days over the summer. Gala planning is well under way with a number of possible visitors already under investigation for the Summer Gala. The Sunday of the Summer event will, for the first time, also include the 2019 Bus Rally bringing together two forms of transport that are intertwined in a historical and preservation sense. Due to a

clash with the Severn Valley Railway Autumn event, our own Autumn event has been pushed back a week. This has also allowed the investigation of a possible guest loco for this event in collaboration with the SVR. Several enquiries have also been made by other railways for a number of our locos to head off and pay visits for galas.

We also have a number of larger projects that will hopefully find funding and potential completion dates over the close season including a gantry crane to straddle roads 10 and 11 immediately outside the shed that will allow for a much easier way to remove larger engine components and a fuelling point, including storage tank, that will mean more flexibility when fuelling locos rather than requiring pre-planning for wholesale top ups throughout the year.

On behalf of the department, wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

*Gareth Arlett*

### FIRST RESPONSE

This is the first submission from the First Response Department which has taken over from the Fire Department. Although we have taken over many of the functions of the Fire Department, there is a much greater emphasis on first aid provision.

A First Aid at Work course was held earlier in the year run by Passion First Aid Training of Gloucester. The course was externally assessed and six members of the team successfully completed the course. The team consists of 8 members with a First Aid at Work (FAW) qualification and 4 with Emergency First Aid At Work (EFAW).

The team have covered all special events this year, but needed some assistance for the Steam Gala and Wartime in the Cotswolds. A variety of incidents have presented themselves from smut in the eye, sprained ankle, broken bone, cut finger, diabetic emergency and heart attack.

This year there have been 3 in-house EFAW courses, which approximately 22 people have attended. There has also been 1 training session delivered by South West Ambulance Service on the use of defibrillators. This is a useful skill as there are now more and more public access defibrillators around in key positions and villages.

The department also looks after 51 first kits, 4 eye wash stations, 4 burns kits and 4 defibrillators on the railway, replenishing them and checking them for out of date items.

The Department is looking for more members to join the team. This does not mean leaving your existing department. We are hoping to have another FAW course in January. This is an externally recognised qualification and a skill that could mean you are ready to help someone when needed and may even save a life.

The Department is now on HOPS thanks to the sterling work of Ann Broomfield (Deputy Head of Department), and those eagle-eyed among you will have spotted that there is a small green circle with a white cross against some members of the railway on HOPS, this signifies they have a first aid qualification.

For more information please contact Phil Harbron    [philontherun@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:philontherun@yahoo.co.uk) or 01452 414996

*Sue Harbron*

## LINESIDE CLEARANCE

We finished clearing the base of the viaduct arches for inspection of brickwork. The arches have now been inspected at ground level by the Civil Engineering department. The higher parts of the structure were inspected by an amazing specialist abseiling team. Clearance of all four embankments around the viaduct is nearly complete. We have spent much longer here than expected, as the initial clearance was beginning to reveal problems in the soil structure. This is especially so on the southern embankment, Cotswold side, where there is considerable badger damage.

We're about to move back briefly to Stanton yard, to finish off there now that the stored rails and sleepers have been removed. In preparation for next year we're planning a further batch of life-expired tree felling and are considering more mechanisation of the routine maintenance such as using petrol hedgecutters and a chipping machine. We have recently welcomed several new members to the team; all have taken and passed their PTS training.

*Rose Phillips*

## LINESIDE DRAINAGE

Well, what a hectic year that was!

The drainage team very nearly completed all that was planned for 2018, and more! The plan was to complete the rebuilding of all the culvert headwalls/chambers from CRC up to Dixon Road Bridge. We have just 4 left to do at Bishops Cleeve, 40A & 39B, both 'up' & 'down'. In total 18 culvert headwalls have either been repaired, rebuilt or built from new. Not all of these have been on the section of line mentioned here. On top of these, 2 cess drain outlets have had new headwalls built from new footings up, and substantial clearance has been undertaken at Chicken Curve, Stanton Yard and the River Isbourne in conjunction with 'A. N. Others' activities. All in all, a very rewarding year thanks to Alastair, Roger, Stuart & Chris's commitment.

Water can be a VERY dangerous and damaging element of our world and 'OUR' Railway, so getting it to pass from one side to the other of our railway without it causing any harm or damage to the running line or any of its structures is of utmost importance. When the GWR built 'our' line, it created a somewhat large dam in the form of high embankments at the foot of the Cotswold Escarpment. And a lot of water falls in the Cotswolds! The culverts are there to release and transport that water safely.

There are persons out there that question the detail (and expense) of some of our work, but WE (the team of five) strive to get the best out of the 20 or so thousands of pounds we spend each year. Time will tell.... Even the BIG railway has in recent years found to their cost what a lack of maintenance and expenditure can do. Spend a few thousand here can save millions there....

To All our readers, have a very Merry Christmas and a Very Prosperous AND Rewarding New Year. Be assured, we will do our utmost to keep GWSR on the right track!

Andy, Alastair, Roger, Stuart, Chris and of course our four-legged 'supervisor', Jaz.  
Woof-woof!

*Andy Protherough*

## NARROW GAUGE

Now the running season is definitely over, as we don't run Santa Specials or the like, much track maintenance has taken place. Some 80 sleepers, (with grateful thanks to GWSR as we can often use those not suitable for mainline running) have been replaced, along with a couple of lengths of track. The unenviable task of fishplate lubrication is taking place on warmer days, as even heating the "oil" fails to render it suitable for application on very cold days!

Justine's boiler work is under way, and 1091 our 1918 German engine is now also out of service for 10-year overhaul. Owned by the same owners as Justine, pockets need to be very deep for the second time in three years. We still have two engines still well within ticket, Chakas Kraal (Hunslet), and the Polish engine Tourska, so maintenance is also under way with them over the winter months. No rest for the wicked (or mad)!

A major project has been undertaken by one of latest volunteers to do some serious maintenance on California Crossing signal box, which remains a significant attraction for our visitors as they can enter and watch the action on running days. There is also a lot of work being done on the 16mm layout, another attraction appreciated especially by our younger visitors.

*Mike Trapp*

## P-WAY REPORT

Maintenance and repair work have continued across the entire system. Track defect maintenance Laverton to Toddington, stone blowing dipped joints at Gretton, derailment repair and timber replacement in Toddington loco yard, fitting insulated fishplates at the new south crossover at Toddington, sleeper replacement in C&W yard.

Work moving the Pway headshunt siding has been completed, the buffers and newer rail complete with replacement sleepers replacing the compost will allow the Usk building to be built (subject to passing any planning constraints).

An old favourite job has been started in earnest in the short-closed season in November, fishplate greasing of the running line south of Greet tunnel using both TB2 nut runners to undo and do up nuts and the compressor to inject the grease into the undone plates via a lance. Each day of use has completed around  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile under a track possession.

At Broadway restrictions on signalling and barrow crossing positioning have required modification to the trackwork, whereby the bullhead rail has been cropped back and replaced with flatbottom rail to allow the barrow crossing to be positioned between the bracket signal and platform ends.

Planning and ordering of materials for this season's "large job" has been undertaken. The job re-ballast and re-sleeper the section Toddington signal box to the new crossover fitted last close season. Worn rails will be cropped and where necessary replaced from stock, i.e. those removed from Chicken curve.

*Nigel Black*

## RAILWAY CATERING SERVICES

Mince pies..... We will shortly be surrounded by lots and lots of mince pies. Across the Railway we are likely to be ordering in the region of 11,000 loose mince pies to serve on our services. As our Santa trains start running in December, we embark on a busy, but enjoyable end to our season.

Along with other volunteer groups we are busy getting everything ready. The Coffee Pot café at Winchcombe now looks very different. In addition to the Christmas trees and decorations, the layout is transformed to deal with around 850 parents and children who will arrive here on trains from Cheltenham over an 11-day period between 1<sup>st</sup> December and Christmas Eve. Our visitors will be served with warmed mince pies, tea or coffee with a choice of squash and biscuits for the children. There is also the heathy option of satsumas for the children. When the train from Cheltenham arrives, half the passengers go to the Tim Mitchell Building through the grotto to see Father Christmas, with the remaining passengers from the train having refreshments in the café. The groups then swap over before all getting back on the train (also decorated) for the return journey to Cheltenham.

At Toddington, we have the Toddington Buffet Car. This is the buffet car 1808, one of two coaches stationed in the bay platform. This experience is slightly different to that at Winchcombe. The children and parents travel on the DMU from Toddington towards Broadway, without actually entering the station. Father Christmas helped by his elves sits and chats with each child before giving them a present. It really is a lovely experience. Some of the elves entertain everyone with Christmas songs and some very corny jokes! When the DMU returns to Toddington everyone gets off and is directed to the two coaches where they are served with the same refreshments as in the Winchcombe café.

On our trains, for those travelling on the Chocolate and Cream set, warm mulled wine is available alongside warmed mince pies. On the maroon set mince pies are available but have to be eaten cold as we don't have a facility for heating them in the mini buffet. On both trains as well as in the Toddington Buffet Car, we sell boxed mince pies for our customers to buy and take away. The popularity of the mince pies ensures we have many returning customers. Last year we sold around 550 of these boxes. This year we are likely to sell more.

For our volunteers, wherever you are working, you are very welcome to come and have a hot drink and warm mince pie.

We reopen again on Boxing Day with our usual fare on offer, although there may still be some mince pies left if you can face them. If the weather is as cold as it is whilst I am preparing this report, the bacon rolls on Train 1 will be as popular as ever.

We close on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 after what has been a very different operating season for us. So many passengers, so many cakes baked and eaten, so many bacon rolls cooked and eaten (their fame continues to spread). In 2019 whilst we won't be offering cream teas, many of our usual services will continue and the tearoom at Broadway will open. The good news is that the kitchen furniture has been delivered and into the New Year, the tables and chairs will arrive – we are currently making the final decisions on these. A new venture for everyone working in RCS.

As the 2018 season ends, a huge thank you to all our volunteers in RCS as well as the many other volunteers at our Railway who all give so freely of their skills, knowledge and most importantly, their time.

*Christine Johnson*

## RETAIL

The shops, as with the rest of the railway, have seen a significant increase in turnover and thus profit for 2018. It is encouraging to see so many volunteers and members of GWSR /GWRT using us for books, gifts and clothing and we are, we know, the first shop of choice for Railway books for many of our local and regular visitors.

We aim to improve some of the displays and as our regulars know I am always trying to bring in new lines and book titles. Not least replacing Thomas themed items with The Big Jigs range which has proven to be a good seller. I am offering a 20 % discount on our remaining Thomas items all now at the CRC shop. We now stock a small range of 7mm model railway items in addition to the 2mm and 4mm and will for the new season have an extended range of 4mm wagons specifically produced for GWSR.

My thanks to all of you for your custom and the retail team for their considerable efforts through 2018.

We will be looking to expand our team for 2019 so if you are interested in joining us please either contact me or Philip Young's dept

And in closing Do Not Forget to buy your GWSR 2019 Calendar whilst stocks last.

Thank you.

*David Holmes*

### SIGNAL & TELEGRAPH

Since the last newsletter our work has continued at Broadway amidst much indifferent weather!

Our runs of rodding to the north end of the station (x4) has seen the compensators installed on steel plates which were fitted to steel framework. This received a large amount of concrete to hold it all in place and after a period of drying time we connected all rods and points and facing point locks. With no trains operating we duly tested the points etc via the applicable levers on 1<sup>st</sup> of November. All tested very well considering the headshunt point (no.13) is some 260 yards away. All the 8 signals at the Honeybourne end are now connected and working.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October saw a small S and T gang (Tuesdays are our normal big gang day) as a rail wagon full of concrete troughing was partially unloaded from the main road bridge to Childswickham bridge. About 450 pieces were unloaded on what was a taxing day as the weather was probably our wettest! Several weeks then followed lining and levelling the troughs which will house the incoming/outgoing cables. Presently we have all new cable in stock and just recently a near mile of cable has been buried from Laverton and at its commencement a cabinet has been installed.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November saw the pre-delivered standard signal posts planted, indeed the last for Broadway with just the large bracket signal to complete. This latter item is sitting restored in Winchcombe yard although won't head for Broadway until a few missing parts have been delivered (next year) when a trial kitting out will need to take place to check all is well.

Our current work has seen signal wire stakes planted (about 60) which have received concrete around their bases. These stakes have now reached Childswickham bridge where a route on the Malvern side is to be established, another 40 to 50 stakes need planting to reach the "outerhome" signal but are awaited from the manufacturer.

Finally, a big thanks to all the dept's who have assisted us this year and to all who have made 2018 a memorable successful year. Have a great Christmas and New Year.

*Malcolm Walker*

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The general increase in passenger numbers over the 2018 season has had the effect of reducing the amount of promotional work for the team while increasing the number of on-line queries. A lot of the questions posed by our potential visitors relate to information that is readily available by simply looking up on the website, others we pass the buck and advise the requestor to contact the Admin office.

The 5\* reviews are still coming in, even when we aren't running trains people are still keen to recommend us, and here's a couple that deserve wider viewing:

- Can I give more than 5\* please? This place is just awesome if you love the nostalgia of the steam age. As with the other stations, there are plenty of retro advertising signs and equipment. On one of my visits there were 2 restored fire engines and an old "Snub nosed" lorry in the car park - truly delightful. Plenty of stall holders with items for sale as well as the cafe. Across the car park is the Toddington engine shed where restoration work is carried out on both the steam and diesel engines. Views can be obtained along the side path when open. Whether you have been before or this is your first visit, a guaranteed day of excellence awaits you.
- Great day out. The staff make it a wonderful experience. Great food and the tea is great! :)
- Most excellent journey back into the past. Great trains and carriages. Well worth the cost, for the experience gained.

We are now looking forward to the 2019 season and we need new ideas for promoting the normal running days. If you have any novel ideas that you think we can turn into video or still image promotions just get in touch: [socialmedia@gwsr.com](mailto:socialmedia@gwsr.com)

We would like to wish all our readers a happy Christmas and a successful 2019.

*Stuart Hamilton*

## STATION STAFF

Passenger numbers have continued at a high level, with the numbers through the booking offices showing an increase of over 45% at the end of October. As previously, the biggest increase has been seen at Cheltenham Racecourse, where we're now scheduling a second Booking Office Clerk in the mornings. The Broadway effect can be seen at Winchcombe, where return tickets to Broadway are now the highest selling paid tickets (adult all-day rovers were the highest, but 40% of these were in exchange for shareholder vouchers).

This year, we have now qualified 23 new members of the department, as predicted in the previous report. We congratulate our recent qualifiers -

Station Master: Tony Stockwell

Booking Office Clerk: Dennis Stevens

Station Assistant: Peter Gough, Robert (Bob) Jones and Paul Wilkinson.

I'm pleased to say that we have some people waiting to be trained next season in all categories, but we're actively looking to increase numbers in the department in anticipation of needing extra staffing in the future. There is a clear demand for train services which allow people to spend a longer time in Broadway, which would mean longer opening hours. Obviously, there are serious implications for all operational departments if we were to go in this direction!

*Leslie Last*

## STEAM LOCO

The home fleet has been left in a slightly depleted state with 4270 having been hired out to the East Lancs Railway, where she will remain until the New Year. The remainder of our home fleet have run reliably with nothing more than a few minor issues.

November has precious few steamings, and most of the locomotive owning groups made a head start on winter maintenance by applying bitumastic paint to the coal space of the tenders and carrying out a number of smaller tasks such as replacing the brick arch on Dinmore Manor and swapping out the borrowed bogie spring on 35006. The big jobs will be left until January/February.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2807 hauled a centenary special train to commemorate 100 years since the end of World War 1. In attendance was the Gloucestershire Regiment dressed in WWI uniform, and a remembrance service was led by Rev David Hall. 2807 was built in 1905 and had hauled trains throughout the conflict, including the famous Jellicoe Specials taking Welsh steam coal to Scapa Flow for the Navy. She was fitted with a large red poppy on her smoke box door for the occasion.

On the locomotive restoration front, 76077 has had a company (Toddington Standard Locomotive LTD) set up to oversee its restoration. Early work has included getting the wheel sets refurbished by the South Devon Railway. 3850 is continuing to progress, with much of the work under the tender completed and the sandbox that doubles as a frame stretcher removed in advance of removing the life expired cylinder block casting. The new cylinder block should be ready to be machined in the near future. Some work has taken place on 2874, including stripping salvageable components from the cab. The 30<sup>th</sup> of November was 2874's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We have just commenced the Santa Season, with 2807 & Dinmore Manor rostered to do the majority of the turns, with 35006 & Foremarke Hall covering most of the post-Christmas turns.

The last of the season's trainees have now passed out, with Andy Turner and Sam Perry now both being qualified as firemen, congratulations to both of them.

*Ray O'Hara*

## TODDINGTON STATION DEPARTMENT

Painting of the fence alongside the car park is nearly finished. Other painting jobs include the donations pillar box just outside the gate (painted in GWR colours rather than PO red, to the consternation of some people!), the doors of the wheelie bin store (work in still progress because of the weather) and the fencing around the Memorial Retreat (now put to bed for the winter). Work was also started on the railings either side of waiting room block but has now been suspended until the weather improves.

The further work needed on the drainage system has just been finished. This involved altering the access and manhole covers to new storage tanks, laying pipes to join the original tanks to the new, and filling in the old tanks. The site of our former lawn is now a sea of mud but is to be left for a few months for the soil to settle before we do any more gardening there. We've had plenty to do in other parts of the station: general weeding, tidying, leaf-sweeping and bulb planting. And work continues near the Platform 1 footbridge opening up the view of the station from the access road.

Some of the equipment has been removed from the play area, partly because it was damaged and partly because of the drainage work. The area now needs redesigning and will

be reduced in size slightly to make space for the new accommodation pods. Building Services has started working on the foundations for the pods; it is possible that they will arrive before Christmas. Building Services has also started relaying the uneven paving bricks alongside the drive and in the picnic area and will work on the platform paving in the New Year.

I'm sure that there's a full report of the Remembrance service elsewhere in this newsletter, but I must just say how wonderful it was to have the Remembrance Train departing from 'our' station on 18th November. The band playing throughout created just the right atmosphere and the Glosters made a very smart colour party. From our viewpoint on Platform 1 they were beautifully silhouetted against the misty hills in the distance. And Canon Mead's widow coming forward to lay the poppy wreath was a most poignant moment.

The plans have now been finalised for the DMU Santa Specials – what goes where and who is on duty which days. The housing for the snow machine has been adapted and installed in the picnic area, so that Santa's sleigh in its new position can be showered with snowflakes! Decoration of the station is to start this week. The set-up days are: Friday 30th November, Monday 3rd December and Friday 7th December. Any extra help will be very welcome, just come to Toddington from 10am onwards. We're all hoping for a good Santa season this year, without the wind and snow of 2017. And when it's all over we'll be looking forward to our annual get-together at the Hobnails in February.

*Rose Phillips*

#### WINCHCOMBE STATION

Autumn clearance has dominated the gardening over the past two months but there was also a significant advance on the project to create a screen of plants along the top fence behind Platform 2. One of our Friday gang, Patrick Moss, was able to summon a small team from his workplace as a community project to dig a trench and then manhandle 12 wooden sleepers to form a front edge to the new border. Two days later our gardeners, Vivien and Rose, planted a row of small shrubs in the newly-created border which we hope will eventually form the desired screen.

Elsewhere the wooden salt bin cover has been given a roofing felt cover and the dehumidifier in the weighbridge hut now feeds into a drain. The FoWS committee in October decided that the ex-Surbiton kiosk would not be suitable as a shop for the FoWS and, furthermore, there was no obvious site for it at Winchcombe station. Nevertheless, the team feels some responsibility for the large pile of parts which have been occupying the covered shelter at the end of the C & M workshop. As this space was needed by C & M, the Station Team spent two Fridays shifting the innumerable pieces of timber and erecting a makeshift shelter to give them a bit of protection. Restoring it would be a 3-dimensional jigsaw puzzle.

At the end of November, the whole Team decorated the canopy and Platform 1 area with seasonal foliage - Holly, Ivy, Laurel, Teasels etc - gathered from around the station. This was augmented by painted decorations created by Rose from natural materials.

*Neil Herapath*

#### SIDING SNIPPET

Work has started on constructing the driveway entrances for the Broadway Car Park. I wonder what else will need doing before the car park can be used?!

If you would like to add your department to the contributors, please email me at [gwrtnews@gmail.com](mailto:gwrtnews@gmail.com)

### Website

[GWSR Boardroom](#)  
[GWSR Official Website](#)  
[Narrow Gauge Railway Trust Website](#)

### Blogs

[Broadway Station Rebuild](#)  
[Broadway Extension](#)  
[Cheltenham RC Station](#)  
[Carriage and Wagon Dept](#)  
[Civil Engineering](#)  
[Construction & Maintenance](#)  
[Diesel Department](#)  
[Steam Loco Department](#)  
[Signal & Telegraph](#)

### Flickr

[Lineside Clearance](#)  
[Lineside Drainage](#)  
[Permanent Way](#)  
[Toddington Station](#)

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway | [info@gwsr.com](mailto:info@gwsr.com) | 01242 621405 | [www.gwsr.com](http://www.gwsr.com)

See what's happening on our social sites:

